

## Gearing Up for Advocacy:

A Toolkit for the Government Affairs Committee  
Illinois State Council  
Emergency Nurses Association



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## Introduction

The efforts of ENA and the Illinois ENA members and other grassroots advocates are critical to the work the national ENA is doing to advance the principles of Safe Practice, Safe Care to support advancements on the emergency nursing profession. State lawmakers and agency officials have jurisdiction over many laws and regulations regarding issues like: workplace violence, emergency nursing scope of practice, access to mental health and substance abuse treatment services, and emergency department staffing standards. (National ENA Government Affairs Toolkit for GAC Chairs, 2019).

The Illinois ENA GAC toolkit patterned from the National ENA Government Affairs Toolkit for Government Affairs Committee (GAC) Chairs is designed to assist the IL GA Committee in its activities throughout their term. It includes information on roles and responsibilities, how to shape Illinois ENA's government relations activities, and how to maximize the impact of IL's government relations efforts by energizing and guiding IL ENA members to advocate on behalf of themselves and their patients.

## Explore Legislative Resources

The Government Affairs Chair and committee members should visit and familiarize themselves with the state legislature's website (<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/>), which is a great source of information regarding legislation and state policy. There, one will find information that will assist the GA Committee members in researching bills or getting to know the state representatives, such as:

- ✓ Contact information for state legislators, including biographies, office locations, and staff. Some may even offer complete rosters for the entire legislature for download;
- ✓ Updated legislative calendar information while the legislature is in session;
- ✓ Committee information, including hearings and other meetings; and
- ✓ Bill Tracking that provides alerts about specific pieces of legislation and/or committee activity.

## Government Relations Programs and Resources

ENA advocates on federal legislative and regulatory issues affecting emergency nurses and patients. ENA's Government Relations team:

- Meets with elected officials on Capitol Hill
- Tracks federal legislation affecting emergency nurses
- Engages in the rulemaking process for programs and policies affecting emergency nurses
- Spearheads grassroots lobbying efforts through the EN411 Action Network
- Tracks emergency medical and nursing-related legislation in all 50 states
- Work closely with leaders at the state level to identify, review, track an advocate for legislative initiatives
- Actively seeks opportunities for members to influence the lawmaking process at the state level-through grassroots campaigns or testifying in front of lawmakers in the state capitol

Advocacy is more than just understanding the issues. To make a difference, we need to make our voices heard. The involvement of individual emergency nurses is vital to the success of ENA's grassroots efforts. ENA provides the following services and information:

**Advocacy Packets:** contain material to assist ENA members in developing collaborative strategies to educate colleagues and legislators on topical issues affecting emergency nursing. The information packets are provided prior to Day on the Hill and the leave-behind folders of the "Asks" are distributed during the Day on the Hill workshop.

**Action Alerts:** They are quick and easy way for members to contact their legislators about a specific issue, bill, or vote. ENA Government Relations will provide members with a sample letter that can be sent directly to the legislators. When possible, it is always recommended that these communications be personalize.

**EN411 Action Network:** Established to strengthen the voice of emergency nurses in the legislative and regulatory process. Members of the EN411 Action Network are the first to hear about important opportunities to engage with policymakers through ENA's Action Alerts. They also receive a monthly newsletter highlighting news, issues, and legislation impacting emergency nursing.

Members of the IL ENA Government Affairs Committee are expected to join the EN411 Action Network. A link can be found on the ENA Government Relations webpage.

## State Policy Priorities and the ENA Public Policy Agenda

From the start, it is important to recognize that all the state's government relations duties should be performed in a coordinated manner, in line with the priorities set forth by the GAC Chair and the State Council. The specific priorities should reflect ENA's national priorities as laid out in the most current Public Policy Agenda (<https://www.ena.org/government-relations/public-policy-agenda>), as well as issues specific to Illinois.

### ENA State Policy Priorities

Many efforts to advance ENA's policy goals occur at the state level. Therefore, it is recommended that the state council focus its government relations work in the state. Some of ENA's priority issues can be found at <https://www.ena.org/government-relations>

### Identifying Illinois' State Policy Priorities

To enhance the IL state government relations program, a policy agenda for IL should be developed. Illinois ENA's Public Policy Agenda shall mirror national ENA's Public Policy Agenda.

A policy agenda is a critical tool used to communicate ENA's and IL ENA's priorities to advocates, ILENA members, state officials, lawmakers, and other stakeholders. It can be as easy as making a list of 3 to 5 policy goals that make it clear what priorities the IL State Council has for a given year or legislative session.

How do we do this? First, let us consider the policy landscape in our state. Look at the ENA legislative priorities found the ENA Public Policy and Legislative Agenda and determine where IL ENA stands on these priorities, such as workplace violence, nursing practice authority, funding for trauma centers. General priorities should be established for each legislative session. Keep in mind that often, priorities might shift or be influenced by other developments that can open up new opportunities for engagement that may not have been identified specifically. Being flexible will help the state council to capitalize on opportunities when they arise

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## Why is Bill Tracking Important?

Success in implementing the Illinois state policy agenda depends on being informed. Staying on top of the progress of the legislation the IL State Council supports or opposes is a critical function of the members of the GA committee led by the GA Chair. The sponsor and cosponsors of the legislation we support is the starting point for developing champions for future efforts. Tracking a bill's progress will help the GAC to identify lawmakers who are important targets for relationship development. When a bill that the IL GAC is scheduled for hearing in a committee, the GAC members as well as other ENA members might seek to schedule a meeting with members of the legislative committee who may not have declared support for the bill to inform them of ENA's support for the issue. IL GAC members and other ENA members can reach out to the Legislative Committee to potentially speak as a witness or file written testimony on behalf of IL ENA for consideration by the committee prior to a vote.

