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Legislative Process

As many of you know, getting a bill passed is not an easy thing to do. There are specific steps that need to happen in order for the bill to get through the process. The State of Montana provides information on-line that outlines the process and that is synopsised below. But then, again, due to "politics" the process is much more complicated than meets the eye. Below the general explanation, we'll go through the gory details of what it **really** takes to get a massage therapy bill passed in the state.

The General Steps to Get a Bill Passed and Implemented

To get a bill passed we can divide the process into essentially 5 steps:

1. [Developing a Workable Bill Draft](#)
2. [Introduction and Passage Through One Chamber](#)
3. [Passage Through the Other Chamber and What happens when the two versions conflict](#)
4. [What happens when the bill passes both Houses and is sent to the Governor](#)
5. [Implementing the Bill](#)

Developing a Workable Bill Draft:

1. **Find a legislator to submit a bill draft request** to the Montana Legislative Services Division (LSD).
 - The Legislator does not need to be the same person who sponsors the bill, but it is ideal if they are.
 - Prior to the session (about 1 month), a member can make unlimited bill draft requests. After that deadline, they can request no more than 7, and 5 of those must be requested prior to the start of the session.
 - However, LSD works on each draft in the order in which it was received. And the 6th and subsequent requests are lower in priority than the top 5 drafts of **every other legislator** unless the requester opts to make it a "top 5" priority and drop another of their requests in priority.
 - The last day to request a General Bill Draft is on the 10th day of the legislative session.
 - The request may include an actual bill draft that has been put together by either the Legislator or the group/individual that has asked the Legislator to make the request.
2. **A Bill Drafter is assigned** (a research analyst or attorney) by The Legislative Services Division (LSD) to work on the bill.

The request is summarized in an unofficial short title and posted on the Legislative Branch website.

 - The Bill Drafter writes (or re-writes) the information submitted to them.
 - The language used must comply with the guidelines outlined in the "Bill Draft Manual."
 - In addition, the Language is screened for constitutional issues so that it does not conflict with current law or Montana constitutional law.
 - The Drafter will notify the Requester if more info or guidance is needed.
 - The Requester may ask that the Bill Drafter work directly with the interested group in order to make sure that the bill is drafted properly.
3. The Draft is then returned to the Legislator for review. If the draft is accepted by the legislator and the requesting group, it is sent to legal review and edit.

4. **Submission for Legal Review and Edit.** The draft is reviewed and corrected by an attorney and an editor.
 - The request may lose its priority if changes are requested after this step.
 - The requester may make changes to the draft without losing priority only one time.
 - Subsequent revisions, or changes that don't meet specified deadlines, are treated as if the draft were a new bill draft request for the purposes of prioritization.
 - After the review, the draft becomes available on the website.
5. **Final Review.** The draft is reviewed by the drafter, the editors, proofreaders, and the Executive Director of the LSD. Corrections to proper format, style, and legal form are made.
 - A notice to the Requester is delivered that outlines the steps for introduction or preintroduction (introducing a bill before the session starts).
6. **The bill is "Delivered."**
 - The bill is "Delivered" once the Requester picks it up. If they don't pick it up, it is not "Delivered".
 - Once the Bill is Delivered, It **must be introduced within two legislative days.** Or if prior to the session, instructions for preintroduction may be followed.
 - If the Requester is not going to be the Sponsor, the Requester still has to pick up the bill and it is still considered "delivered" at that time. They then give it to the Sponsor to Introduce the Bill and take it through the process.

Introduction and Passage Through One Chamber:

Keep in mind that, at any time in the legislative process, the committee that hears the bill or the Committee of the Whole (meaning the whole chamber of the House or Senate) can decide to "reconsider" its vote, undo what it decided and take another action. However, given that the Legislature meets for 90 days every other year and deals with 1500+ bills, it is highly unlikely that this would happen. It is possible, but unlikely, because Legislators don't have the time to spend.

