

Federally Employed Women

LEGISLATIVE HANDBOOK



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Federally Employed Women's

Mission

*works to end sex and gender discrimination,
to encourage diversity for inclusion and
equity in the workplace, and for the
advancement and professional growth of
women in federal service.*



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WELCOME TO YOUR NEW POSITION AS A FEW REGIONAL/CHAPTER LEGISLATIVE CHAIR!

You have joined a dynamic team of Federally Employed Women's (FEW) elected and appointed officials, and active members who are closely monitoring current legislative proposals and working hard to ultimately effect progressive changes in the federal workplace.

Federal employees face many obstacles in their efforts to provide quality services to the citizens of this country and the world, not the least of which includes severe budget "belt tightening" and the displacement of thousands of military and civilian employees as a result of outsourcing. FEW must strive to work with the Administration and the Congress to meet the challenges of the 21st century by remaining constantly visible and vigilant in our efforts to speak as informed and knowledgeable representatives on behalf of female federal employees.

To affect the legislation that impacts you, there are six basic steps, you must know:

1. Identify your resources
2. Find out about the issues
3. Learn about the legislative process
4. Identify the players
5. Communicate with elected officials
6. Become a resource yourself

This handbook has been designed to assist you in gaining the knowledge and skills you need to fulfill your new responsibilities as a FEW Regional/Chapter Legislative Chair.

Brace yourself for fast-paced, high profile years ahead, certain to provide a fair share of both rewards and frustrations. And remember...

TOGETHER WE CAN AND WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

I. IDENTIFY YOUR RESOURCES

As you are already aware, FEW has developed a comprehensive legislative program consisting of many components and resources. For you to best utilize these resources, it is important to be fully aware of the

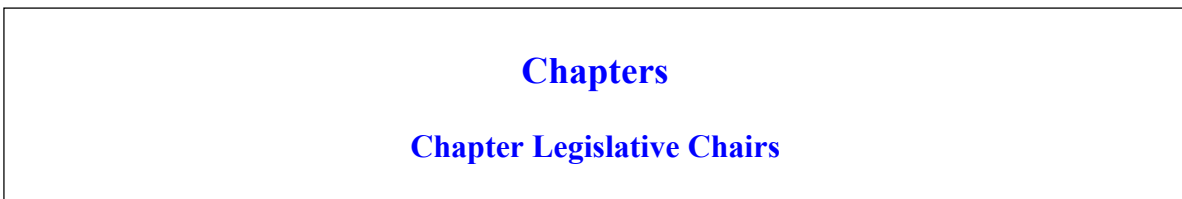
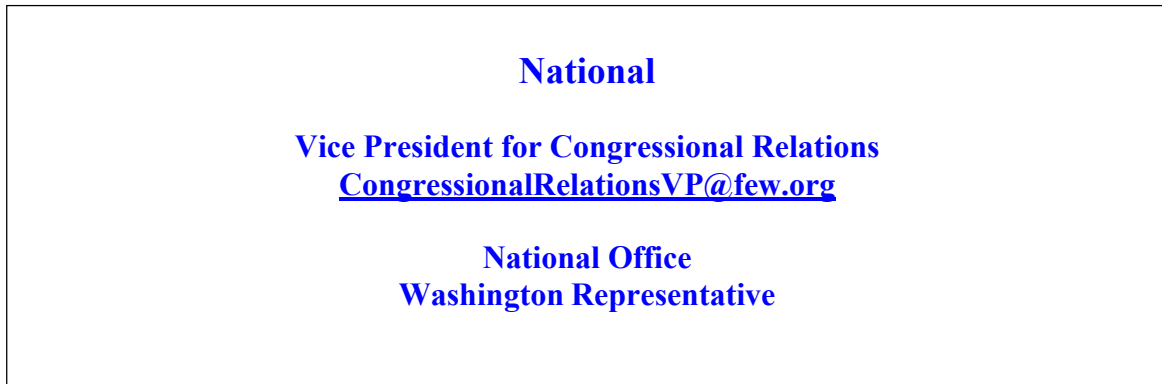
- Structure of FEW's Legislative Network
- Responsibilities of the Elected and Appointed Officers, and National Office Staff*
- Legislative publications
- FEW's National Voter Voice Website (www.few.org/votervoic/)

As you will see, each and every member plays an important role in the success of FEW's Legislative Program.

*Note: Discussion of National Office Staff and National Office Publications throughout this manual represent the current concept for the National Office and its operation. For any questions you might have regarding the information in this handbook or on how the FEW Legislative network will operate, please contact the FEW National Vice President for Congressional Relations. Her email address is CongressionalRelationsVP@few.org and is also located at the FEW National website, www.few.org, in the National Officers link, www.few.org/about-us/national-officers/. At this link, cursor down to the picture of the Vice President for Congressional Relations, and click on the Vice President's name, or you can contact FEW's Washington Representative Tonya Saunders at tasaunders@washingtonpremiergroup.net

FEW LEGISLATIVE NETWORK

FEW's legislative network contains several components. Each link of this network must work effectively, efficiently and cooperatively for the entire network to be productive.



LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Each individual component of the legislative network has defined responsibilities.

Vice President for Congressional Relations

The National Vice President for Congressional Relations is elected every two years and is a voting member of FEW's Executive Committee (EC) and the National Board of Directors (NBOD). The responsibilities of the Vice President for Congressional Relations include:

- Developing FEW's legislative policy and strategy with the National President and the Legislative Working Group
- Ensuring that a working legislative network is in place in FEW
- Coordinating grassroots lobbying efforts
- Reporting to the FEW Executive Committee and the NBOD on legislative activities
- Guiding Regional/Chapter Legislative Chairs in local legislative programs
- Coordinating FEW's Voter Registration and Education Project

Washington Representative

The Washington Representative is a Washington, D.C. consultant for FEW who assumes primary responsibility for developing and coordinating FEW's Legislative Program. The responsibilities of the Washington Representative include:

- Researching legislative issues of concern to federally employed women
- Developing the National Legislative Agenda in conjunction with the National Legislative Working Group
- Monitoring all actions affecting legislative issues
- Establishing and maintaining working relationships with Members of Congress and their staffs, and with the House and Senate Committees concerned with legislation impacting women and federal employees
- Educating Members of Congress, Administration officials, agency heads, and organizations with similar agendas on FEW's legislative objectives and activities
- Preparing testimony for delivery before appropriate congressional committees by the FEW National President or her designee
- Developing materials, Action Alerts, and training programs that educate FEW's members about legislative issues and active participation in the legislative process
- Representing FEW in coalition efforts
- Drafting and distributing semi-monthly reports on legislative developments
- Managing and maintaining the grassroots lobbying efforts, including the updating of the FEW grassroots website
- Conducting research on legislative issues of concern
- Developing legislative issue materials as needed

Regional Legislative Chair

The Regional Manager appoints the Regional Legislative Chair to the Regional Board. This individual is the primary liaison between the Washington Representative, the National Vice President for Congressional Relations and the Chapter Legislative Chairs within the Region. Each Regional Legislative Chair is responsible for

- Establishing and directing the legislative program for the Region
- Ensuring that all Chapters have a working legislative program, including the maintenance of an operable telephone tree of email network
- Monitoring Region/Chapter responses to legislative alerts from National
- Developing legislative workshops at the Regional Training Program
- Initiating contact with local press and organizing press events on Regional Legislative efforts

Chapter Legislative Chair

The Chapter President appoints the Chapter Legislative Chair. This individual is a vital link in FEW's legislative network and is responsible for:

- Gathering and disseminating legislative information to all Chapter members
- Familiarizing Chapter members with the legislative process as well as positions of their Congressional representatives on key issues
- Equipping every member with mail and email addresses and telephone numbers of their Congressional and State representatives
- Initiating responses to legislative action alerts from the National Office
- Promoting letter writing and visits to Members of Congress on a regular basis
- Monitoring state and local legislative activities
- Planning Chapter programs on legislative issues
- Educating local media on FEW's Legislative Agenda and activities
- Keeping the Voter Registration Guide current

Individual Member

Members play a significant role in FEW's overall Legislative Program. To ensure that our Legislative Agenda receives top priority on the national, state and local levels, members MUST actively participate in the legislative process and be responsible for:

- Becoming familiar with FEW's Legislative Agenda
- Identifying their national, state and local legislators of their respective position on FEW's Legislative Agenda items
- Becoming familiar with the legislative process
- Using the available resources—print, broadcast media, the internet, FEW publications—to keep up to date on issues affecting women and federal employees
- Responding quickly to action alerts by communicating FEW's position to their legislators
- Educating coworkers, friends and family on these issues and the need to participate in the legislative process
- Voting

FEW LEGISLATIVE PUBLICATIONS

There are a number of legislative publications that have been provided to individual Chapters and to FEW members. When available, these are offered free-of-charge, but may require minimal fees to cover the cost of postage and handling.

FEW Washington Legislative Update

The *FEW Washington Legislative Update* is the primary tool by which time-sensitive legislative information is passed down from the National Office to the Regions/Chapters. The *Washington Update* is designed to provide the Legislative Chair with a full understanding of specific pieces of legislation, behind-the-scenes political maneuvering, and strategies developed to ensure progressive movement, and specific actions that should be taken to encourage member participation.