## Which Bills Should be Tracked?

After priorities for the year has been established, the next step is identifying bills that the State Council can support, oppose, or seek to have introduced. The State Council will collaborate with ANA-Illinois on which bills impact emergency nursing.

Regardless of what bills the State Council end up supporting or opposing, the following tips may help narrow it down:

- Review the most current ENA Public Policy Agenda for potential ideas for legislation as a starting point.
- Seek legislation that accomplishes the State Council's policy priority but is simple in nature, avoiding complicated legislation that provides many opportunities for failure.
- Work with like-minded groups or coalition partners to help identify bills to track.
- Be on the lookout for bills that might be harmful to emergency nurses or the patients you serve. Flag these for tracking as well.
- Keep in mind that some bills may not be directly related to IL ENA's priorities but may present for engagement, such as legislation that establishes a task force on trauma care, or a bill that would enter the state into the APRN Compact.

Once the GA Committee identifies a bill to support or oppose, it must be discussed with the IL ENA Board for approval. Once approved by the IL ENA Board, only then will the GA Chair notify

the ENA Government Relations Team at [gov@ena.org](mailto:gov@ena.org). Once notified, ENA Government Relations will begin tracking the legislation's progress and provide regular updates on the bill's status. The ENA Government Relations Team can also provide strategic and technical support, including assistance drafting materials in support or opposition to legislation.

## Getting to Know the State Government

Each state has a popularly-elected governor, who serves as the chief executive officer for the state. Governors are responsible for overseeing the implementation of state laws, as well as the state's executive branch. Governors also make many appointments within state agencies, boards, task forces, etc., including the leadership of each state agency. In a legislative role, the governor works with the state legislature to pass laws and confirm appointees, but also have the authority to veto bills passed by the legislature.

In Illinois, the governor can exercise the veto power in four different ways: a total veto, an amendatory veto, an item veto and a reduction veto.

In a **total veto**, the governor vetoes the entire bill. The General Assembly has two options:

- The General Assembly can do nothing, and the bill is dead.
- The General Assembly can **override the veto with a vote by a three-fifths majority** of the members in each chamber. The bill then becomes a law in the form in which the bill was originally sent to the governor.

**Amendatory** veto (applicable to substantive bills only). In an amendatory veto, the governor makes specific recommendations for changes to the bill. Included with an amendatory veto is a "veto message" indicating that the governor would sign the bill if the recommended changes were made. The General Assembly has three options:

- The General Assembly can do nothing, and the bill is considered dead.
- The General Assembly can **override the veto with a vote by a three-fifths majority** of the members of each chamber. The bill then becomes a law in the form in which the bill was originally sent to the governor.
- The General Assembly can **agree with the recommendations made by the governor by a simple majority** vote in each of the chambers. The bill then becomes law, as amended by the governor. However, should the governor issue the amendatory veto after May 31 and the changes have an immediate effective date, the recommendations require a three-fifths majority vote in both chambers in order to pass. If the effective date is the next fiscal year, the changes only require a simple majority to pass.

**Item veto** (applicable to appropriations bills only). The governor may veto any item of an appropriations bill. An item veto allows the governor to change a bill if the governor basically approves of it but finds some parts of the legislation unacceptable. The portions of the bill that are not vetoes become law. The General Assembly has two options:

- The General Assembly can do nothing. The portions of the bill that were not vetoed become law, and the items the governor vetoed are stripped from the bill and considered dead.
- The General Assembly can **override the item veto with a vote by three-fifths majority** of the members of each chamber. The bill then becomes law in the form in which the bill was originally sent to the governor.

**Reduction Veto** (applicable to appropriations bills only). A reduction veto allows the governor to reduce any amount of an item in an appropriations bill. A reduction item veto allows the governor the option of changing a bill if the governor basically approves of it but finds some parts unacceptable. The portions of the bill that were not reduced become law. The General Assembly has two options:

- The General Assembly can do nothing. The portions of the bill that were not reduced become law, and the items the governor reduced become law in the reduced amounts.
- The General Assembly can **override the item veto with a vote by three-fifths majority** of the members of each chamber. The bill then becomes law in the form in which the bill was originally sent to the governor.

### Overriding a gubernatorial veto

If the General Assembly disagrees with the governor's total veto, amendatory veto or item veto, the General Assembly can override the veto by a vote of three-fifths of the members elected to each of the Illinois House of Representatives and the Illinois Senate.

**State agencies**, such as departments of public health, mental health, boards of nursing, etc. will have authority over policies and programs affecting emergency nurses and their patients.

Forty-nine of fifty states have a **bicameral legislature**, which includes an upper chamber (Senate) and a lower chamber (often either the House of Representatives or Assembly). Nebraska, with its **unicameral** legislature, serves as the exception. Members of the State Council, starting with the members of the GAC, should familiarize themselves with the state's legislative leadership, including Speaker of the House, Majority and Minority Leaders in both



chambers, President of the Senate, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, etc. It is important to know who holds positions of leadership (Chair/Vice Chair/**Ranking Member**) on relevant committees that drive our legislative agenda including, but not limited to: Health, Judiciary, Appropriations, and Budget. Each member should know who their own State Representatives and Senators and engage with them.

