



# From a Challenge to a Legislative Change

Navigating Policy Change at Every Level

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# From Barrier to Solution

- Think outside of the box
  - What are some challenges you encounter in your job?
  - Just because we've always done it this way doesn't mean we always have to do it this way.
  - Is it an internal policy, or a legal issue?
  - \*\*\*Is it an issue that needs to be resolved?
    - Changing laws based on the needs of one person or one situation does not make good policy for the most part.
    - Consider collateral consequences.

# An Idea

- How can you address your challenge?
- Research, prepare, draft
  - Research— check out they do it in other states or jurisdictions, reach out to colleagues within your area, or even colleagues in other states.
  - Prepare— collaborate with people in your field and other allies, brainstorm pros and cons of your idea, consider other solutions. Get to know your friendly neighborhood prosecutors. Get to know your organizations' membership groups, etc.
  - Draft— come up with a basic idea. You don't have to draft an entire bill, that's bananas if you have no previous legislative experience.
- **BE READY TO COMPROMISE!**

# Finding a Sponsor

- Every bill must have a sponsor in both chambers.
- The LRC is your friend! They might not act like it but they are!
  - The LRC= The Legislative Research Counsel. The gatekeepers of all bills.
  - How do they work? A legislator brings a bill or bill idea to the LRC, and it's assigned to a Legislative Attorney or Research Analyst to draft.
  - They draft the bill, conforming to current SD code style.
  - That bill is then passed through an editing process and put into form.
  - The bill is returned to the sponsor with a sponsorship jacket, they collect signatures from fellow legislators and then submit the bill to the appropriate chamber, where it is passed to the President Pro Temp for committee assignment.







# Finding a Sponsor, Part II

- Procedure is great, but how do you find a sponsor?
- Get to know your legislators! Everyone has three in their district. Two representatives and one senator.
- You can find your legislator's info on the LRC website, to be provided at the end of the presentation. Send them emails, write them letters, give them a call— set up a meeting to explain your idea.
- If your legislators are not receptive, see if any other legislators have any involvement in your particular area of interest.
- You're the experts! Legislators hear from citizens every day. Some of them have great ideas, some have very, very bad ideas. Show your legislator that you're not just an Average Joe with a vendetta— you're the expert on the front lines of society's issues.



# How to make a bill a law

- Once the bill is written and sponsored, it makes its way through both chambers.
- Assigned to a committee, it must stay in the same committee on both sides. If the prime sponsor is a senator, it starts in the Senate, etc.
- Once it is assigned to a committee, the bill is scheduled for a hearing by the chair of the committee.
- You get the opportunity to testify, and you should!
- The committee then votes on the bill— if it makes it out of committee, there is a vote in the chamber. If it passes, it goes to the other chamber for the same process.



# Make your voice heard



- Testimony in committee: if you can get to Pierre, great. Since COVID they also do Zoom testimony. Reach out to the staff person at the LRC to sign up for testimony.
- Other means: emails, letters, social media. Emails probably most effective— make them personal, not generic. Explain your personal experience and why you support the bill and they should too. Not boilerplate language.
- Rally the troops! Make sure your colleagues are aware and ask them to reach out to their legislators as well. The more voices in support, the more convincing.



# Effective Lobbying



When testifying, keep your emotions in check.



Talk facts, talk real life circumstances and examples.



Don't attack, persuade.



Talk about what's not working and why.



Be civil, even when you really, really don't want to.



Pick your battles.





An illustration on a dark gray background shows several stylized human figures interacting with a large, light brown puzzle piece. One figure stands on top of the puzzle piece, another is on a ladder to its left, and others are positioned around its base. The scene is framed by a blue and white geometric border on the left side.

# Collaborate

- Find the organizations associated with your profession and reach out to them.
- Reach out to your local State's Attorneys for criminal law changes.
- Start the discussion early, so you can problem-solve long before the bill is even written.
- Failure to collaborate= failure to pass the bill.

# Contacts:

- <https://sdlegislature.gov/>
  - Legislator Contacts
  - Find My Legislators
  - Session
  - Bills
  - Chambers/Committees
  - Laws

<https://sdstatesattorneys.org/>

Paul Bachand, Executive Director

<https://atg.sd.gov/>

Legal Resources

NUMEROUS links to other organizations, from Forensic Lab to Law Enforcement

# Questions?