The Washington Representative will email the *Washington Legislative Update* twice a month on important legislative and regulatory developments affecting FEW members. Also, included will be political information, general interest stories, and other intelligence to help Regional/Chapter Legislative Chairs get the full picture of what is happening in Washington, D.C. Action Alerts will be emailed to home and/or personal email addresses. The Regional/Chapter Legislative Chairs are subsequently responsible for filtering the information down to their individual members.

Legislative Highlights

Along with the *FEW Washington Update*, a summary and status report—*FEW's Legislative Highlights*—of all-important pieces of legislation will be attached to each *FEW Washington Legislative Update* when Congress is in session and provided to Regional/Chapter Legislative Chairs. This concise publication is specifically designed to aid in the dissemination of legislative information and can easily be inserted into Regional/Chapter newsletters or reproduced and distributed to individual members.

Legislative Fact Sheets

Legislative Fact Sheets are compiled on either Legislative Agenda items or specific pieces of legislation. These fact sheets are updated and distributed periodically and include background information, relevant statistical information, an overview of any pending legislation, and a statement of FEW's position on the issue and/or bill.

Action Alerts

Action Alerts for specific grassroots actions will also be emailed to home/personal addresses as needed. Participants will be directed to the interactive FEW grassroots Voter Voice software website (www.few.org/votervoicer/) or other websites where visitors will be given the opportunity to send letters to their elected Representatives and Senators on specific bills pending in the Congress. Language for these letters will be provided. Grassroots participants can also send letters to their local newspapers with the click of a button.

(NOTE: This interactive site has been linked to the FEW main website and is also accessible to grassroots participants directly at www.few.org/votervoicer/).

News & Views

Each edition of FEW's bi-monthly newsletter, *News & Views*, contains legislative information of interest to women and federal employees. Early in every congressional session, it features information on FEW's Legislative Program and includes the Legislative Agenda and a summary of legislation that FEW is monitoring.

Position/Policy Papers

- FEW Position/Policy Papers offer a comprehensive overview of a general topic that is of significant concern to women employed by the federal government. These publications offer a historical perspective, analysis of the impact on federal employees in general and specifically female federal employees, a review of current programs or proposed solutions, and a summary of legislative remedies.

In addition, FEW has released a number of publications taking the form of handbooks and guides:

- Combating Sexual Harassment
- A Federal Worker's Guide
- A Handbook for Agency Visits
- Every Vote Counts
- Conducting a Successful Voter Registration Drive

Legislative Brochures

FEW's Legislative Program brochure (is now included in the overall FEW brochure). The Legislative Agenda has been developed by the National Office and is available to Regions/Chapters on request. The brochures themselves are provided free-of-charge to the Region/Chapter. These brochures are excellent informational and membership recruiting tools. All of the above publications, when available, are also available to individual FEW members and can be obtained by contacting the National Office at 202-898-0994.

THE FEW VOTER VOICE WEBSITE

The Voter Voice Tool is used by FEW to take-action in support of the H.R. Bills of which we advocate for as part of our Legislative Agenda for the current Congress.

This website contains information on our issues, elected officials, recent legislation, and upcoming elections and can be used as a resource for information and for lobbying efforts. The Voter Voice website (www.few.org/votervoicer/) facilitates the activities of the Legislative Chairs and membership and allows for easy access to information about issues of concern to FEW members, and timely communication to Members of Congress via an email or letter-writing capability. Legislative Chairs are encouraged to visit the website and make use of its resources in the development of your Chapter or Regional legislative programs.

Also, on the site are all FEW Action Alerts on important legislative issues currently being debated and considered in the Congress. Included are sample letters, background information on the issues, FEW's position, and click-of-the-button access to sending letters to legislators.

In the Legislative section of the site, all bills and pieces of legislation that FEW is tracking are listed, along with FEW's position, if applicable. Visitors can submit letters to their legislators instantly on any of these issues straight from this section of the website.

Finally, information on every legislator can be found on the site, including contact information, positions on selected issues, Committees the lawmakers serve on, Labor staffers and a lot of other important information.

Instructions on how to use the Voter Voice tool:

- Access to Voter Voice is on the National Website at www.few.org/votervoicer/
- A list of all the H.R. Bills that action can be taken are displayed. Select one and click on the radio button "Take Action"
- A summary of the Bill will display and a request for your zip code is required, which will display your U.S. House of Representatives
- A pre-populated letter is also displayed to be completed and can be edited before clicking the "Submit" button

II. FIND OUT ABOUT THE ISSUES

There has never been a more significant time for women employed by the federal government to voice their opinions on issues that affect them in the workplace. As the only organization that represents all female federal employees, FEW has taken the lead in identifying issues of concern to federal employees and to women as a class, and in following those issues through the lengthy legislative process.

FEW prides itself in being an extremely diverse organization, representing women of varying ages, races, and ethnic backgrounds, occupations, educational backgrounds and stages in their careers. This diversity makes us strong; however, it also makes our list of concerns quite comprehensive.

FEW Legislative Working Group – is chaired by the National Vice President for Congressional Relations and includes the National President, Executive Vice President, Immediate Past President and the Washington Representative -- charged with developing a Legislative Agenda at the onset of each Congress (which begins in January of odd numbered years).

The Legislative Agenda is drafted and distributed throughout the organization for comment prior to the start of each session. At the semi-annual National Board of Directors Meeting held in February, a final version is ratified. This document is the master outline for directing the entire legislative program—for both the National Office and the Regions and Chapters--throughout the two-year session.

Although Regions and Chapters may have concerns specific to their geographic or service area, there must be a coordinated policy position on the issues affecting federal employment in general to ensure that we are all working on common goals. **At no time should you as a representative of the organization take a position on an issue that contradicts the National organization's stated position.** If you have concerns or comments to make regarding any issue that is not covered by or is contrary to FEW's National Legislative Agenda, please discuss the matter with the Vice President for Congressional Relations as soon as possible.

FEW'S LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE CONGRESS

All FEW Legislative Agendas are organized into a three-tier priority structure. The complete text of the current FEW Legislative Agenda can be found on the FEW National Website (www.few.org) at the Legislative link.

Some FEW areas of concern are given **Overall Priority** status.

Tier I issues are considered of utmost importance to female federal workers today. FEW gives priority attention to these areas by initiating legislative actions, monitoring specific legislation, and educating members about congressional activities in these areas:

- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Affirmative Employment
- Full Constitutional Rights for Women
- Effective/Efficient Government Reform
- Family Member Care
- Retirement/Pension
- Privatization/Outsourcing
- Women in the Military
- Employment Benefits
- Glass Ceiling Issues

Tier II issues are those that impact all federal employees, regardless of their gender. In these areas, it is important to work toward progressive policy development for all employees and to assess policies and practices from a women's perspective to identify whether there are also uniquely female needs and concerns. Rather than taking on primary responsibility, FEW joins forces with other organizations to monitor and affect legislation and to educate members regarding congressional activities in these areas:

- Safety and Health
- Workplace Violence

Tier III - issues are those issues that affect all women. FEW is bound in sisterhood with other women in all walks of life and, therefore, is interested in those issues that impact all women as a class. Once again, because of limited resources, FEW supports other organizations who initiate legislative actions:

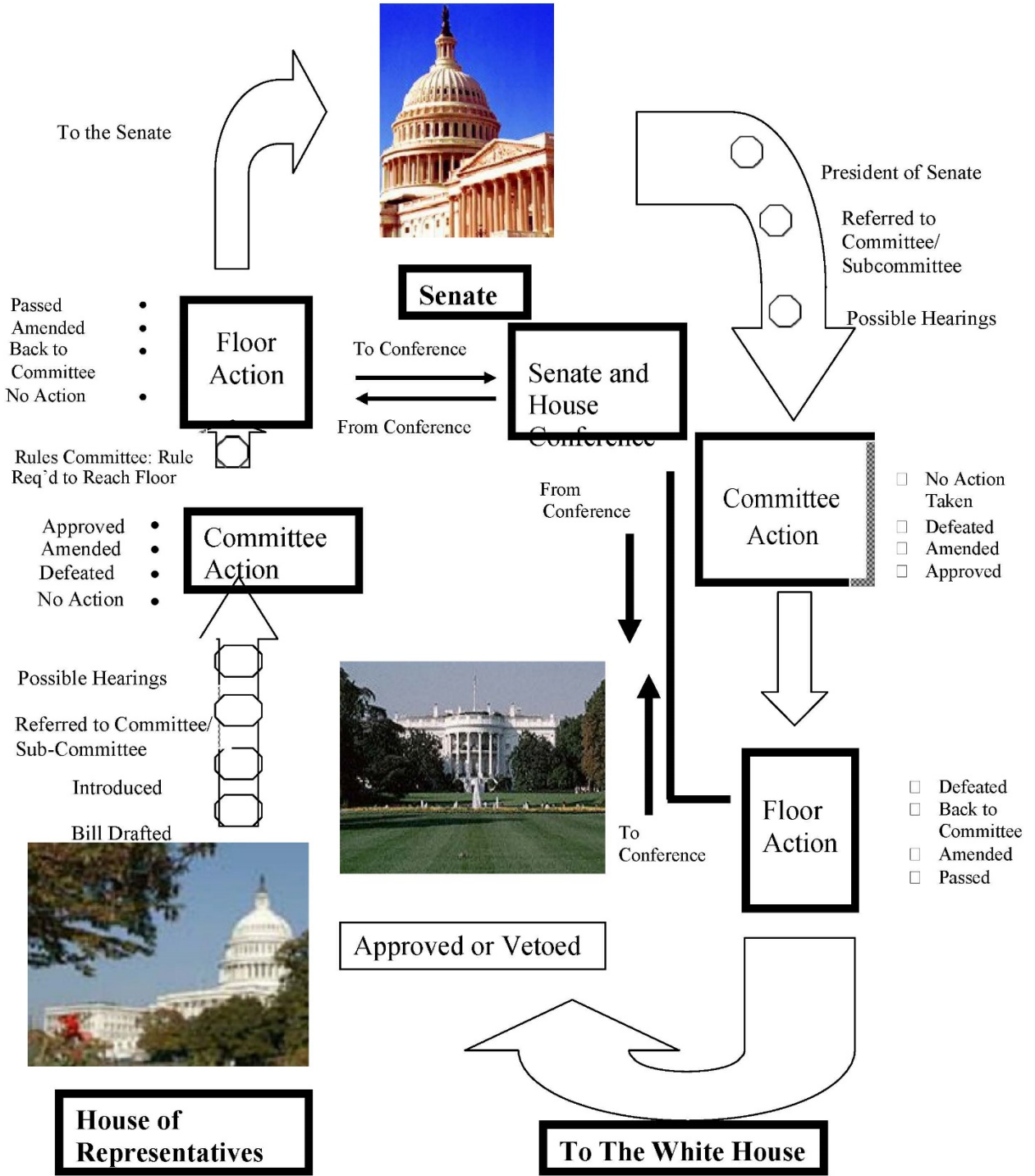
- Convention on Discrimination Against Women
- Economic Empowerment Women
- Health Care

Special Project status is given to the ongoing activity of voter registration and voter education. FEW encourages all women to participate in the political process, as candidates, volunteers and informed voters.

III. LEARN ABOUT THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

To make an impact on the issues that have been identified, it is crucial to understand the intricacies of the legislative process. Although most individuals feel somewhat intimidated by the legislative arena, there are several basic facts that will enable you to understand the process, and maneuver through it as an informed citizen and advocate.

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW



HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

To become a law, a bill must move through Congress in an ordered series of steps.

Introduction

Any Member of Congress may introduce a bill in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. It may be the Member's own bill, a bill introduced at the request of the Administration (the President or other government officials) or the idea may have begun with some group back home, such as business or labor.

When a bill is introduced, it is given a bill designation and a bill number according to the house where it originated. For example, "H.R. 20" means that this bill was first introduced in the House of Representatives and was 20th in the order of bills introduced. A bill introduced in the Senate is similarly designated, e.g., "S. 185."

Committee Action

After being introduced and given a number, the bill is referred to a committee(s) with jurisdiction. The committee usually refers the bill to a subcommittee which studies the issue in-depth and holds hearings in which interested parties may testify. The sub-committee may also vote to amend (change) the bill during a mark-up session. When its work is done, the subcommittee reports the bill with recommendations back to the full committee.

The full committee may discuss the bill further, make additional amendments, reject the bill or approve it. If approved, the bill is reported out of committee, usually with an accompanying committee report that explains that bill's provisions and the committee's decision.

Debate

After a bill is reported out of committee, it must be scheduled for debate by the full House or Senate. In the House of Representatives, a bill is scheduled by the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee determines when the bill will be debated, how much time will be spent on the debate, and whether or not amendments to the bill from the House floor will be allowed. A "rule" approved on a particular bill means that the bill was scheduled for floor debate. If a rule is not approved, the bill dies in the Rules Committee.

In the Senate, bills go on the Senate calendar and are scheduled for debate by the majority leadership. There is no time limit on debate in the Senate, unless agreed upon by unanimous consent.

Floor Action and Passage

Next, the bill goes to the floor of the House or Senate for consideration by all Members. The bill is debated, possibly amended and voted up or down.

If approved by one body (House or Senate), the bill is sent to the other body where it again moves via the committee procedure. Should the second body pass the bill without any changes, it is sent to the President for signature and enacted into law.

If, however, the Senate and the House of Representatives pass different versions of the bill, the two bills are sent to a conference committee. The House and Senate each appoint Members from the committees that first considered the bill to serve on the conference committee and resolve the differences between the two bills. If they fail to reach a compromise, the bill dies in the conference committee.

If the conference committee reconciles the differences and agrees on the compromised version, the bill (in the form of a conference report) goes back to the Senate and House for passage. No further amendments are accepted—the bill must be voted up or down.

Presidential Action

When a bill is approved by both houses of Congress, it is sent to the President for signature. Upon receiving the bill, the President has several options:

He may sign the bill—and it becomes a law.

He may veto it and send it back to the House and Senate where the veto can be overridden by a two-thirds vote of both houses.

The President may neither sign nor veto the bill within ten (10) days, and the bill automatically becomes law.

If Congress adjourns within that ten (10) day period, however, the bill is killed by “pocket veto.”

IV. IDENTIFY THE PLAYERS

Successful lobbying requires a full understanding of the issues, the legislative arena and a familiarity with the Members of Congress and their role in the process. To identify the players, it is important to familiarize yourself with:

- Safety and Health
- The party leadership
- The committee system
- Your individual member of Congress
- The role of Congressional staff
- Using the World Wide Web as a Resource

CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

Although the Constitution does not mention the role of political parties in the legislative process, party leadership is one of the decisive forces influencing the way Congress operates. Foremost among the tasks of Congressional leaders is organizing the House and Senate chambers to effectively carry out their party's programs. In that role, the leadership must decide how to guide proposals through the various stages of the legislative process: committee action, floor action and House-Senate conference negotiations. Generally, leaders represent the ideological center of the party.

Please visit website links below to find congressional party leaders:

Senate:

www.senate.gov/pagelayout/senators/a_three_sections_with_teasers/leadership.htm

House of Representatives: www.house.gov/leadership/

THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM

The Speaker of the House and the Presiding Officer of the Senate are formally assigned the task of referring bills to appropriate committees in their respective chambers for action. A bill can be referred to one committee—a **single referral**—if its subject matter lies exclusively or predominantly within the jurisdiction of one committee. Where the subject matter cuts across two or more committees and jurisdictional lines, the bill can be referred to more than one committee—**multiple referral**. Multiple referrals can take the form of:

Joint Referral -- Referred simultaneously to two or more committees sequentially,

Referral -- Referred within specific time limits successively to one Committee, then a second committee, etc., or

Split Referral -- Referred to several committees with each having jurisdiction over only specified parts of the bill.

Once a bill is referred to a committee (or committees), the committee can begin its work on the measure; however, usually the bill is referred to a subcommittee(s) for review. Since most bills die at the committee stage, with the committee having taken no action, not having completed an action or having voted not to report the bill to the parent body, committee assignments and the make-up of the assigned committee are crucial to passage.

In your position as Legislative Chair, it is important to become familiar with several key committees that act frequently on FEW's Legislative Agenda issues. Many committees have home pages on the Internet that will make this easier by allowing you to identify their members and track legislative action within their purview. Information sources on FEW key committees are readily accessible on the internet. You can find out the membership on these key committees by searching at the websites listed below:

Senate: www.senate.gov/pagelayout/senators/a_three_sections_with_teasers/leadership.htm

House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov/leadership/>

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Regardless of the issue on which you are working, your primary contacts in the Congress should be your own elected officials. Each and every citizen has a total of three (3) representatives in the Congress:

One (1) Member of the House of Representatives

Two (2) Members of the Senate

Your elected officials are determined by a congressional districting plan that is based on data generated by the Census Bureau.

As the primary coordinator of the Legislative Program in your Region or Chapter, you are responsible for providing your members with current data on their nationally elected officials. You can obtain this information from the FEW grassroots website (www.few.org/votervoices/), Capitol Hill Switchboard, the FEW National Office or from following the League of Women Voters (LWV) website location: Note: At the website location, on the upper middle of the screen, under "Elections" then "Find Your Elected Officials," enter the zip codes of your Region or Chapter members, click on go, and information on government representatives at both state and national levels will be provided.

Once you have identified your individual elected officials and those Members of Congress that represent your Region or Chapter collectively, it is important to find out as much information as you can about them personally and politically. Biographical information can be obtained either from the Members' own office, from their home pages on the internet, or from a wide variety of congressional directories that are currently on the market. Of key importance in developing ties and lobbying strategies is knowledge of Members' terms and tenure of office, committee assignments, caucus memberships and issues of concern.

CONGRESSIONAL STAFF

It is equally important to acquaint yourself with the Members' personal office staff. These individuals work directly for the Member and often play a key role in influencing the Member's position on any given issue.

