The legislative process in Connecticut
Agenda:

• Legislation 101: how a bill becomes a law
• Our friend, the (legislative) clock
• Picking a policy agenda
• Advocating for policies:
  • During the session
  • Outside the session
The process
Basic steps:

1. **Bill is introduced**
2. **Sent to the appropriate committee**
3. **Committee decides if it considers or alters the bill**
4. **Public hearings**
5. **OFA writes a fiscal note on the bill**
6. **If money involved: appropriations**
7. **Goes to other committees. Similar steps, but no hearing.**
8. **Vote on bill, Joint Favorable report**
9. **Bill gets a calendar number**
10. **Vote in one house**
11. **Vote in the other house**
12. **Governor signs it**
That ticking clock
Time limits on the legislative session

“Long” session, odd numbered years:
• from the Wednesday following the first Monday of January to not later than the first Wednesday after the first Monday in June.

Short session, even numbered years:
• from the Wednesday following the first Monday of February to not later than the first Wednesday after the first Monday in May
Meaning:
Session goes from:
February 3\textsuperscript{rd} to May 4\textsuperscript{th}...

... and if you want to kill legislation, you just need to run out the clock.
Places where you can delay a bill:

Bill is introduced → Sent to the appropriate committee → Committee decides if it considers or alters the bill → Public hearings → Vote on bill, Joint Favorable report → Governor signs it

OFA writes a fiscal note on the bill → If money involved: appropriations → Goes to other committee. Similar steps, but no hearing.

One alternative: the implementer bill
- Avoids committees and hearings
- Leadership has a lot of leeway on what to include
- Caveat: controversial stuff is out

Bill gets a calendar number
Picking a policy agenda
Two main conditions

1. Has to be good policy:
   • Reduces poverty
   • Good bang for the buck
   • Does not damage the economy

2. Needs to be able to \textit{survive} the policy process
Good policy

(Read our policy reports)
Navigating the system

- We need:
  - Sponsors that can introduce the bills
  - Champions that can move them to the top of the agenda in committee
  - Allies that move it through committees
  - Appropriations chairs willing to spend money on it, if needed
  - Support from the House / Senate leadership so it makes it to the floor
  - A friendly governor who signs it (or a veto proof majority)
Navigating the system

• On top of that:
  • The bill can’t really annoy anyone *too* much

• Remember:
  • Biggest constraint of the legislature is floor time
  • If someone does not like your bill and is willing to stall it running the clock, leadership will not put up for a vote, unless they *really* care about it.
Advocating for a policy
During the session

- Testifying in favor of the bill
- Talking with legislators at the Capitol
- Working with our allies so they talk with legislators
- Asking constituents to call their legislators
- Organizing events at the Capitol
- Writing reports and policy briefs
- Having people tell their story to legislators
- Social media use and abuse
- Creating a SuperPAC and raising millions of dollars (out of our reach)
Outside the session

- Looking for legislative champions
- Making “friends” with legislative leaders
- Working with our allies so we have a coalition in place
- Building a mailing list
- Organizing events at the Capitol and elsewhere
- Writing reports and policy briefs
- Compiling stories from constituents
- Social media use and abuse
- Creating a SuperPAC and raising millions of dollars

(still out of our reach)
That's all Folks!