<b>The 2020 Legislative Leadership</b>			
<u>House</u>		<u>Senate</u>	
<b>Speaker:</b>	<b>Michael Madigan (D)</b>	<b>President:</b>	<b>Don Harmon (D)</b>
<b>Majority Leader:</b>	<b>Greg Harris (D)</b>	<b>Majority Leader:</b>	<b>Kimberly Lightfoot (D)</b>
<b>Minority Leader:</b>	<b>Jim Durkin (R)</b>	<b>Minority Leader:</b>	<b>Bill Brady (R)</b>

### Legislative Session Dates & Deadlines

Unlike the U.S. Congress, most state legislatures are not in session year-round. Although specific lengths may vary by state, many legislative sessions begin in January and end in late spring, usually in April, May or June. Some state legislatures, such as New York and Illinois, meet virtually year-round. Others, however, such as Nevada, Texas and Montana, may meet every other year.

The **Illinois General Assembly** convenes its regular session on the second Wednesday in January (as fixed by the state constitution) and adjourns in May or June. It then reconvenes for a short veto session in the fall to consider the Governor’s vetoes. The General Assembly is organized into a two-year cycle of legislative activity called biennium. It does not start from square one every year.

Many states require a bill be reintroduced during each session of the legislature, but about half allow for **carryover** of bills. Carryover occurs when states do not require a bill be reintroduced each year of a given legislative session. About half of all states practice carryover. Pre-filing is a practice in many (but not all) states whereby a member of the legislature indicates an intent to file a bill on a certain topic. A **pre-filing deadline** is the date by which this must be done, before the beginning of a session, usually between October and January. The **filing deadline** is the date is the date by which the bill must be introduced to be eligible to be considered during the current session. These will vary state-to-state unless the state has no filing deadline. Finally, some states limit the number of bills a legislator may introduce each session. Regardless of how states handle pre-filing, filing, or filing limits, it is especially important to reach out to the

champions (sponsors of the bills) in the months *leading up to* the end of the session, especially if the bill need to be reintroduced

States also commonly hold what are known as “special” sessions of the legislature, where they convene outside of the normal session schedule to act on specific business. **Special sessions** may last anywhere from a few days to a few months.

It is important to know the important dates in the state’s legislative session – including when the session begins and ends as well as any legislative deadlines the state may have.

### Illinois 2020 Legislative Session Deadline

State	Session Dates		Intro Deadlines		Crossover Deadline	Carryover	
	Start	Adjournment	House	Senate		'19 to '20	'20 to '21
Illinois	1/8/20	5/31/20	2/14/04	2/14/20	4/24/20	Yes	No

### More About the Legislative Process

For policy priorities that are lucky enough to have an identified champion in the legislature who introduces a related bill, the process moving forward is fairly straightforward although not always easily realized.

In general, for the legislative process to begin, a bill must first be introduced by a member of the state legislature in either the House or Senate. Bills are typically drafted by permanent staff of the legislature, after being given a concept or idea from a member of the legislature. After being introduced, the bill is assigned to one or more **standing committees**, based in the subject matter of the legislation. The **chair of the committee**, can choose to call a special hearing specifically for the bill or may include the bill on a roster of other legislation to be considered during a hearing already scheduled. The chair may also choose to do nothing with the bill, effectively killing it. During hearings, members of the committee hear testimony, ask questions and read statements in support or opposition to the bill. Depending on the state, committee members may have a chance to offer amendments to the bill as well.

If the committee votes to send the bill to the full chamber, the bill moves under the leader of that chamber (typically House or Senate), who may choose to allow a full chamber to vote on the bill. If the bill is brought to the full chamber for vote, members may have the opportunity to speak about the bill, offer amendments, and vote up or down on the legislation.

Once a bill clears the first chamber, it heads over to the other chamber consideration. To become law, both chambers must pass identical versions of the same bill. If the other chamber amends or otherwise changes the bill, it must return and be approved by the original chamber. The final version, approved by both chambers, can then be sent to the governor for a signature.

Many states have **cross-over deadlines** which should be noted. A cross-over deadline is the date by which a bill must be passed in at least one chamber before it can be considered by the other.

In **Illinois**, legislators make, and revise laws and a bill are a proposed law. While anyone can suggest a bill, only legislators can introduce them or propose amendments to the legislative body. There are several distinct types of bills:

- Appropriation bills specify the dollar amounts for the operating expenses of state agencies.
- Substantive bills make major changes in existing laws or create entirely new laws.
- Revisory bills make technical changes in the form or in the wording. Such bills are not controversial, as they do not initiate policy change.
- Shell/vehicle bills make no substantive change in the law. Bills are moved through the General Assembly so that at later stages in the process substantive legislation may be introduced.

A bill may be introduced in either the House or the Senate. The Illinois Constitution, Article IV, section 8, contains several requirements which guarantee that legislators will understand the bills they are acting on before they are passed. A bill, for example:

- Must be printed and available for reading before passage
- Must address only one subject
- The section of the law that is being amended must be identified.