1. **Introduction.** Any Legislator may introduce (Sponsor) the bill in their respective Chamber.
 - A Senator introduces it by signing it and delivering it to the Secretary of the Senate. A Representative signs it and delivers it to the Chief Clerk of the House.
 - Signatures of cosponsors or a joint chief sponsor from the other chamber may be gathered.
 - Once the Bill is introduced, it may not be withdrawn or cancelled by the sponsor or requester.
 - Once it is given to the Clerk or Secretary, they assign a Bill Number.
 - SB followed by a number for bills originating in the Senate.
 - HB followed by a number for bills originating in the House.
 - The presiding leader of the Chamber requests a Fiscal Note if needed.
 - A Fiscal Note is a report that outlines the costs associated to implement the bill. For example, it would outline how much it would cost to administer all of the aspects of the bill, as well as what income would offset those expenses.
2. **First Reading.** The Chief Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate reads the number of the bill, the sponsor's name and the title of the bill on the floor.
3. **Committee Referral.** The bill is assigned to a working committee ("referred" to committee) by the leader of the Chamber (Speaker of the House or President of the Senate).
 - The Committee Chair assigns a hearing date.
 - House rules "encourage" that at least 3 days notice for the hearing be given. In the Senate, 3 days notice is mandatory unless it is too close to the transmittal deadline. To avoid controversy, it is unlikely that there would be less than that, and in fact, there is usually more notice than 3 days.
 - This group will decide upon the merits of the bill and make recommendations as to its passage.
4. **Committee Hearing.** Anyone wishing to testify must sign in before the meeting is brought to order and supply their name, whom they represent, in which bill(s) they are interested, and whether or not they are "for" or "against" the bill(s).
 - Testimony may be verbal, written or audio-visual.
 - Amendments for the Committee's consideration can be introduced during testimony.

The Committee Hearing's Order of Business:

- Sponsor's Opening Statement. The Sponsor summarizes the contents and purposes of the bill, and then may introduce the person who encouraged the proposal of the bill. They may introduce any amendments to the bill that were agreed to by various parties in between the time the bill was introduced and the hearing.
 - Proponents (supporters) of the bill testify first. Testimony by the proponents should be designed to systematically build a case for passage of the bill, and minimize or discount opposition.
 - Opponents then have the opportunity to testify against the bill.
 - Statements of Informational Witnesses are taken. Sometimes there are people there who have factual information to give to the committee concerning a bill, but don't fit into the category of proponent or opponent.
 - After all the testimony is heard, the Committee Members will ask questions to help them determine how they will vote, along with whether or not additional amendments to the bill are needed. The Committee may request that the opponents and proponents get together to see if they can hash out their differences.
 - Sponsor's Closing Statement. Once it appears that discussion by the committee is complete, the Sponsor summarizes the bill and thanks the committee for their consideration.
 - The Hearing is then Closed.
5. **Executive Action** on the bill.
This is the committee meeting where the committee takes action on the bill. There don't seem to be any rules concerning public notice of this meeting. However, typically the Committee can't take action if the sponsor isn't present, or hasn't given written consent if they can't attend.

Although anyone may attend an executive session, there is no testimony by the general public at this hearing.

The Legislators will discuss the bill or take final action on the bill. Legislators may ask those present questions about the bill to clarify any remaining issues.

Several options are available to the committee when it takes action on the bill:

- Pass it out of committee with a "Do Pass" or "Do Not Pass" recommendation. From here it goes to the full chamber for consideration.
- Amend the bill then do Pass it out of committee as above.
- Postpone the bill till a later date or indefinitely.
- Call for further study or refer to a subcommittee
- Recommend a substitute bill.

Discussion by the Committee ensues. If amendments are added, each amendment is voted on first, then the whole bill (as amended) is voted on.

- Although anyone may suggest and draft amendments to give to the committee, amendments that are included in the bill must follow a specific format and are drafted by the Legislative Services Division. They are not authorized to draft amendments for citizens. Therefore, to get an amendment to be included as part of the bill, a legislator has to request it.
6. **What the Committee Actions Mean:**
Keep in mind that no bill can proceed in the process without the committee making a recommendation.
- If the Bill is Postponed for consideration on a later date, it is **Tabled**. The Committee can vote to "reconsider" the issue and take it off the table.
 - If the bill is **Indefinitely Postponed**, the process stops here and the bill is usually declared "dead."
However, It is still possible to revive the bill by reconsidering the motion or the bill is taken away from the committee by the whole Senate or House (very unlikely in our case).
 - If the Recommendation is **Do Pass** or **Do Not Pass** the bill is referred back to the whole Senate or House and the Committee reports its recommendation.
 - Bills receiving a "Do Pass" or "Do Pass As Amended" are placed on the calendar for Second Reading.
 - Bills receiving a "Do Not Pass" or "Do Not Pass As Amended" are not placed on the second-reading calendar, and are considered dead. It is possible to revive the bill if a motion is made and carried. (House rules show that this takes a three-fifths vote, the Senate does not address this). (One Webpage says that "adverse reports are

uncommon" -- this implies that the committee typically indefinitely postpones the bill rather than sending it on with a "Do Not Pass" recommendation)