Members of the Congress maintain at least two offices: one located in Washington, D.C., which primarily works on legislation; and one or more located back in the Members' home district, which focuses on constituent services. Staffs can range in size. In the House, Representatives employ up to 22 people; in the Senate, the number of staff depends upon the state population.

Typically, Congressional Staff are grouped into two main function areas: legislative and administrative.

Legislative Staff

Legislative Director oversees legislative program and may handle issues of primary importance to the member of Congress.

Legislative Assistant responsible for certain issue areas and any activities associated with those issues, including the drafting of legislation, speech writing, constituent correspondence and general advice.

Legislative Correspondent manages legislative mail flow and may handle some issues.

Administrative Staff

Executive Assistant works closely with the member of Congress and may also handle schedule.

Administrative Assistant coordinates and supervises the work of the entire staff.

Staff Assistant acts as receptionist for the office.

Press Secretary serves as the chief spokesperson for the office.

Scheduler schedules appointments.

Caseworker primarily responsible for providing constituent services (e.g., Social Security or tax questions, complaints, etc.) and is usually located in the District office(s).

USING THE INTERNET AS A RESOURCE

The Internet is an excellent resource that you can use to find out more about the legislative process, Members of Congress and their staffs, congressional committees, congressional caucuses like the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues and recent legislative action. This page provides a very basic introduction to using the Internet to make your legislative advocacy with FEW easier.

Getting information from the Web has several advantages: it is relatively inexpensive in comparison to long-distance phone calls to Washington, D.C.; you can do your research at any time of the day or night that you have access to a computer and Internet service; you can often "download" the documents you find to a disk or thumb drive and into a word processing program to edit for inclusion in newsletters and updates.

"Home pages" on the Web are designed to be user-friendly so that even people with little knowledge of computers or the Internet can read them and then connect to access points, "links" to go to other related home pages. For example, by entering a specific Congressperson's Web address via a web-browsing program or online service, you will be able to reach the Member's Web site, and you will often be able to click on links to the Websites of the committees and caucuses to which the member of Congress belongs.

Many **Members of Congress have home pages on the Internet** that provide a wealth of information including:

- Brief Biographies and Pictures of Committee and Caucus Membership
- Direct Links to the Congressperson's Email Address for Comments and Letters

- Updates on the Congressperson's Position and Recent Votes News about the Congressperson and Press Releases Information about the Legislative Process
- Party Information, including Party Leadership
- Information about the Congressional District such as Towns and Zip Codes
- "Special Issues" of Concern to the Member of Congress Constituent Service Listings
- Internship Opportunities
- Information for Visitors to the Capitol and Washington, D.C. and How to Schedule a Congressional Visit

Committee Home Pages generally include information about

- The Kinds of Issues and Legislation the Committee Handles
- Lists of Committee Members, Leaders, and Staff
- Listings of Past and Future Hearings on Bills and Related Policy or Oversight Issues with Dates, Hearing Topics, and Specific Bill Numbers and Subjects
- Action taken on Legislation Referred to the Committee
- Links to the Text of Published Committee Reports
- Committee Voting Records
- Committee History

Other Resources available on the Internet include

1. Lists of all Members of the House and Senate with Contact Information including email addresses
2. Bill and Amendment Status
3. House and Senate Floor Schedules
4. House and Senate Floor Votes and Text of Floor Speeches
5. Indexes and Text of Federal Regulations
6. Information about Government Reform Initiatives

Three of the most useful Website addresses are those for the Senate, House and White House home pages. From these you will be able to access all of the above information.

Senate Internet Home Page: <http://www.senate.gov>

House of Representatives Home Page: <http://www.house.gov>

The White House Home Page: <http://www.whitehouse.gov>

V. COMMUNICATE WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

Whether you have an opportunity to speak directly to your elected officials or simply write or telephone their offices, it is important that you articulate your position and your request for action loudly and clearly. The following pages will provide you with helpful tips that ensure effective lobbying. These pages can easily be copied onto your Regions or Chapters letterhead and distributed to your members. **Note: It is illegal to use federal resources to lobby or encourage others to lobby. Distribution of the lobbying portions of this section should be done using Chapter funds. It is advisable to distribute lobbying information off of federal agency property.**

LOBBYING AS A FEDERAL EMPLOYEE

When federal employees begin to become active in legislative activities, inevitably questions regarding the Hatch Act prohibitions are raised. It is important to understand that while the Hatch Act still prohibits certain partisan political activities, it does not prohibit advocacy or lobbying.

Federal employees have a right to their own opinion regarding any given issue and the right to make that position known to their elected official.

It is your responsibility, as the Regional or Chapter Legislative Chair, to lie to rest any confusion. The following provides significant background and technical information on the Hatch Act and Hatch Act Reform Amendments.

THE HATCH ACT

There has long been a sentiment that for public institutions to function fairly and effectively, the political activity of government employees must be limited.

Background

Thomas Jefferson was actually the first to impose restrictive guidance to that effect. However, it wasn't until 1939 that restrictions on the political activities of government employees were actually codified into law. At that time, Congress approved the landmark legislation known as the Hatch Act, which limits the political activities of federal employees, employees of the District of Columbia and certain employees of state and local governments.

Before 1979 the U.S. Civil Service Commission had primary enforcement responsibilities for the Hatch Act. However, the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 transferred the Commission's investigative and prosecutorial authority to the Office of the Special Counsel within the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB). Among other duties, the MSPB is the administrative body which adjudicates formal disciplinary actions filed by the Special Counsel against alleged violators of the Hatch Act.

Prohibitions

With very few exceptions, all employees in the Executive Branch of the federal government are subject to the political activity prohibitions of the Hatch Act. Employees of the U.S. Postal Service and the District of Columbia government are also subject to this law. The provisions of the Hatch Act do not apply to employees paid from the appropriation for the Office of the President, to heads and assistant heads of executive or military departments, and to officials who develop and implement national or foreign policy, and whom the President, subject to confirmation by the U.S. Senate, appoints to such positions.

The law also does not apply to individuals employed by educational or research institutions, establishments, or agencies which are supported in whole or part by the District of Columbia or by recognized religious, philanthropic or cultural organizations. There is also a partial exemption for federal employees living in the vicinity of Washington, D.C., and in other communities where the majority of voters are employed by the federal government.

Reform Movement

Since the 1970's the federal labor unions, employee organizations, and Congressional proponents have pushed for a lifting of Hatch Act restrictions. FEW has joined this effort, believing that prohibitions against political activities deprive civil servants from exercising their Constitutional rights to participate in the nation's political process. As protections against political coercion have been codified into law and regulation, these political restrictions are no longer necessary.

Progress was made to enact reforms in the 103rd Congress. On October 6, 1993, PL-103-94 expanded the realm of political activities for federal workers. Employees of the following agencies or divisions within an agency are exempt from the latest reforms: Administrative Law Judges; career members of the Senior Executive Service; Central Intelligence Agency; contract appeals board members; Criminal Division of the Department of Justice; Defense Intelligence Agency; Federal Elections Commission; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Merit Systems Protection Board; National Security Agency; National Security Council; Office of Criminal Investigations of the Internal Revenue Service; Office of Investigative Programs of the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms; Office of Special Counsel and the Secret Service. Please refer to the following information for lists of permitted and prohibited activities under current law.

For specific information, contact your agency's General Counsel or

Hatch Act Unit
U.S. Office of Special Counsel 1730 M Street, N.W., Suite
201 Washington, D.C. 20036-4505

Telephone: 800-85-HATCH or 800-854-2824 or 202-653-7143

Permissible and Prohibited Political Activities

According to the Hatch Act Reform Amendments of 1993, which went into effect on February 3, 1994, the following list contains examples of both permissible and prohibited political activities.

Covered Employees MAY

- Register and vote as they choose
- Express opinions about candidates and issues
- Participate in political campaigns
- Contribute money to political organizations or attend political fund raisers
- Wear or display political badges, buttons or tickers while **off duty**
- Attend political rallies and meetings
- Join and hold office in political clubs or parties
- Sign and circulate nominating petitions
- Campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, municipal ordinances and candidates in partisan elections
- Make campaign speeches for candidates in partisan elections
- Distribute campaign literature in partisan elections
- Assist in and organize voter registration drives.

Covered Employees MAY NOT

- Run as candidates for public office in partisan elections**
- Use their official authority to affect the results of an election
- Solicit or discourage political activity of anyone who may receive any type benefit or penalty from the employee's office
- Engage in political activity while on duty
- Use any official facilities or resources for political activity
- Wear an official insignia of the employee's office while conducting political activity
- Solicit, accept or receive political contributions from any person unless that person is in the same federal labor union, not a subordinate of the employee, and the solicitation is for a multi-candidate political committee or a federal employee organization

NOTE: The Office of Personnel Management has relaxed provisions in certain municipalities in Maryland, Virginia, or other areas where the federal government employs the majority of voters because it is in the domestic interest of these employees to participate in local elections.

**Technically, an election is partisan if any candidate for an elected public office is running as a representative of a political party whose presidential candidate received electoral votes in the last presidential election.