The bill must be read on three separate days and the final vote must be recorded. Reading a bill does not mean that the entire bill is read. Usually, only the title is read but the process of reading announces to the legislature that the bill is being considered, allows legislators to debate the bill and suggest amendments, and prohibits passage of a bill without at least a three-day delay.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Reading & Committee Hearing

On the road to becoming law, each bill must be “read” on 3 different occasions in both the Senate and the House. The title is read, and copies of the bill are distributed. The 1<sup>st</sup> reading is simply a bill’s formal introduction after which it is assigned to a committee to be studied. A committee is made up of legislators that hold regular hearings. At committee hearings, specific bills are “called”, and anyone can present arguments for or against the proposed legislation. Hearings tend to be dominated by lobbyists and expert witnesses, but any citizen may participate by filling out a “witness slip” indicating a desire to testify. A testimony can be submitted orally and/or in writing. Committee Amendments. Formal revisions of a bill may also be proposed at this time. After having studied a bill the committee votes to make one of the following recommendations:

- Do pass
- Do pass amended
- Do not pass
- Do not pass as amended

If a committee votes a “do not pass,” the bill is considered dead. If they vote “do pass” then the bill is released from the committee and moves onto the second reading.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading

The 2<sup>nd</sup> reading is where amendments are considered. After changes made in committee have been handled, amendments may be offered and voted upon by the floor. Many bills drift into legislative limbo during the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading. The reasons could be that the legislature ran out of time, the bill’s sponsors may decide that there is too much opposition, or the sponsor may simply decide to forget the bill. Often the governor and the legislative leadership will become very active at this reading stage.

Out of more than 4,000 bills introduced each session, only a few hundred make their way through both houses.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading

Bills cannot be amended at the 3<sup>rd</sup> reading. At this stage, a bill is debated, culminating in a roll call vote, meaning every legislator’s vote is recorded as: yes, no, present, absent, or excused. All bills require a **constitutional majority** to pass. A constitutional majority means 30 votes in the Senate and 60 votes in the House. If a bill passes it then automatically moves to the other

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chamber, where it must go through almost the exact same process again, with 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> hearings.

### Concurrence and Conference Committee

If the Senate and the House do not pass a bill in exactly the same form, the bill has not passed. There are certain things that can be done when this happens. If one chamber has added an amendment, it is sent to the other chamber for concurrence to the amendment. If one chamber refuses to drop the amendment and the other refuses to add it, a conference committee is formed. This committee consists of five members from both chambers who try to write a compromise version of the bill.

### Lame Duck Session

Whenever the General Assembly meets to take care of unfinished business after the election of new legislators, but before the sitting Legislators' terms have expired, it is referred to as lame duck session.

## Engaging with State Lawmakers

Just as the effectiveness of our work as emergency nurse depends on the quality of our relationship with patients and colleagues, the same is true with government relations. We need to develop relationships with legislators and their staff long before we turn to them for an understanding of our point of view on an issue. Strong personal relationships are the best means of influencing legislative decision-making. Personal visits, letter, phone calls, faxes, and emails are also important especially when they come from constituents who are well-known, highly regarded, and have gone out of their way to be helpful in a variety of ways in the past. Building relationships takes time and effort, but it is the most effective way to shape the thinking of those who decide public policy.

How do you go about building such relationships? In much the same way as you cultivate friendships: by being friendly and personally helpful. Become useful and trustworthy source of sound information and insight, contributing your personal time to professional and political needs and interests. Your own party affiliation should not restrict you. Every elected officeholder represents an entire state, legislative district, or local government – Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike. You don't have to be a member of the legislator's political party to work together and even to become friends. You will need, however, to do some homework about key issues, economic facts, etc. that are important to the interests and

viewpoint you represent. In the same way, familiarize yourself with the legislators with whom you want to build relationships. Become a fountain of fact. Know the number of ENA members and emergency departments in the official's legislative district.

As an organization, it is important to establish relationships with state legislators, to maximize one's effectiveness as advocates. The goal is to be a go-to-person for that lawmaker on all issues related to emergency nursing. Government Affairs Committee members can serve as a source of information and expertise on key policy issues.

Some examples of how GAC members (and general membership) can engage with state lawmakers include:

- Invite your state legislators to tour your ED (if appropriate and in accordance with your employer's policies. You may have to work with your Marketing Department). This can provide the legislators a firsthand look at your facility and
- help sway them to support policies favorable to emergency nurses. When possible, work with coalition and community partners to develop an informative program for their visit.
- Request to meet with state legislators while they are at home in their districts. Typically, state lawmakers are more accessible than members of Congress, especially when out of

session and back in their districts, which is more likely to be close to where you live. Be mindful of the state legislative calendar as Illinois is a year-round legislature. Request time when you know the legislator is scheduled to be on recess. Most lawmakers will also be home during the weekends and holidays, and often will plan events in the district in which constituents are encouraged to attend.

- Join your lawmaker's mailing list. Many state lawmakers will have email lists you can join to learn more about their priorities, as well as events the member is holding in your district. Town halls and other community events are a great opportunity to voice concerns about your policy priorities and cultivate positive relationships with lawmakers and their staff.
- Communicate regularly with the legislator or his/her staff. For GAC Chair, if you prepare a regular update for the State Council, Board of Directors, or the state membership about state government affairs activities, consider including the legislators and their staff in those emails as well.

## Engaging with the Governor & Staff

Reaching out to communicate with the governor and members of his staff will potentially allow GAC committee and members (and the state council board) to educate the most powerful people in the state on the importance of emergency nursing as well as the policy priorities of emergency nurses in Illinois. These interactions also serve as an opportunity to learn more about the governor's priorities on issues related to emergency care and the practice of emergency nursing in Illinois. If the state council's priorities align with theirs, then the state council can begin work with the administration to move those ideas forward. If they do not align, you might inform them how some policies will negatively affect emergency nurses' ability to provide emergency care to patients in need.

Establishing a rapport with the governor's lead health policy staffer can be a very important first step. They can be a wealth of information on upcoming movement in policy areas of the state, and often have the ear of key administration staff, as well as the governor. Administrations are normally very busy during a legislative session and will typically plan for the next legislative session soon after the previous one ends. Requesting a meeting soon after the end of a session improves one's chances of receiving a meeting. This could also be a time where they are more receptive to advancing IL ENA's (National ENA) agenda as well.