7. **Second Reading.** The entire Senate or House debates the bill as "Committee of the Whole". The Floor Sponsor makes an opening statement and then debate occurs. Questions are also asked and answered. Unless the bill is controversial, the legislators tend to follow the recommendation of the committee. Any Amendments are voted on individually:
 - Those recommended by the Committee
 - Those introduced on the floor during debate

Then the bill as a whole (with amendments) is voted on by the House or Senate.

- If the bill is Passed, the bill is engrossed before moving on to the Third Reading.
 - **Engrossed/Engrossing:** all amendments are incorporated into the bill and the bill is printed. Joint Rules state that once the bill is engrossed, the bill must be placed on the 3rd Reading for the following day. House Rules state that the bill must be engrossed within 48 hours after its 2nd Reading. The Senate Rules don't cover this. In other words, there are no more than 3 days between the 2nd and 3rd reading (at least in the House).
 - If the bill is not passed, the bill dies.
8. **Third Reading.** The bill is simply read and a final vote is taken, without discussion or debate.
 - If the bill is Passed, the bill moves to the other Chamber and the Process begins again.
 - If the bill Fails in the Second or Third Reading, it is dead. There are ways to revive it, but because of the time constraints involved, with our little profession, the bill would probably stay dead.

Passage Through the Other Chamber:

1. **Transmittal to Other Chamber.**

This is the same as Introducing the bill, except in the other Chamber.

 - In order for the bill to be considered by the second Chamber, it must pass the first Chamber and be referred to the other Chamber before what is called the **Transmittal Deadline**. Any bill that does not cross over to the other Chamber by this date is dead (a two-thirds vote in the receiving chamber could be made to ignore the deadline, although it is unlikely). The Transmittal Deadline occurs about half-way through the session -- typically on the 45th Legislative Day, which usually is in late February.
2. ALL of the steps to move the bill through the First Chamber are repeated here.
 - A Sponsor in the Second Chamber is found to shepherd the bill through this Chamber.
 - Although both sponsors will appear at the committee hearing, only the Second Chamber Sponsor can speak on the Floor during the Second Reading.
 - Second Chamber Committees phrase their reports as "Be Concurred In" or "Be Concurred In, as Amended". Unfavorable report is "Be Not Concurred In". In the First Chamber it was "Do Pass" or "Do Pass as Amended" or "Do Not Pass".
3. **Bill Passes Second Chamber with No Changes:**

If the Second House agrees to pass the bill "as is" with no new amendments, and does not make any changes to the bill, the bill is:

 - **Enrolled:** the bill is prepared in its final form with all amendments; it is checked for accuracy, and is printed.
 - signed by the presiding officers of both chambers, then
 - sent to the Governor to sign.
4. **Bill Passes Second Chamber With Changes And First Chamber Agrees:**

The bill goes back to the First Chamber, and the question is voted on the Floor of the Chamber (the bill goes through both the Second and Third Readings again to consider and vote on the new amendments. If there are a lot of Changes, the bill may be referred back to Committee for a hearing). If the vote in the Chamber of origin supports these new changes, then this is the bill that passes. The bill is then enrolled, signed, and sent on to the Governor (as above).

5. **Bill Passes Second Chamber With Changes And First Chamber Rejects New Changes:**

- The First Chamber may ask that the Second Chamber recede (give up) these new amendments. If not agreed to, each Chamber will appoint a Conference Committee.
- **Conference Committee:**
 - The leader of each Chamber (House Speaker, Senate President) each appoints a conference committee to meet with the like committee of the other Chamber.
 - Generally composed of three members from the House and three from the Senate.
 - Usually the sponsor of the bill is a member.
 - A "Regular" Conference Committee is limited to considering only the disputed amendments. A "Free" Conference Committee may change the entire bill or think up new amendments and additions to the bill as long as the original purpose of the bill is not changed.
 - These committees will try to reach a compromise and recommend amendments acceptable to both chambers.
 - If no agreement is reached in the conference committee, they report their disagreement and either body may ask that a new conference committee be appointed. Otherwise, the bill may die.
 - If both chambers accept the changes, then the bill is enrolled, signed and sent to the Governor.

