



---

# CHW Advocacy Coalition: Overview of the Legislative Process

*Presented by:*

*Deb Polun*

*Community Health Center Association of Connecticut*



# Three Branches of Government

**The Executive Branch: The Governor and his Agencies and Departments**

**The Legislative Branch: The Connecticut General Assembly, composed of the State House of Representatives and State Senate**

**The Judicial Branch: System of State Courts**



# Executive Branch

## Governor Ned Lamont

- Elected in 2018 and re-elected in 2022
- Proposes a budget
- Appoints commissioners and other agency heads
- Sets the vision

## Other executive branch agencies of note:

- Department of Social Services
- Department of Public Health
- Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services
- Office of Policy & Management



# Legislative Branch

## State House of Representatives:

- 151 members, each representing approximately 23,000 people
- Serve 2-year terms
- Currently: 101-49, Democratic control

## State Senate:

- 36 members, each representing approximately 100,000 people
- Serve 2-year terms
- Currently: 25-10, Democratic control



Find your legislator here!  
[www.cga.ct.gov](http://www.cga.ct.gov)



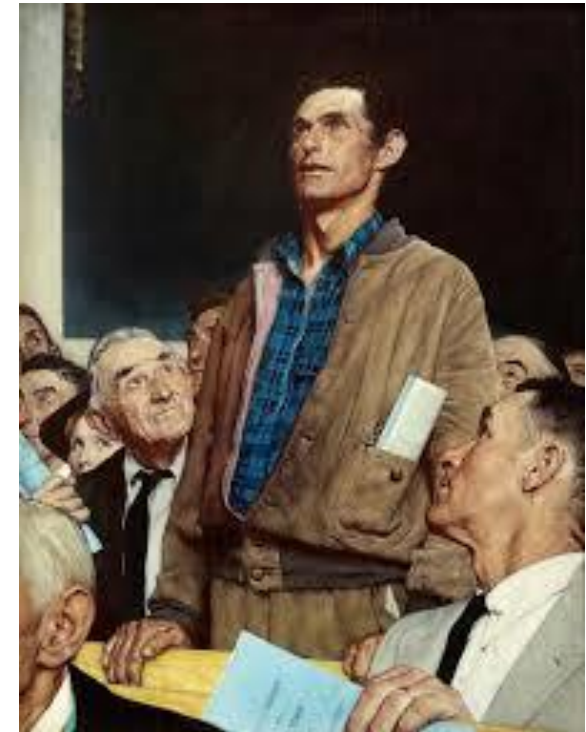
# How a Bill Becomes a Law

- **Concepts are introduced by legislators and the governor and crafted into bills. They will be either House bills or Senate bills.**
- **Bills are assigned to the most relevant legislative committee. Committees are “joint” committees.**
- **You can call, email, or write to your legislators with your opinions about bills.**
- **Committees determine what bills will be raised for public hearing.**
- **Public hearings are an opportunity to voice your opinion in front of relevant committees.**



# More about Public Hearings

- The legislative bulletin is published daily and includes information about public hearings. Information must be published 5 days prior to the hearing.
- Instructions are in the bulletin about how to sign up to speak and/or submit written “testimony.”
- Your written testimony can be one paragraph, or several pages – up to you!
- Spoken (oral) testimony is limited to three minutes. Legislators may then ask questions (or not).
- Usually, the first hour of a hearing is reserved for Commissioners and other public officials.
- There are options to provide oral testimony remotely or in person.





# What's next?

- After a public hearing, bills are eligible for a Committee vote up until the Committee's deadline.
- You can still call, email, or write to your legislators about the bill – even after the public hearing!
- The Committee can pass the bill as-is, amend it, or let it die. It can pass it to another Committee or straight to the House or Senate (depending on the bill number).
- The House or Senate decides whether or not to vote on that bill.
- Once a bill passes one chamber, it is sent to the other chamber.
- If it passes both chambers, it is sent to the governor for his signature.



# Important Dates

- **January 8: Session begins, Committees begin meeting**
- **February 5: Governor's budget proposal is released**
- **February 11-26(?): Appropriations Committee public hearings on governor's budget proposal**
- **February-April: Committees have public hearings on policy ideas proposed by the governor and by legislators**
- **June 4: End of session**
- **July 1: Start of state fiscal year**

## Committee deadlines of note:

- **Human Services: March 20**
- **Appropriations: April 25**





# Getting Involved

- Learn who your legislators are!
- Develop a relationship with them. Call or email them, invite them to visit your organization, ask for a meeting!
- Make sure they leave with an understanding of your issue and know what your ask is.
- Provide testimony (written and oral) at public hearings.
- Be in touch with them “off session,” when they have more time.



Find your legislator here!  
[www.cga.ct.gov](http://www.cga.ct.gov)



# CHW Reimbursement

- **Whether you are a CHW, employ CHWs, or have been helped by a CHW – your voice is needed!**
- **We have not yet seen a bill to provide reimbursement for CHWs – but we still have time!**
- **We will also ask the Appropriations Committee to include funding in the budget.**
- **Help us make the case!!**



# Thank you for your advocacy!

If you have questions, reach out to me at [dpolun@chcact.org](mailto:dpolun@chcact.org) or 860.878.7760.