## Connect with State Agencies

Establishing connections within various state agencies that deal with emergency care and nursing policies can be some of the most valuable contacts you can make in state government. These career professionals implement new laws, which often leave out many of the details associated with changing policy or enacting a new program. Meeting with these individuals to discuss how the implementation of new laws can affect emergency nurses serve as an opportunity to influence how these policies are enacted.

Many state agencies seek out professional groups like ENA as partners in the implementation of new laws. Meeting regularly with these offices can establish ENA as a trusted and valuable resource, which can open doors to participation in statewide meetings, task forces, and advisory councils, which can have a positive impact on the profile of ENA and its members. Request meetings with appropriate staff for the specific issues that the state council GAC are working on anytime throughout the year. Extend an invitation to agency staff to attend the state council quarterly meeting.

Examples of state agencies and committees are:

- Department of Health and Human Services
- State Board of Nursing
- State Trauma Care Committee (often have representatives from nursing)
- Department of Labor-Office of Occupational Safety and Health
- Office of Emergency Services (or other Emergency Management Agency)

### Identify & Build Coalitions

Influencing the development and implementation of public policy requires the ability to work with other organizations, key stakeholders locally and around the state who share policy goals with ENA. This may include other nursing groups, emergency physician organizations, injury prevention advocates and patient advocate organizations. Joining or forming **coalitions** with these partners can lead to valuable contacts and relationships that can pay big dividends when pushing for the state's policy agenda.

Coalitions allow disparate groups to come together informally to advance one or more policy goals. This allows for coordinated efforts that allow the individual groups to leverage the resources of all to advance their policy forward. Coalitions can be whatever the group envisions – formal, permanent or temporary- it is up to the state council.

- Contact other local groups that have natural intersections regarding policy priorities.
- Find and join other state/local coalitions working on issues like workplace violence, the opioid epidemic, advance practice issues, safe patient handling, injury prevention, etc.
- Think outside the box!

### GAC Chair: Engage Illinois ENA Members in Advocacy

One of the most important things a GAC Chair can do is to energize the state's ENA members to become stronger advocates for issues affecting emergency nurses. With the State Government Affairs Committee, the GAC Chair acts as a liaison to the state council. Members of the GAC should represent different parts of the state. Have a regular communication with all state members to inform them of the organization's priorities and how ENA's activities in the state can lead to positive change.

Some things to keep in mind about engaging with the IL ENA members:

- The Government Affairs Chair should have regular interaction with membership.  
GAC Newsletter, emails, website



- Encourage members to join the EN411 Acton Network to receive: Action Alerts, Washington Update, and other announcements.
- Push out Action alerts to all IL ENA members.
- Encourage members to attend Day on the Hill to engage in grassroots advocacy at the federal level.
- Mentor other members to become Government Affairs Chair.
- **Encourage all members to update their account information, especially their preferred email on their ENA member profile online – many ENA members use their work emails, which often blocks ENA emails due to their robust firewalls.**

### ENA Government Relations Team -DC

ENA's Government Relations Team, based in Washington, DC, can serve as a resource for the GA Chair and the state council as the state council develops and implement a government affairs program. The types of technical and strategic support that the DC team can provide includes:

- Reviewing and tracking legislation
- Drafting and editing letters of support, written and oral testimony, and other materials
- Providing strategic advice and support regarding the movement of legislation
- Assistance connecting with state lawmakers
- Support for meetings with lawmakers, agencies, and other key stakeholders

Contact information for the ENA Government Relations Office:  
Rob Kramer ([rob.kramer@ena.org](mailto:rob.kramer@ena.org))

## Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Act	Legislation that has passed both chambers of Congress and become law
Amendment	A change in a bill or document by adding, substituting, or omitting portions.
Appropriation Bill	Legislation that provides funds for authorized programs.
Authorization Bill	Legislation establishing a program and setting funding limits.
Bicameral	Referring to a legislative body in a state that has two chambers, usually a House of Representatives/General Assembly and a Senate. Forty-nine states have bicameral legislatures.
Carryover	In state legislatures, referring to the practice where bills are held over from one year of a legislature to the next. Bills do not have to be reintroduced in carryover years.
Caucus	Meeting of Republican or Democratic Members of Congress to determine policy and/or choose a leader.
Chair of Committee	The highest -ranking member of a committee, who controls the agenda and direction of that committee. Committee chairs are almost always members of the majority party of the chamber.
Clean Bill	A bill that has been revised in markup. Amendments are assembled with unchanged language and the bill is referred to the floor with a new number.
Cloture	Method of limiting debate or ending a filibuster in the Senate. At least 60 Senators must vote in favor before cloture can be invoked.
Coalition	An alliance of distinct parties, persons, or organizations for joint action.
Committee	A group of Members assigned to give special consideration to certain bills.
Committee of the Whole	A mechanism to expedite business in the House whereby the House itself becomes a committee, allowing for less rigid rules and a quorum of 100 Instead of 218.
Companion bills	Identical bills introduced separately in both Senate and House