What Happens When the Bill Passes Both Houses and is Sent to the Governor:

1. The Governor signs the bill; the bill becomes law and is enacted.
2. The Governor vetoes the bill.
 - It is sent back to the Legislature with the reasons for the veto.
 - If both Chambers can muster a two-thirds Vote in each Chamber to override the veto, then the bill will pass against the Governor's objections. This does not happen very often.
Otherwise, the bill is dead.
 - The Governor can send it back with recommendations for amendments. the Legislature can:
 - Go through the process of amending the bill and accepting the Governor's amendments
 - Override the veto
 - Let the bill die
 - Unlike the Federal Government, there is no "pocket veto" -- this means that if the Governor does not act on a bill within 10 days, the bill will become law.
 - If the Governor vetoes a bill after the session has adjourned, the Legislature will be polled by the Secretary of State. If two-thirds of each chamber votes to override, the bill becomes law.

The above was adapted from the Montana Legislative Website:
The Montana Legislative Process: Instruction for Montana's Youth
Montana Legislative Branch - How a Bill Becomes Law in Montana
Legislator's Handbook
Committee Procedure in Montana
House, Senate and Joint Rules

Implementing the Bill:

1. The Board is appointed by the Governor.
 - If we are under the Alternative Health Care Board, 2 new members will be appointed.
 - If we have our own Board, all members will be appointed.
2. The Board will develop the Rules and Regulations to flesh out what is meant by the law that was passed.
 - The R&Rs cannot make new law, nor can they be more restrictive. They are intended to be guidelines to carrying out the intent of the law.

- A hearing is held to elicit public feedback on the R&Rs. The Board Passes the R&Rs, and begins implementing the law.

What it Really Takes to Get a Bill Passed and Implemented

All of the above steps hold true for what it takes to get a bill passed and implemented. However, there is more to it than that. Essentially, we can break the process into 5 parts:

1. [Choosing a Requester, Sponsor and Lobbyist](#)
2. [Developing an Acceptable Draft](#)
3. [Pre-Legislative Session Negotiations](#)
4. [During Legislative Negotiations](#)
5. [After Legislative Session Negotiations](#)

Choosing a Requester, Sponsor and Lobbyist:

These choices are critical. They can make or break the bill.

Definitions:

The Requester and Main Sponsor (the person who introduces the bill into the first chamber) can be the same person, or they can be different people.

- **Requester:** the person who submits the request to the Legislative Services Division to start working on the bill draft.
- **Sponsor(s):** Legislator(s) who shepherd(s) the bill through the actual legislative process.
- **Lobbyist:** a paid professional who helps to get a bill passed; an individual who is working with a group/self to get a bill passed.

The Requester:

Since the Legislator is given a limited number of prioritized bill drafts (5), the Requester is likely someone who is very interested in the topic and will also want to act as Sponsor. However, it is possible for the Sponsor and Requester to be different people: The Legislator interested in Sponsoring can approach the Requester and ask to take over the bill (once drafted, the bill is "delivered to" the Requester who gives it to the Sponsor, who puts their signature on the bill and introduces it). Legislators can unofficially "swap" bill draft requests (one would make a request, but then turn over sponsorship once the bill is drafted).

The Sponsors:

There are at least two sponsors for any bill, one from each chamber of the Legislature. The person considered the main sponsor introduces the bill into the first chamber. The Floor Sponsor is the person sponsoring the bill in the second Chamber. The original sponsor can't debate the bill on the floor of the second Chamber, so that is left to the Floor Sponsor. Anyone else can sign on (they literally put their signature on the bill) as a co-sponsor before the bill is introduced. Ideally, the more co-sponsors the better; this means that you typically have the vote of that legislator.

The choice of the Sponsors is critical. If they are not fully "sold" on the philosophy and idea behind the bill, they are likely to make compromises detrimental to the profession. In 1997, we picked a different Sponsor than the Requester, largely because we found someone more willing to shepherd the bill through the process who had a lot more seniority and was more amenable to our ideas, and was not as easily dissuaded by opposition lobbyists. We were fortunate (very lucky, actually) in that the Requester was responsible enough to let us know

so that we could make the appropriate change. In 2003, the Sponsor started espousing opposition philosophy at the legislative hearing. Screening these Legislators for possible conflicts of interest is vital. Ensuring that they will be on "our team" and follow our wishes is critical. Just picking someone because they want to Sponsor is not in our best interests. They need to be screened for their motivation and for potential conflicts of interest. Picking someone who understands the issues, who will truly advocate for us, is what we absolutely need.