THE BASIC RULES OF LOBBYING

Most aptly put, lobbying is the art of persuasion. It is little different from the process you go through on a daily basis to get your point across at home, at work or among social friends. To try to convince someone to think like you do, you must know your facts and present them in a logical and non-confrontational manner. On an organizational level, the scope and effect of your actions are much broader, but the basic purpose is the same -- to influence. Through effective lobbying we can influence our policy makers to take action which benefits us both individually and collectively.

1. **Get to know your legislators well**—their districts, interests, biases, voting records and personal schedules; attend town meetings and express your concerns. Challenge yourself to get your legislators to recognize your face.
2. **Become acquainted with the legislative staff members**—of the legislators, committees and resource offices with whom you will be working. These individuals are essential sources of information and have substantial influence in some instances in the design, drafting and passage of legislation. Being courteous with them and being sensitive to the demands on their time can be highly effective in gaining access to the congressperson.
3. **Know your fellow lobbyists**—particularly your allies. Cooperation can allow you to better understand the process, follow legislation and assess strengths and weaknesses. Remember the opposition. Determine the groups you may need to negotiate with the changes in legislation that could otherwise block its passage. Furthermore, help your friends by volunteering or contributing to their campaigns; it's a clear way of saying, thank you.
4. **Look for friends everywhere**—even unusual places. In politics, a friend is someone willing to work with you on an issue regardless of party affiliation or liberal or conservative viewpoint. The person may disagree with you on every other issue.
5. **Do not spend time on opponents**—who are publicly committed to their position. Strengthen relationships with allies and lobby legislators who have room to be flexible and are keeping an open mind.
6. **Do not grab credit**—nothing is impossible if it does not matter who gets the credit.
7. **Maintain integrity**—never promise anything you cannot deliver and never allow a legislator to consider you a bitter enemy because you disagree. Remember, your word is your bond and today's opponent may be tomorrow's ally.
8. “When you are crossed politically, don't get mad, get even.” (Bobby Kennedy)
The power of the ballot box is yours.
9. **Muster all the luck you can find**—in lobbying, you can know your opponent, you can develop imaginative and reasonable compromises, you can burn the midnight oil to digest all the arguments, but it can be futile if you don't also have a little luck.

10. **Register to Vote and Vote the Issue**—in the flurry of activity in Congressional offices, oftentimes concerns and requests of non-voters are placed on the bottom of the burner. Although nobody knows how you vote, anyone can find out if you are registered.

VISITING YOUR CONGRESSPERSON

One of the most effective ways to lobby Congress is to arrange face-to-face visits with your Senator and Representative. Since you hold the vote that can prolong or discontinue their stint on the “Hill,” your presence and opinions are extremely important.

You do not have to travel to Washington, D.C., to make a personal visit to your Congressperson. All Senators and Representatives maintain at least one district office back home and visit their office(s) frequently. With proper planning and a certain degree of flexibility, you should be able to schedule a visit in your own locale.

Before actually scheduling a meeting, however, make sure you are prepared. Use the following checklist as a guide.

- Define your objective.
- Get to know the issue thoroughly. Cover all aspects, including your position on the issue, the position of your opponents, the Status of any proposed legislation relating to the issue and your elected official’s current position.
- Organize a small representative group with an appointed spokesperson.
- Decide which office is most convenient/effective to meet your goals.
- Strategically and logistically arrive at several possible meeting dates and times.

If you have completed all of the above, you are now ready to schedule the visit. Simply follow the steps below.

1. Contact the Member of Congress’ Personal Secretary or Scheduler.
2. Request a particular date, but be flexible and ready to suggest second or third choices.
3. Be prepared to make a commitment and keep it.
4. Begin preparing for your visit.

Your performance in the meeting can leave a lasting impression, so treat it seriously. Here are some helpful hints that will make your visit effective and enjoyable.

1. Be on time for the appointment. However, because of the hectic pace of the legislative process, be understanding if you have to wait.
2. Introduce yourself and other participants. Be sure to identify yourself as a constituent and/or a representative of a particular organization, if applicable.
3. In general, **be brief, courteous and keep to the point.**
4. Clearly state your position and just what you would like your legislator to do.
5. Identify any relevant pieces of legislation by name and number whenever possible.
6. Use examples to dramatize your position.
7. Be firm in discussing the issue, but do not try to force a change of position or commitment if there is an obvious resistance.

8. Provide a short-written statement of your position to leave in the office.
9. Leave on an upbeat note, if possible.
10. Follow-up with a thank-you letter and a reminder of any verbal commitment you receive.
11. If you have to meet with a member of the staff, don't be disappointed. Congressional staff is extremely knowledgeable and deserve the same respect that would be afforded the Congressperson.

When the meeting is over, meet as a group to measure your success. Ask yourselves the following questions:

- Did your group present itself in a professional manner?
- Were you well organized in your presentation?
- Did the group provide individual experiences or examples that dramatically illustrated your points?
- Did you respond clearly and intelligently to questions asked of you?
- Do you have a clear understanding of your representative's position on the Issues and/or pending legislation?
- Did this visit further the credibility of yourselves and the organization you were representing?
- Did you enjoy yourselves?

If you can answer "yes" to all of these questions, then your visit was a resounding success. Please note that your success should not be based on whether your representative(s) ultimately agreed with your position. There are many competing forces which play vital roles in determining a political point of view. If your visit did not change their position at this point in time, then your contact will no doubt assure that your perspective will, at a minimum, be considered in the future. Maybe the representative(s) will even solicit your opinion or assistance before judgments are made the next time around. Progressive policy is not made overnight, but in the long run...

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

WRITING LETTERS TO YOUR CONGRESSPERSON

One way to communicate your own or your organization's views to a legislator is by letter. Letters from home or via email have become the main form of voter contact and the primary gauge of public opinion. Don't consider writing only when you are dissatisfied. Positive feedback is welcomed and enables you to develop good rapport that may come in handy in the future.

Members of Congress need and expect to hear from you. Writing an effective letter to your Senator or Representative is not a difficult task. In fact, in this day and age of the Internet, often advocacy organizations, including FEW, will have already drafted email letters available for you to use at their websites. Continually check the FEW grassroots website www.few.org/votervoic/ and *FEW Washington Legislative Updates* for information on new Action Alerts drafted by the National Office. Another recommended site for FEW members is the site belonging to the League of Women Voters at: (www.lwv.org/other-issues).

Here are some guidelines to help you in writing correspondence from scratch:

1. Before drafting your letter, **do your homework**. Research the issue. Give thorough attention to
 - Your position
 - The position of your opponent
 - The status of any pending legislation relating to the issue
 - Your elected official's current position and
 - State specifically what you want your Legislator to do

Contact FEW's National Vice President for Congressional Relations via CongressionalRelationsVP@few.org or FEW's Washington Representative via tsaunders@washingtonpremiergroup.net for specifics.

2. **Timing is extremely important**. If your letter arrives too early, it will be forgotten. If your legislator is a member of the committee to which pertinent bill(s) are referred.

Send your letter when the committee begins hearing. If not, send your letter before the bill(s) come to the floor for debate and vote. (Don't overlook email, telegrams or telephone calls when the time is short.)

3. **Write legibly or preferably type**.
4. **Use your own personal stationery**. If you are writing as a representative of a group, write on the group's stationery.
5. **Address your legislators properly**. When Congress is in session, use the Washington addresses below: (NOTE: It is recommended that you FAX your letters to these offices as direct mail takes a month to be delivered because of security precautions.)

Senate
The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

House of Representatives
The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator _____

Dear Representative _____

At all other times, write to your legislator's district office or home address.

6. **If you are a constituent, begin your letter by saying so.** If you supported or voted for the legislator, say that also. If you are not a constituent, begin by explaining why you are contacting that office.
7. Write about one bill or issue in each letter.
8. **Be Brief.** One page is best. Concise letters receive better attention from Legislators and staff alike.
9. **State your Position clearly** and identify exactly what you would like your representative to do.
10. Refer to a particular piece of legislation by name and number whenever possible.
11. **Use your own words and include personal experiences** or examples which dramatize your point of view. Tell your legislator how the issue would affect you, your family, your organization or your community.
12. **Be reasonable.** Do not threaten.
13. After you have stated your views, **request a reply to your letter** which indicates your representative's position and intentions.
14. **Sign your full name and address** so that your legislator can respond. Include a phone number, as the legislator or a member of his/her staff may wish to talk with you about your communication.

If circumstances require the use of postcards or petitions, make sure you include the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all signatories. For your information:

- Postcards are not as effective as a letter, but better than no contact at all.
- Petitions are the least effective written communication, but are useful to create a send of mass support rallying behind a particular issue.

Your representatives are your voice in the Congress.

HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE!

SAMPLE LETTER FORMAT

The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives/United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515/20510

Dear Representative/Senator _____:

As your constituent, I am asking you to co-sponsor S 76, the Paycheck Fairness Act. This is a very important bill and will help equalize the pay inequities between men and women in the workplace. Although I am employed by the federal government, and not currently subject to these types of inequities under the Civil Service System, I am deeply concerned with the impact of pay inequities on women employed in private industry. In addition, I am concerned about government reform legislation that might cause this pay gap to carry into federal service.