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Concurrent Resolution	Legislative action used to express the position of the House or Senate. Does not have the force of law.
Conference Committee	Meeting between Representatives and Senators to resolve differences when two versions of similar bills have been passed by the House and Senate
Continuing Resolution	A resolution enacted to allow specific Executive Branch agencies to continue operating even though funds have not been appropriated for them for the following fiscal year.
Cosponsor	A member of the legislature who has publicly signed-on in support of a bill but who is not the principal sponsor or the one who introduced the bill.
Cross-over Deadline	In bicameral legislatures, the date by which a bill must have passed one Chamber in order to be eligible to be considered in the other chamber.
Engrossed Bill	Final copy of a bill passed by either House or Senate with amendments. The bill is then delivered to the other Chamber.
Filing deadline	The date by which all bills must be filed to be eligible for consideration in the Current legislative session.
Joint Resolution	Legislation similar to a bill that has the force of law if passed by both chambers and signed by the President; generally used for special situations.
Medicaid	Public health insurance program that provides coverage to eligible individuals, including low-income adults, children, pregnant women, elderly adults and People with disabilities. Medicaid is administered by the states and federal Government. Medicaid is the nation's number one payor of mental health and substance abuse treatment services.
Omnibus Bill	A bill regarding a single subject that combines many different aspects of that subject.
Pre-filing deadline	Date by which bills that are being filed before the start of a legislative session must be submitted to be eligible for consideration.
Public Policy Agenda	Written document that identifies key policy priorities for ENA State Councils. Should be utilized by Government Affairs Chairs as well as ENA members to reference basic information on these priorities.
Ranking Member	The highest-ranking member of a committee from the minority party in control

of that legislative chamber.

Special Session	A special meeting of the legislature, called by the governor of the legislature itself and limited to specific matters.
Sponsor	Member of the legislature who introduces a specific bill.
Standing Committee	A committee appointed with continuing jurisdiction over general policy Issues or areas of legislative activity.
State Agencies	Offices and departments that comprise the executive and administrative branch of state government, reporting to the governor. State agencies are tasked with implementing new laws affecting programs and policies under its jurisdiction, as well as developing and maintaining government programs and services provided at the state level.
Substantive Bill	Substantive bills make major changes in existing laws or create entirely new laws. Shell/vehicle bills make no substantive change in the law. However, these bills are moved through the General Assembly so that at later stages in the process substantive legislation may be introduced.
Unicameral	Referring to a legislative body in a state that has one chamber. Nebraska is the only state with a unicameral legislature.
Whip	Assistant Leader for each party in each chamber who keeps other Members of the party informed of the legislative agenda of the leader. Also tracks sentiment among party Members for certain legislation and tries to persuade Members to be present and vote for measures important to the leadership.

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## Appendix B: ENA Government Affairs State Council Chairperson Role and Responsibilities

(Appointed by the President every year Term of Office: One year)

The role of the Government Affairs Chairperson includes developing relationships with legislators and staff and maintaining government relations activities. **Responsibilities and activities may include:**

1. Maintain communication about government relations activity by:
  - Conducting conference calls with committee members at least twice a year or as needed
  - Informing the state council and members with legislative updates of pertinent legislation within the state legislature
  - Encourage other ENA members to sign-up for the EN411 Legislative Network, and become engaged in public policy discussions
  - Contribute to the ENA database of key contacts, such as federal elected officials.
2. Effectively advocate on behalf of ENA's public policy priorities by:
  - Taking action on assigned action alerts
  - Calling legislator offices on timely issues
  - Attending in-district legislator events, such as town hall meetings
  - Providing feedback on all activities to the Government Relations team
  - Participating in ENA Day on the Hill
3. Participation in Government Affairs Chairperson quarterly conference calls
4. Mentor GA Co-Chair and other committee members as part of an ongoing succession planning initiative.

### Qualifications:

- Current ENA membership
- Current registered nurse licensure
- Demonstrates leadership through involvement in state council or national ENA projects, committee or programs
- Attends Quarterly State Council meetings

The following outlines various attributes this role should encompass:

- Demonstrate leadership skills
- Have dedicated interest in government relations matters
- Understanding of basic legislative and regulatory processes
- Ability to develop relationships with legislators and their staff
- Communicate effectively with ENA membership within the state

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## Appendix C: Instructions for Requesting a Meeting with Federal/State Legislators

When requesting a meeting with the Federal/State Representative/Senator and they ask that the request be submitted in writing via email or fax, use language below as template.

The language below is also useful when speaking with the Representative's/Senator's staff. When on the phone, remember to make clear that you are a constituent of the Representative/Senator and give specific time windows that you are available to meet. Feel free to modify the template based on your conversation with the lawmaker's office.

Due to the lengthy security process involved with the screening of regular mail sent to Representative's/Senator's offices, please email or fax all written requests for meetings. Do not use regular mail.

### **Template for Written Meeting Requests**

#### **To a Senator**

The Honorable (full name)  
Rm #, (name of) Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

#### **To a Representative**

The Honorable (full name)  
Rm# (name of) House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20115

\*Substitute addresses of State Legislators

Dear [Name of Staff Member. Representative/Senator]:

As a constituent and emergency nurse living in [City/State], I am writing to respectfully request a meeting with [Representative/Senator Last Name] to discuss issues of importance to me and emergency nurses across [Name of State]. I will be in [State Capitol] and available to meet in your office on [Date] at [Insert time]. Specifically, I would like to discuss healthcare issues and legislation that directly impact emergency nurses and the care received by patients. If [Representative/Senator Last Name] is unavailable to meet, I would be pleased to meet with the staffer handling healthcare issues. I look forward to hearing back from you. Thank you for your time and attention to my request.