The Lobbyist:

The Lobbyist's job is to help "grease the wheels" and act as a guide in getting the bill passed. They know the process inside and out, the players involved, and who owes what to whom. Bills are often passed through bargaining and the exchange of political favors, not necessarily on the merits of the bill (cynical, but true). They help persuade legislators to vote for the bill, and to aid in the negotiation with the opposition.

Lobbyists can be hired for varying amounts of work. For example, they can do most of the Legislator contacts and pave the way for the bill's passage. Or they can be very passive and just give guidance during the process. In 1997, we didn't have very much money, so we hired one to do the latter. We hired him for a set number of hours of consulting time and to teach us the ins and outs of what we needed to do prior to the Legislative session, as well as during the session. When it came time to do the actual lobbying, we did that ourselves (two days or more per week for most of the session). In this instance, it wasn't so important that the Lobbyist understand all of our issues.

However, it is important to screen any lobbyist for conflict of interest, common ties to the opposition, and experience. For example, if the lobbyist has previously worked for a potential opponent (any other medical profession that has expressed prior opposition), could that create a conflict of interest? How would the Lobbyist handle it if a previous employer wanted to hire them back to deal with the issue? Would they be obliged to step aside at a critical juncture if they have that type of agreement or ethical standards? The answers to these questions are crucial in choosing a lobbyist.

If the Lobbyist is hired to "get the bill passed" but is not educated as to the issues, they will not necessarily negotiate in our best interests. We were told back in 1997 that a good Lobbyist could pass anything without understanding it, that no or little understanding of the issues was required. That may be true, but what would be passed? Laws are the result of compromise. If practitioners do not understand the implication of certain language (and it's clear from past experience that most massage therapists involved in the legislative process do not), then the Lobbyist needs to have enough understanding of our issues and the legal expertise to keep from giving away the store.

Developing an Acceptable Draft:

The question is: Acceptable to Whom?

Not only does the bill have to be acceptable to massage therapists and bodyworkers (and other somatic practitioners), but it must be acceptable to a lot of competing professions. Although all licensure bills are put forth with the notion that protecting the public is what is paramount, the legislative process is essentially about "turf" battles and each profession protecting its piece of the pie. No discussion of this will ever occur, but this is what is happening. Therefore, the idea is avoid stepping on anyone's toes, stand up for what is absolutely necessary, and negotiating the rest. The trick is determining exactly what is "absolutely necessary."

It is imperative that we understand that the Bill Draft is the Starting Point. It is not what we will end up with. However, if the process is done right, then what is introduced to the Legislature will be changed very little. That will depend upon the Pre-session Negotiations.

Pre-Legislative Session Negotiations:

Legislators hate having to make a choice that will alienate their constituents, so they want all of the interested (warring is more like it) parties to come to agreement before the bill is even introduced.

To re-iterate: it is imperative that we understand that the document is malleable, and will change throughout the legislative process. It is the responsibility of those leading the process to make sure that they keep telling us that, and maintain good communication with community throughout the process to explain their actions.

Negotiations within the Massage Therapy, Bodywork, & Somatic Practice Community:

1. Practitioners have to understand that the bill that comes out of these negotiations must have enough wiggle room in it to allow the latitude to negotiate with everyone outside of the profession. Therefore, the bill has to be very expansive and include "everything" in the definition, with the understanding that some of it will be negotiated away. And it is fair and proper to put some things in the bill that will not change. For example, the national organizations have shown us exactly what is commonly accepted in the profession for massage therapy training. That would not be a point for negotiation. The profession needs to know and trust that the bill will be scuttled rather than pass something that is detrimental to the profession.
2. In developing a bill, what is most important is to have a group of individuals who are experienced with the process and have the attitude of what is best for the profession, not for themselves, or other special interest groups.
These individuals must understand Montana Law, the trends in other states, and model legislation and language proposed by the AMTA, ABMP, NCTMB and other groups.
Representatives from various groups should participate in order to give a wide breadth of input.
The 1997 final bill draft would be a good place to look at language: it was drafted by the Legislative Services Division and contains language that has been screened for legal and constitutional issues.
The Position Papers of the BLMTB reflect all of this, and would also be a good starting point for any bill drafting group.
3. Feedback must be gained from all constituencies within the profession at all phases of the process.
Regional Meetings with face-to-face contact is the best way to do this. Our recommendations:
 - a. One round of Regional Meetings occurs once an initial bill draft is developed. The purpose of these meetings will be to discuss the current bill draft, the possible negotiating points in the bill, and to gain feedback as to what the "bottom lines" (non-negotiable) points are with other professions.
 - b. A second round of meetings once negotiations have occurred with other professions to explain the changes that have occurred and why, to get further feedback from the various constituencies, and to garner further support for the bill.