According to research by the Census Bureau, currently there is a 17 per cent gap between average men's and women's salaries for work requiring equal skill, effort and responsibility. This bill would provide the needed enforcement tools to protect women in the workplace achieve the equal pay they have earned and deserve.

While some of the disparity is because more women take time off from work to have and raise children; research has also shown that a portion of the wage gap is attributed to gender- and race-based discrimination.

The issue of pay equity is not only a fairness issue, but a "family" issue. Many women outlive their spouses and have to rely on their own Social Security and pension benefits to support them and their families. By participating in an inequitable pay system, these women are further harmed in their retirement years because of their lower contributions into these systems throughout their long careers.

We need to correct this situation now not only for current workers, but also to help those ready to retire within a couple of years.

Again, as your constituent and one of almost one million women employed in the federal government, I ask that you add your name as a co-sponsor to this legislation, and that you help in any way you can to get it signed into law during this congressional session.

Sincerely,

MAKING PHONE CALLS TO YOUR CONGRESSPERSON

Because the legislative cycle moves at such an incredibly rapid pace, very often there is not enough time to write letters. When grassroots action is urgent, telephone calls are the only way to contact your legislators. Phone calls can also be particularly effective prior to key votes.

The following numbers can be used for every Senator or Representative or when contacting the White House:

Senate switchboard	202-224-3121
House of Representatives switchboard	202-225-3121
White House public information hotline	202-456-1111

When you telephone your legislator during a session, you will likely speak with an Aide or Secretary who will relay a detailed message. During especially busy times, you may only have the opportunity to leave a very brief message with the Staff Assistant answering the phone.

Here are some practical suggestions for **beginning your call**:

1. Identify yourself by name, address and hometown, and by any organization you may be representing.
2. Identify the bill of concern by name (e.g., Family and Medical Leave Act) and number (H.R. 2 or S. 5).
3. State your reason for calling (e.g., expressing support for a Member's position or urging the Member to vote a specific way) and ask to speak to the person who handles that issue. At this point, you may be transferred to a Staff Person immediately, or you may be asked to leave a very brief message.

If you need to leave a message, explain how the legislation affects you in one or two sentences and why you support or oppose the bill or amendment. If you would like a Staff Person to call you back, let the assistant know. Be ready to follow the suggestions below during any phone or written follow-up.

If you are transferred to a Staff Person, the following suggestions will help you make the most of your conversation:

1. Identify yourself again by name, hometown and organization.
2. Identify the bill by name and number again and explain how it affects you. Briefly describe why you support or oppose the bill or amendment.
3. Ask for your legislator's view on the bill or issue and how she/he plans to vote. Be firm in attempting to obtain a commitment to vote.

4. Remember to pause frequently and listen carefully and respectfully to what the Aide tells you about the Member's position and the issue. Congressional staff are quite knowledgeable, but they do not make decisions for the Member of Congress.
5. If your legislator requires further information, supply it as quickly as possible.
6. Do not be abusive and do not threaten your legislator.
7. Express your approval whenever possible. Always acknowledge your legislator's support on past bills.
8. When times allows, send a letter to the legislator confirming your conversation and your position on the bill discussed.

Make frequent use of this quick and easy method of lobbying.

ONE SIMPLE PHONE CALL COULD MAKE THE CRITICAL DIFFERENCE!

USING EMAIL TO CONTACT CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION

Email is another useful way to contact your congressperson or the Administration. Over the last several years, most, if not all, congressional and federal offices have public email addresses. Using email to communicate with Congress has several advantages:

- Your messages are transmitted instantaneously so that your views can be presented at the time of a critical vote on your issue.
- You can easily send copies of your letter to other advocates and friends urging them to send similar correspondence and they in turn can easily personalize the copy of your email letter and send it on their own. *

*It is illegal for government employees to use government email for lobbying efforts. Any email lobbying efforts should be done using private email. Under no circumstances should email lobbying letters be sent to other government employees at their government email addresses. Email with lobbying messages can be sent to government employees who have provided a private email address for this purpose; these again should be sent to a private email address from a private email address.

Sending an email may be considered less effective than sending a traditional letter; for some of the same reasons it is useful.

- Some offices may feel that an email represents less time and effort.
- Since emails are easy to forward, people receiving them are tempted not to personalize them before they send them to their Congressperson. Generic mail that does not reflect your own individual views or situation is less effective.

Generally sending an email will be most effective when you write it as you would traditional correspondence. You should follow the same suggestions on the preceding pages to write messages that will create the strongest impact.

If time is short, sending a very brief, one paragraph email note will probably be about as effective as a post card. If you forward a letter without modification, it may possibly be accorded similar weight as a petition would.

No matter what kind of email correspondence you send, it is critical to always include your full name and postal address, preferably at the top of your message. Most congressional offices have adequate staff only to respond to their constituents, and including your name and address will ensure the office responds promptly to your communication. Some offices will respond to your communication as you sent it—by email and many will respond via a conventional letter.

Remember, although a personalized letter is best, a quick forwarded message with your name and address is better than no message at all!

The easiest way for FEW members to contact their member of Congress is to visit our www.few.org/votervoices/. By inputting your zip code and clicking on “Go,” you will be provided with information on your elected officials and with the capability of writing an email on a topic of interest directly from the Voter Voice site. Email addresses are also available from individual offices or from the websites listed on page 25 of this handbook.

ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS

When communicating with the President and Members of Congress, use the following information and format:

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
Office of the President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President

202-456-1111 – public information hotline

The Honorable _____ United
States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator _____

202-224-3121 – Senate switchboard

The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative _____

202-225-3121 – House of Representatives Switchboard

Email addresses for your Members of Congress and various committees are available from individual offices or from the World-Wide Websites listed on pages 16, 18, and 30 of this handbook. A list of all Members with public email addresses is also available, on request, from the National Office.

VI. BECOME A RESOURCE YOURSELF

As the Regional or Chapter Legislative Chair, you are a vital extension of FEW's Legislative Program in the field. By keeping up-to-date on legislative issues, familiarizing yourself with the legislative process and players, gaining visibility in your Region or Chapter, you will become a valuable resource to both your members and the organization as a whole.

You will be responsible for

- Providing the National Office with valuable input in the form of regular reports
- Developing and organizing Regional or Chapter legislative activities and
- Establishing or maintaining active coalition efforts with organizations with similar goals and objectives.

This section includes a wealth of information to get you started. In addition, the FEW legislative staff can be contacted by email or phone, if you need assistance.

REPORTING ACTIVITIES TO NATIONAL

When conducting any national lobbying effort, it is crucial that the individual components communicate with each other.

FEW does not have the money to compete with various interest groups who employ well-financed lobbying tactics and pump millions of dollars' worth of campaign contributions into local and national politics. Our power to persuade lies in activating grassroots support for those issues that affect our members. The National Office needs your input to assess our grassroots strengths and weaknesses, and to make sure that we are honed into our members' needs and desires.

First and foremost, make sure that National has your correct name and address to include government and private email addresses and telephone numbers. This information is gathered bi-annually following National/Regional/Chapter elections. The Vice President for Congressional

Relations maintains government and private email distribution lists for communications with Regional and Chapter Legislative Chairs.

A National Legislative Directory is compiled and maintained by the Legislative Assistant.

*Please note that legislative mailings should be sent directly to the Legislative Chairs. When this material is sent to Regional Managers or Chapter Presidents, valuable time is wasted in transmission.

It is also important that you communicate your legislative activities to the National Office via Chapter Quarterly Reports or to the Vice President for Congressional Relations via email. Make it a habit to document your legislative activities in your Region or Chapter Quarterly Report or consider sending a monthly or quarterly report to the National Office or to the Vice President for Congressional Relations or National Office via email at few@few.org so that we can follow-up and publicize your efforts.

UPDATE THE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTORY

Make sure that your Chapter receives the latest details regarding pending legislative activities on Capitol Hill. Timely dissemination of information and quick response to action alerts is dependent on the information you provide.

Please fill out the attached form and FAX it to the FEW Washington Representative at 202-421-5100 or send via email tsaunders@washingtonpremiergroup.net.

NOTE: Consider having material sent out through the mail to your home address. When information is distributed through other members or sent to a P.O. Box, there is considerable down time.

CHAPTER: _____ REGION: _____

NAME/TITLE OF REGION/CHAPTER LEGISLATIVE CHAIR:

CHAIR'S FEDERAL AGENCY OR MILITARY AFFILIATION:

ADDRESS TO MAIL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

PHONE: (w) _____ (h) _____

FAX: _____

CHAIR'S WORK EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

CHAIR'S HOME/PRIVATE EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

* For FEW lobbying activities; use of federal email for lobbying is strictly prohibited.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY REPORT

NAME: _____ TITLE: _____

CHAPTER: _____ REGION: _____

FOR THE PERIOD COVERING: _____

Identify the type(s) of lobbying activity/activities that you have been involved in and fill out the corresponding sections below.