Sincerely,  
[Your Name]  
[Address]  
[Phone Number]  
[Email]

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## Appendix D: Sample Letter of Support for State Legislation

Below is a sample language that can be used for drafting letters of support for a specific bill or initiative. While the subject matter of the letter may vary, we (Government Relations Team) ask that you follow the general structure of the letter provided, to include the following:

- Salutation including the number of ENA members in the state, the purpose of the letter, and what the bill/initiative you are supporting/opposing would do;
- Paragraph that lays out the landscape for emergency nurses currently, with regards to the particular issue at hand;
- One or two paragraphs that support your position using data and statistics (when available);
- Closing paragraph thanking them for their leadership and expressing a desire to work with them to support the legislation/initiative.
- Whenever possible, the letter should be signed by the State Council President.

### Sample Letter

The Honorable [Name of Legislator]  
[Name of State] House of Representatives/Senate  
[Office Address]  
[City, State, Zip]

Dear Representative/Senator Smith:

On behalf of the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) and our more than 43,000 members worldwide, including nearly (Number of ENA Members in the state) members in (Name of State), I am writing to express our support for House/Senate Bill XXXX. The legislation strengthens the penalty for assault and battery on emergency nurses and other health care professionals. In so doing, this bill would help address the elevated risk of violence faced by emergency nurses and other health care professionals across South Carolina by increasing the penalties for assaulting such individuals.

As you know, under federal law, EDs are required to treat any patient seeking care without regard to insurance status or ability to pay. However, the duty should not be accepted at the expense of the safety of patients receiving treatment and professionals receiving it. Every day, emergency nurses across the country are punched, bitten, spit on, slapped, grabbed, kicked, and sometimes worse, yet rarely are these assaults reported. On average, health care

professionals in the ED experience a violent event every two months, and registered nurses in the ED are more likely to experience acute stress, according to the American Journal of Medicine.

Emergency nurses and other personnel in the ED experience violence at much higher rates than other workers. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) found that between 2002 and 2013, incidents of serious workplace violence were four times more common for health care than other private sector workers.

In a 2016 report, the Government Accountability Office identified workplace violence as a “serious concern” in health care, and it is critical that those who face substantial risk of violence, like emergency nurses, are adequately protected under the law. Your legislation will help ensure that violence against emergency nurses and other health care professionals are not ignored. We must protect those who dedicate themselves to saving lives in their communities every day.

Thank you for your leadership on this important legislation that will help protect health care professionals, including emergency nurses.

Signed,

Jane Doe

[Name of State] ENA State Council President





## Appendix E: Sample Thank you Letters

Date

[Name of Staffer, if applicable]  
The Honorable [first name, last name]  
U.S. House of Representatives (or U.S. Senate)  
Washington, D.C. 20515 (or 20510)

Dear Representative (or Senator) [last name]:

Thank you for meeting with me [my colleagues and I] on [date and place]. I am pleased that we had the opportunity to discuss (position on issue)

[Briefly restate the issue(s) and what action(s) you want the member to take. Also provide any follow-up information you may have promised.]

Again, thank you for meeting with [me/us]. Please contact me at [your phone number] or [your e-mail address] if I can be of any assistance or if I can provide any additional information. I will continue to monitor [issue(s)] and will keep in touch with your office as developments occur.

Sincerely,

[your name and any credentials]  
Illinois State Council Emergency Nurses Association



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The Honorable (First name) (Last name) (Room Number), Address (Zip Code)

RE: (state the topic or include the bill number, author and subject if you are writing to support or oppose a particular legislative bill)

Dear (Assembly Member/Senator) (Last name):

My name is (your first and last name) and I am a regional center consumer (family member /service provider/advocate/community member) who resides in your district.

(State why you support or oppose the bill or other issue here. Choose up to three of the strongest points that support your position and state them clearly.)

(Include a personal story. Tell your representative why the issue is important to you and how it affects you, your family member and your community.)

(Tell your representative how you want her or him to vote on this issue and ask for a response. Be sure to include your name and address on both your letter and envelope.)

Sincerely,  
SIGN YOUR NAME

Print your name Street address  
City, State, Zip code



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## Appendix F: Do's and Don'ts in Government Relations

## Do's

Do remember that you are an expert and nurses are the most trusted professionals. Most legislators are not nurses, so you have specialized knowledge that they don't have. Trust that they will listen to you and respect you because you are an expert.

Do consult your ENA Government Relations Team in D.C. or the ENA Government Affairs Chairs Toolkit for specific tips on letter writing, personal visits, email, and phone calls. Detailed information is available for your reference, so use your resources.

Do try to personalize the issue by giving examples of how you, your coworkers, and/or your patients are affected. You would be amazed at how much more weight is given to a constituent's concerns than those of a lobbyist; but the message should be meaningful. Legislators and their staff know that organizations try to mobilize their members to send emails or letters on certain issues. If the letter reads like a form letter, it will not have the same impact as a personal letter that includes examples and personal experience.

Do realize that talking to the staff is like talking to the elected official. Treat staff the same way you would treat the elected official. Officials often rely on staff to advise them on how to vote or craft

legislation, and they also develop interpersonal relationships with trusted staffers. If you alienate the staff you are asking for trouble.

Do be early for meetings. An elected official's schedule can be filled down to the

minute. They don't have time to wait for you, even though you may have to wait for them.

Do avoid health care jargon. Although you are an expert, try to frame your comments as small bullet points of information that can be easily understood by a layperson. While your clinical knowledge may be impressive, if you lose your audience your message will be lost.

