ADVOCACY GLOSSARY

One of the most confusing things for new advocates to deal with is government terminology. This glossary contains terms commonly used in advocacy and the lawmaking process.

Administrative Advocacy: An attempt to influence policies within the executive branch such as agency rulemakings, grant programs, or agency budgets. Also known as "regulatory advocacy."

Advocacy: Speaking out on issues of concern. This can mean something as formal as sitting down and talking to a legislator; as intensive as engaging in efforts to change laws or policies; or as simple as telling other members about the impact of a law.

Amendment: A legislative change to a bill or motion, sometimes replacing the entire bill (called a "substitution"). An amendment is debated and voted on in the same manner as a bill.

Appropriations: Basically, a fancy word for budget. A legislature's appropriations committee will craft a bill that lays out how the overall government's money should be spent for a given time period (usually a fiscal year), which is then voted on by the legislature and signed into law by the president or governor. Often, these bills are huge, and contain many "riders." At the federal level, these budgets also determine the overall spending level for each appropriations bill.

Authorization: Legislation that formally establishes a program or activity and sets its funding limit. Authorizations are often for a limited time (3-5 years typically), and programs must be periodically "re-authorized," often with changes.

Bill: Legislation drafted for consideration by the legislature. Bills usually must be formally filed and given an identifying number (H.R. 1007 is the one thousand and seventh bill filed in the House of Representatives in a given Congress. S. 234 would indicate a Senate bill).

Chamber: At the Federal level, either the House of Representatives (House) or the Senate.

Committee: Both chambers have a number of these panels that formally review existing law and formulate new laws for consideration of the full chamber. They conduct hearings to review and develop laws within their jurisdiction. Generally, legislation must pass in a committee before the entire chamber can vote on it. Committees often schedule public hearings to discuss legislative issues. In the House, most action takes place at the subcommittee level.

Committee of Jurisdiction – Each chamber has divided federal laws into subgroups, such as agriculture or healthcare and assigned them to specific committee. Such a term is used to designate a specific committee has been given primary responsibility for reviewing specific laws. Frequently jurisdictions seem to overlap but really do not because sub-issues are based on different laws.

Congressional Record: The official transcript of federal House and Senate proceedings. Often includes statements by members that are added directly into the record, and not fully read on the floor in the interest of saving time.

Conference Committee: The House and Senate appoint members to a conference committee to resolve differences between versions of legislation passed by both bodies. Both chambers then vote the combined legislation, which is called a "conference report."

Continuing Resolution: Legislation passed by both chambers that allows the executive branch (agencies) to continue operating in the absence of a budget. They usually occur after the fiscal year starts each October 1. In past years, several continuing resolutions have been needed before a federal budget was finally passed.

Cosponsor: When a legislator supports a bill, but is not the primary sponsor, they may sign their name onto the bill as a cosponsor to show their support. Legislation can sometimes have hundreds of cosponsors.

Direct Lobbying: To present a case for or against a specific piece of legislation, and to ask a legislator to vote a certain way.
**District:** The geographic area from which a U.S House member or state legislator is elected.

**Executive Order:** An action by the President or a Governor that has the legal authority of a law, often dealing with regulations or the workings of agencies.

**Filibuster:** Delaying tactic used in the US Senate by the minority in an effort to prevent the passage of a bill or amendment and particularly effective right before a 'recess' or before the Senate adjourns for the year. The Senate's rules allow for unlimited debate in some situations, unless a 2/3 vote to end debate passes. A filibuster results when one or more Senators continue "debating" for as long as possible (sometimes for days).

**Germane or Germaneness** – Used to indicate whether an amendment or bill is directly related to one currently under consideration.

**Grassroots Lobbying:** Stating a position on a specific legislative proposal to the public, then asking the public to urge their legislator to support that stated position. Nonprofits are limited in the amount they can spend on grassroots lobbying.

**Hearing:** A meeting where specific issues are explored through witness testimony and personal points of view can be presented to a committee. Usually held in conjunction with the consideration of a specific bill and can include experts on a specific topic or members of the public who would be affected by the bill or issue at hand.

**House:** The lower body of the Congress, and most state legislatures. House members are elected to represent a geographic district. The US House (with 435 voting members and five nonvoting delegates) is much larger than the Senate (with 100 voting members), as is the case in most states.

**Information Advocacy:** Activities to either provide, or ensure the provision of, information that can be used to shape policy.

**Judicial Advocacy:** Working for policy change through the justice branch, either by lawsuits, friend of the court briefs, or providing information for legal cases. Also includes efforts to promote a more just an equitable legal system, which may also include legislative advocacy.

**Legislative Advocacy:** Efforts to change policy through the legislative branch. This may include formal lobbying in support or opposition to a bill, the crafting of new legislative language, writing amendments to existing bills, or encouraging others to contact their legislators.

**Lobbying:** Expressing a position on a pending piece of legislation to legislators and their staff.

**Mark up:** The process of amending a legislative proposal in a committee or subcommittee hearing. Committee members can offer amendments, which if successful, are incorporated into a particular bill. Legislation may be drastically changed during mark up.

**Majority Leader:** The leader of the majority party in the Senate who is elected by his or her peers. In the House, the Majority Leader is the second in command after the Speaker of the House and is also elected to that post by his/her peers.

**Minority Leader:** Leader of the minority party in the House and Senate who is elected by members of his or her party.

**Omnibus Bill:** A bill related to a specific area that covers many issues or topics. Often, the federal budget is an omnibus bill that deals with many agencies' budgets at once. Frequently, the last bill passed in a given year.

**Public Law:** After a bill passes both the House and the Senate and is signed by the president, it becomes a public law.

**Reauthorization:** Most Federal laws need to be reaffirmed by the Committees of jurisdiction and Congress as a whole every 3-5 years.

**Regulation:** A rule or order that has the force of law that originates from the executive branch (usually from an agency), and deals with the specifics of a program. These are the agencies interpretation of recently passed law and illustrate in detail how a law will affect the relevant industry on a daily basis. Congress, for example, may instruct EPA to reduce automotive emissions by 5%, but the EPA must develop regulations to reach this goal.
**Rider:** An amendment to an appropriations bill which may not actually deal with the allocation of government funds.

**Roll Call:** A formal vote on a bill or amendment taken by each legislator announcing "yea" "no" or "present" as their name is read by the clerk.

**Senate:** The upper body of the Congress, and most state legislatures. Each state has two US Senators, elected at-large, to serve six-year terms, with one-third of the seats up for re-election every two years. In state legislatures, Senators usually represent larger geographic areas than House members.

**Speaker of the House:** The "leader" of the House of Representatives, elected by the majority party. The speaker controls the calendar and other aspects of the House's activities.

**Sponsor:** One or more legislators who are the primary writers of a bill. All bills must have at least one sponsor, but many have more than one primary sponsor, and a number of cosponsors as well.

**Subcommittee:** A part of a committee that deals with a specific issue within the committee's jurisdiction (such as the Health Subcommittee of the House Energy & Commerce Committee). In the House, most legislation is first developed and voted on at this level, as a full committee will usually not consider legislation until it has passed its subcommittee.

**Voice Vote:** Voting on a bill by acclimation, or asking those in favor to say "yea" and those opposed to say "no." Usually, only non-controversial legislation without any "no" votes is passed this way (such as renaming post offices), but a voice vote will sometimes be taken before a roll call vote.

**Whip:** Senator or Representative who serves as an internal lobbyist and vote counter for the Republican or Democratic party. It is their job to know what position each member will take in a given vote and know what issues are most important to a particular member. While the whip is an official position, other members may act as a whip for specific legislation or issues.