Type of activity:

DATE: _____ 1. Communication with Member of Congress
DATE: _____ 2. Legislative Training Activity
DATE: _____ 3. Communication with Media
DATE: _____ 4. Voter Registration Activity

1. Describe your communication with a member(s) of Congress.

Name of Senator/Representative: _____

Representing: State: _____ District: _____

Name/Title of Staff Contact: _____

Type of Communication: _____ Personal Visit
_____ Washington, D.C., office
_____ District Office
_____ Written Correspondence (Attach copy)
_____ Chapter Letter
_____ Individual Letter
_____ Postcard/Petition Campaign
_____ Telephone Contact
_____ Chapter Letter
_____ Individual Letter
_____ Email Contact
_____ Original Letter
_____ Forwarded/Letter
_____ Brief Note
_____ Sign-on or Petition

Number of Participants: _____

Issues Addressed/Comment _____

2. Describe your legislative training activity.

Type of Training Activity: _____

Occasion: _____

Number of Participants: Members: _____ Non-Members _____

Topic(s)/Focus: _____

Name/Title of Facilitator: _____

3. Describe your communication with the media.

Type of Contact: _____ Press Conference

_____ Press

Release Date: _____ Interview

Name of Media Source: _____

Targeted Audience: _____

Topic/Purpose: _____

Resultant Press Coverage: _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, describe and attach clippings: _____

Coordination with other Organizations: _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, names of Organizations: _____

4. Describe your voter registration activity.

Type of Activity: _____ Postcard Registration Drive

_____ Deputy Registration Drive

Date: _____ Door-to-Door Drive

_____ Get-Out-the Vote Drive

Location: _____

Number of Participants: _____

Number of Voters Registered: _____

Coordination with other Organizations: _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, Name(s) of Organizations: _____

ORGANIZING LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

The development and scheduling of legislative activities is one of your most important responsibilities as a Legislative Chair. Identifying issues and giving priorities (i.e., visibility) to FEW's Legislative Program and FEW's Legislative Agenda is an essential part of encouraging grassroots participation in the legislation process.

Legislative activities can take a wide variety of forms. There are several things you should keep in mind:

1. Believe it or not, most people are not aware of the legislation that impacts their workplace and their family. In the rush of our busy daily lives, keeping up with legislative activities (which are constantly changing) does not always rank as a top priority. However, once an individual is convinced that they need to pay attention and that their efforts, sometimes as little as voting on Election Day, can make a difference in making change, most will respond.
2. The legislative process can be intimidating to many people. Let's face it: the last time most of us paid attention to the semantics of policy making was in Government Civics class in high school. Frequently, the only time we ever hear about legislation from the mass media is after the fact, when it is too late to affect the outcome.
3. You know your membership best. Be sure to develop and organize events that are both attractive and informative. Regardless of how much time you put into planning an excellent event, you need an audience to make it work.
4. Remember that legislative action and activities can also generate membership. Make sure you consider ways to advertise your activities to reach those thousands of non-members who need to be convinced that FEW is working for them, too.
5. Be inclusive. FEW's strength lies in its diversity and it is this diversity that is vital in building coalitions, expanding FEW's lobbying efforts, and in reaching FEW's legislative goals.

If you remember these facts when you are developing your legislative calendars for the year, you are bound to generate interest, and the action and stamina needed to successfully impact the legislation that affects you.

Several activities are listed below:

Identify the Issues

At the beginning of each fiscal year, it is useful for a Chapter to review FEW's Legislative Agenda. Since there are multiple areas that affect federally employed women, it is important to provide general information on the entire Agenda, and then following the guidance from the National Office*, provide more specific information as needed. National and local interests may vary dependent on current events in the Congress, and parochial interests and events in your Region and Chapter.

Regularly Communicate with Your Members

As the Legislative Chair, you are the only person in your Region or Chapter that regularly receives legislative information from the National Office. It is up to you to distribute this information in a timely manner. If FEW information is mailed to their homes, you can provide information you receive in this manner. Another option is to establish a home/private email distribution list of your Chapter membership, and distribute legislative information you receive via this distribution list. *

Along with your semi-monthly legislative report, you will receive a summary and status report of legislative activities in the Congress entitled “Legislative Highlights for (month/year).” This summary is designed so you can quickly and conveniently include important legislative information in your Region or Chapter’s newsletter. If your Region or Chapter does not currently publish a newsletter, consider starting one. Regular communication is always appreciated, especially by those members that are not able to attend every meeting or event. In addition, for legislative purposes, a local newsletter may be published more frequently than FEW’s bi-monthly newspaper *News & Views* and contain a more personal focus.

In addition to written communication, make sure you provide a legislative report at every meeting. On each and every occasion where members and non-members gather, you should display at a minimum, legislative brochures, FEW’s Legislative Agenda and make copies of the most recent Legislative Highlights summary and Legislative Fact Sheets available.

* For FEW lobbying activities; use of federal email for lobbying is strictly prohibited.

Congressional Visit

As explained in the previous section entitled “Visiting Your Congressperson,” organizing face-to-face communication with your elected officials is a very effective means of lobbying. Remember, every Member of Congress maintains offices in Washington, D.C., and District offices back home. If you are ever in Washington, D.C., contact the Washington Representative to arrange to visit Capitol Hill.

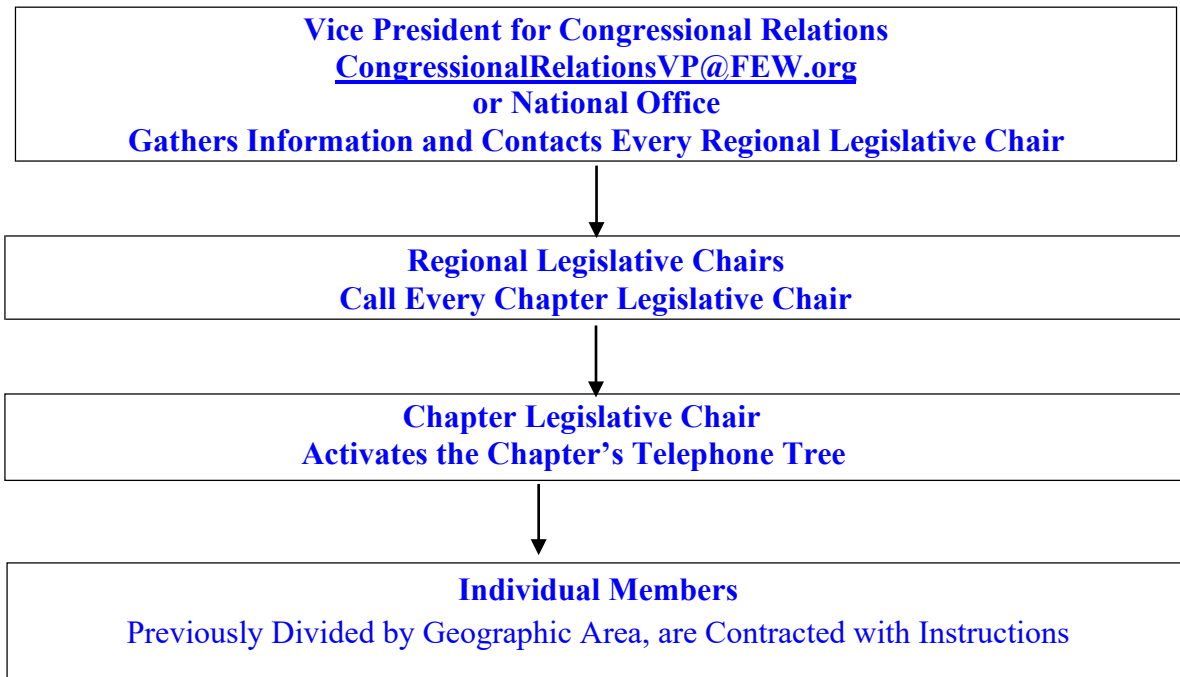
Letter Writing Campaigns

In response to Action Alerts, the most effective means of lobbying Congress is writing personal correspondence to your representatives. Sample letters on various legislative issues are generated by the National Office and will be placed on the FEW grassroots Voter Voice website. Simply send your letters to legislators from this site automatically.

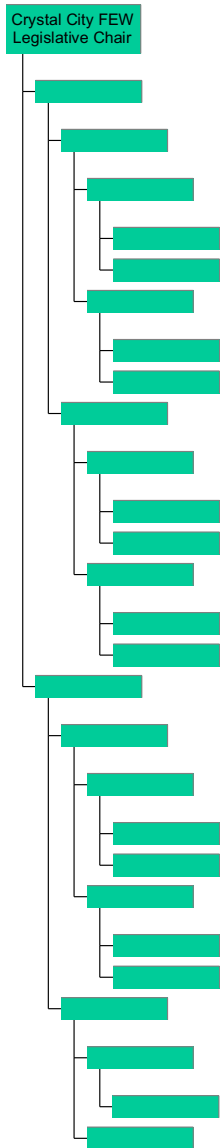
Although form letters, postcards, emails or petitions “get the message across,” short personal notes are more effective in impacting a policy-maker’s position. Some sample letters on the website will be drafted in such a way as to give participants the option to personalize their correspondence.