Do leave something behind. At a minimum, leave your business card so the staff or elected official can contact you with questions. Optimally, you should provide a useful "leave-behind" that summarizes your position on an issue in digestible tidbits. Statistics and their reference is always a plus, as staff will often use information from "leave-behinds" in speeches or as talking points on the issue.

Do be realistic. Thousands of bills are introduced during each session, but fewer than 10% are enacted. Do not be discouraged if your bill does not pass. You have established relationships, educated staff and elected officials, and built support for your position. If you have accomplished these things, you have laid the groundwork and increased your chances that a bill will pass the next time.

Do come prepared to defend your position. You always have to know what your opposition is up to. If you anticipate questions and are prepared to advance to defend your position, you will cut your opposition off.

Do dress appropriately in business attire. Remember the purpose of your visit is to talk about professional issues. To be most effective, you should appear organized and professional.

Do keep your phone call or visit brief and to the point. While staff or elected official will usually be polite, it is incumbent on you to recognize that they are very busy. Keep your meeting pleasant and brief and start looking for clues that it is time to wrap things up after fifteen minutes. Meetings should rarely last more than twenty minutes but take your cue from the person with whom you are meeting.

Do disagree respectfully. If a legislator has an opposing position on an issue and you are unable to change his/her mind, remain respectful of the time he/she gave you to state your position. If possible, compliment the legislator on his/her work on another issue. The legislator will appreciate your understanding and be impressed by your knowledge of his/her record.

Do say thank you. Whether you are following up after a personal visit or thanking a member for fighting in a committee for one small provision that is important to you, it is always nice to recognize another's efforts. Legislators and their staff work hard and most have great intentions, so your sincere thanks are appreciated.

Do provide helpful information whenever possible. Providing information is always appreciated. If you send a copy of a current report or an article you think the staff or elected official would find interesting, you present yourself as a considerate, alert person who wants to help. When you provide useful information and are not asking for any specific action in return, in effect, you are reminding the recipient of who you are and are providing them with a nonthreatening communication that will be appreciated.

Do ask ENA/ENA Government Relations for help. They are committed to helping the ENA members.

## Don'ts

Don't endorse political candidates. While ENA can speak on behalf of its members with one voice, it is also a 501 (c)(3) organization, which means it CANNOT endorse political candidates. The IL ENA State Council is incorporated as a 501 (c)(3), and as such we cannot endorse candidates either.

Don't participate in political activities in the name of the national ENA unless you are advocating an issue on which the ENA Board has taken a formal position. Check to see if ENA has taken a position on the issue of interest to you.

Don't pretend to know something that you don't. If you make up information or skirt around an issue, you will come off as disingenuous and lose credibility. Most people can spot a phony.

Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." Legislators are not expected to be experts on everything and neither are you. Admitting you don't know the answer to something can be a good thing because it gives you the opportunity to say, "I don't know, but I can research that and get back with you." Then, when you have an answer, you have another opportunity to make contact with the staff or elected official.

Don't become cynical. Keep the faith! Remember that most people who serve in public office do so because they want to make a difference. Try to give them the benefit of the doubt.

Don't promise something you cannot deliver. You must be as good as your word or you will lose credibility.

## Guide to Legislative Staff Titles

Each legislator has staff to assist him/her during a term in office. To be most effective in communicating with your legislators, it is helpful to know the titles and principal functions of his/her key staff.

### Administrative Assistant (AA)

#### Chief of Staff (CoS)

The AA reports directly to the legislator. He or she usually has overall responsibility for evaluating the political outcome of various legislative proposals and constituent requests. The AA is usually the person in charge of overall office operations,

including the assignment of work and the supervision of key staff.

**Legislative Director (LD)**  
**Senior Legislative Assistant (Sr. LA)**  
**Legislative Coordinator (LC)**

The LD is the staff person who monitors the legislative schedule and makes recommendations regarding the pros and cons of particular issues. In some offices, there may be one LD or Senior LA but several Las. In this case, each LA has responsibilities assigned to them based on their particular expertise in specific areas. For example, depending on the responsibilities and interests of the Member, an office may have a different LA for health issues, education, family and children, etc.

**Press Secretary (Press Secretary)**  
**Communications Director (Committee Dir)**

The Press Secretary's responsibility is to build and maintain open and effective lines



of communication between the Member, his/her constituency, and the general public. The Press Secretary is expected to know the benefits, demands and special requirements of both print and electronic media, and how to promote the member's views or position on specific issues most effectively.

**Appointment Secretary (Appt Secy)**  
**Personal Secretary or Scheduler (Sch)**

The Appt. Secy is responsible for allocating A Member's time among the many demands that arise from congressional responsibilities, staff requirements, and

constituent requests. The Appt Secretary may also be responsible to making necessary travel arrangements, arranging speaking dates, visits to the district, etc.

**Case worker**

The Caseworker is the staff member assigned to help with constituent requests by preparing replies for the legislator's signature. The Caseworker's responsibilities may also include helping resolve problems constituent present in relation to state/federal agencies, e.g. Social Security and Medicare issues, veteran's benefits, passports, etc. Congressional offices often have several Caseworkers on staff.

**Resources:**

Gearing Up for Advocacy: A Toolkit for ENA State Council Government Affairs Chairs

Government Affairs Workshop documents from previous GAC Workshops hosted by ENA

Illinois Gubernatorial Veto Procedures  
Retrieved from:  
<https://www.illinoispolicy.org/illinois-gubernatorial-veto-procedure>

How Laws are created- The Legislative Process in Illinois by the Illinois State Bar Association Standing Committee on Law-Related Education for the Public

Retrieved from:

<http://www.isba.org/teachers>