Establish a Phone Tree

Every Region and Chapter must have a mechanism with which to contact their members within a short time frame. Frequently legislative activities require very quick turnaround time, especially prior to key votes. The structure of a telephone tree is designed to efficiently distribute information without overburdening anyone.



Each member is responsible for contacting a small number of members who in turn are responsible for contacting even more and so on. You will need to keep a membership directory updated for your telephone tree to work effectively. No one person should ever be responsible for contacting everyone. The following is an excellent example from the Crystal City, Virginia, FEW Chapter, of the possible structure of a phone tree that you can adapt for your members simply by putting a name and telephone number into each box.



Use Email for Inexpensive, Rapid Communication

As you keep your membership directory up-to-date, make sure to include both government **and home/private** email addresses for all members who have them. While email may not replace the telephone for all members, it is far faster than conventional mail for delivering alerts, updates and written materials. By using email to distribute some of your correspondence, you can save both money and time on copying costs, envelopes, and postage and folding and stuffing envelopes or making individual calls.

Also, by using the FEW grassroots website, your letters are automatically sent in the form most desired by the legislator's office (i.e., email or FAX).

Please note that your agency or department may prohibit use of government equipment for personal correspondence of communications between the Legislative Chair and FEW members. It is important that you and your members know and comply with the relevant rules of your agency. And again, federal law prohibits use of government resources for lobbying activities; **Legislative Chairs should never send any requests for lobbying activity over government email.** Information on current legislation and government activities may be sent over the email, depending on the rules of your agency.

Legislative Breakfasts

Since only a small group will be able to meet personally with any elected official, it is important to schedule events which enable the entire membership, as well as non-members, access to their representatives. The National Office has been extremely effective in developing a series of "Legislative Breakfasts on the Hill" which invite members and non-members in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area to meet and communicate with key members of Congress. Participants are provided with a full meal and invited guests are asked to make a brief speech and participate in a question and answer session. The cost of the event can be absorbed by the Region or Chapter, entirely passed onto the participants, or can be inflated to generate profit. (An in-depth guide to planning this type of event is available from the National Office.)

Regional/Chapter Training Programs

As Legislative Chair, it is your responsibility to ensure that a legislative workshop is part of the training program at the Regional or Chapter level. You should already possess most of the information that you will need to conduct this event or to find a suitable facilitator that will adequately and accurately represent FEW's position on legislative issues. If you need assistance or a facilitator, please contact the Washington Representative or the Vice President for Congressional Relations.

Voter Registration

Voter Registration and voter education are an important part of the FEW legislative program. Registering voters is permissible under the Hatch Act. The Federal Election Commission has a website with a voter registration form which can be used in a little more than half of the states: www.fec.gov/. This same website provides information on obtaining voter registration forms from the other states.

It is recommended that registration activities be held in the summer and fall in conjunction with FEW events or with events sponsored by coalition organizations or other related events in your local area.

For more information on holding voter registration activities, refer to FEW's Voter Registration Guide, which can be obtained from the National Office, **from the FEW website**, or by contacting the Vice President for Congressional Relations.

BUILDING COALITIONS

There is much truth to the old adage "there is strength in numbers." It is very likely that other local federal labor unions, employee organizations, or women's organizations are working on similar efforts in the legislative arena. It is important to make contact, schedule joint meetings or events, and share information and strategies. The following is a list of several of the larger organizations with similar national Legislative Agenda. Locate the local chapters in your area.

Federal Labor Unions and Employee Organizations

American Federal of Government Employees (AFGE)
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
Blacks in Government (BIG)
Federal Asian Pacific American Coalition (FAPAC)
Federal Manager's Association (FMA)
Federal Women's Interagency Board (FWIB)
Federal Gay, Lesbian, and Bi-sexual) (GLOBE)
National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE)
National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE)
National IMAGE (federal Hispanic employee organization)
National Treasury Employees' Union (NTEU)
Public Employees Roundtable (PER)
Professional Manager's Association (PMA)

National Women's Organizations

American Association of University Women (AAUW)
Black Women's Agenda
Business and Professional Women (BPW)
Commission for Women (most states have one)
Feminist Majority
General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC)
League of Women Voters (LWV)
Mexican American Women's National Association (MANA)
National Council for Negro Women (NCNW)
National Council for Jewish Women (NCJW)
National Organization for Women (NOW)
National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC) 9 to 5
Older Women's League (OWL)
Organization for Chinese/American Women Organization for Pan/Asian Women
YWCA of the USA
Young Government Leaders

Special Interest Organizations

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

Human Rights Campaign Fund

Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law

National Association of Developmental Disabilities Councils (NADDC)

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Rights

USING THE MEDIA

Using the print and/or broadcast media is an effective way of publicizing your legislative activities, gaining visibility for the Region or Chapter, and increasing your political clout in the community. Press releases and press conferences can get your messages across not only to current and potential members, but to your members of Congress, and state and local elected officials as well.

Issuing press releases on Chapter activities such as the election of new officers, meetings dates, training sessions, or voter registration drives keeps the local community informed about the activities of FEW. Media articles (either print, radio, or local television) on the plight of women in local agencies or reactions to national issues (such as the passage or defeat of an important piece of legislation) educate the public on FEW's positions.

Letters to the Editor on either national or local issues can also effectively influence public opinion. Regular media communications will also encourage local reporters to turn to your Region or Chapter for information on a wide variety of issues. Also, go to the FEW grassroots website (www.few.org/votervoices/) for easy access to your local papers.

Federal employees constantly bear the brunt of negative media attention. It is up to us to generate media events and input that demonstrates the vast resources and expertise of career civil servants.

A sample press release has been enclosed for your information. Is the press release included in the Handbook? I don't see it here.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Act—A bill that has passed through the legislative process and become law; e.g., the Family and Medical Leave Act. Acts are designated as Public Laws and given numbers; e.g., the Act above is designated as P.L. 103-03.

Amendment—A proposal to change the language of a bill.

Appropriations Bill—A bill reported out of the House or Senate Appropriations Committee which assigns government funds to spending bills.

Authorization Bill—Authorizes a program, specifies its general aim and conduct, and unless “open ended,” puts a ceiling on monies that can be used to finance it.

Bill—A legislative proposal introduced by a Member of Congress. Bills are designated as H.R. _____ (House of Representatives) or S. _____ (Senate) according to the body in which they are introduced, and assigned numbers according to the order in which they are introduced.

Budget Resolution—Concurrent resolutions of the House and Senate, which prescribe spending limits in the various areas of government activity.

Calendar—An agenda for pending legislative business.

Cloture—The process by which a filibuster can be ended in the Senate requiring sixteen (16) Senate signatures for introduction and the votes of three-fifths of the entire Senate membership (60 if there are no vacancies).

Committee—A subdivision of the House or Senate which prepares legislation for action by the parent chamber or makes investigations as directed. Most standing committees are divided into subcommittees, which study legislation, hold hearings, and report their recommendations to the full committee.

Conference Committee—A special committee formed to reconcile differences between differing versions of a bill passed by the House and Senate. Conference committee members are appointed from the bill’s sponsoring committees in each house.

Congressional Record—The daily printed account of the proceedings of the House and Senate.

Filibuster—A delaying tactic used by a minority in an effort to prevent a vote on a bill that probably will pass if brought to a vote. The method is most frequently used in the Senate.

Hearings—House and Senate committee sessions in which testimony regarding legislation is taken from interested parties.

Joint Committee—A committee composed of Members of both the House and Senate.

Law—An act of Congress which has been signed by the President or passed over his veto by Congress; e.g., the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (H.R. 2) became Public Law 103-03 during the 103rd Congress.

Marking up a Bill—The process of revising a bill in committee or subcommittee.

Omnibus Bill—A bill containing several separate but related items; e.g., the Economic Equity Act of 1993 contains over 26 bills.

Override a Veto—If the President disapproves a bill and sends it back to Congress, Congress may override the veto by a two-thirds vote in each house; the bill then becomes law over the President's objections.

Quorum—The required minimum number of Members present for the House or Senate to conduct official business; 51 in the Senate and 218 in the House.

Reconciliation—The process through which the Congress enforces a Budget Resolution. Reconciliation requires the authorizing and appropriations committees to spend within the Resolution's prescribed limits.

Rule—Instructions on the time and substance of debate on a bill, attached to the bill when reported out to the floor by the House Rules.

Open Rule—allows unlimited debate/amendments.

Limited Rule—only debate/amendments by Members of the sponsoring committees within a limited time frame.

Closed Rule—House or Senate must either accept or reject the bill as recommended by the sponsoring committee.

Suspension of the Rules—Either chamber of Congress may suspend its usual rules on the first and third Monday of each month and during the last six days of a session, if two-thirds of a quorum vote affirmatively. In these circumstances, a bill may be brought up immediately and acted upon. Debate on the bill is limited to 20 minutes for and against, and no amendments are required.

Veto—Rejection of a bill by the President.

Voice Vote—In either house, members answer "aye" or "nay" in chorus, and the presiding officer decides the result. No actual record of individual votes is documented.

Federally Employed Women

“Working for the Advancement of Women in the Government”



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