For two rounds of meetings to occur, the whole process must start early. At the latest, the first round of meetings occurs in Spring, negotiations with other professions occur in the Summer and Fall, and the second round of Regional Meetings takes place in late fall.

Yes, it is a terrible time to travel, but it is necessary when your livelihood is at stake. The second round could also come via conference call – the spokespeople/negotiators calling to a group of people that have gathered together, with a local facilitator to direct traffic.

These Regional Meetings will also be used for Volunteer Recruitment.

4. In addition, other forms of contact must be made within the community: email, snail mail, and through the websites.

Negotiations with Everyone else:

There are many, many meetings that need to occur before the session starts. First of all, courtesy calls, discussions and negotiations need to occur with every interested party: the medical board, nursing board, chiropractors, veterinarians (how is animal massage handled, or not), just to name a few. Then of course there are the Physical and Occupational Therapists. In Montana, as you probably are aware, the OTs are not nearly as powerful politically as are the PTs, but they need to be attended to as they have been an opponent in our past. Once we've got a sense of what the concerns are, then we can work to change the bill to address them.

During these negotiations, care should be taken to understand the motivation of the changes suggested. In 1997, proposed changes by our opponents went against every one of our "bottom lines" (we don't think that was a coincidence). It is not that our "bottom lines" were all that unreasonable; we believe that we were being challenged to see what we would do. In short, we scuttled the bill as we did not have the resources to fight for what we wanted. We think the same thing happened in 2003, with a different result. For example, the grandfather provisions were strengthened (at opposition request), then changed again (due to pressure from massage therapists). This "weakening" of the provision was not opposed by the opposition, leading us to believe that they just wanted to see what they could get away with versus having a vested interest in those provisions (and besides, every profession newly regulated has generous grandfathering). Every negotiating point should be scrutinized; the deeper meaning should be probed, and not taken at face value. We must be excruciatingly careful in this part of the process, or we might be snookered into something that we do not understand the implications of until it is much too late.

At some point in the negotiating process, there will be a time where the disagreements will seem insurmountable. The midwives stood up against the physicians for the bedrock of what they believed in when they were trying to pass their legislation. And they prevailed. We have a lot more influence than we think we do (at last estimate there were about 1200 massage therapists in the state which represents a large group of wage earners). We must pick and choose our battles carefully and strategically. And we will prevail.

During Legislative Negotiations:

If we've done our job properly, all negotiations will happen ahead of time, we've approached Legislators before the session even starts, and we'll have all of our ducks lined up in a row before that first gavel is struck. And the bill will sail on through with a minimum of change.

There are a lot of ways to influence the legislative process to have it go our way. For example, the Leaders of the Senate and House pick which committee the bill goes to and who is on the conference committee too. Prior contact and negotiation with these leaders can help the process along. If we know we're going to have problems in one committee, if we have ear of the Leader of the Chamber they can assign it to another one. The Committee Chairs decide when the hearings and executive action are scheduled, which can also be turned to our advantage. For example, if we don't have enough votes in the whole chamber, the bill could be held long enough in committee for us to line up the necessary votes or to make the necessary changes in the bill. There are also procedural issues that can be turned to our advantage. But these things require the development of relationships – it is not what you know, but who you know.

Grassroots campaigning is also vital both prior to and during the session. Although we will give it short shrift here, its importance cannot be emphasized enough. Here's a good example of how it's done: in 1997, the opposition contacted legislators by letters, fax and phone within just a few day period. Not just by any constituent, but by someone who knew that legislator personally and had a relationship with them. Now, who will that legislator listen to and trust: a constituent they don't know, or a constituent they know and have a relationship with? These kinds of networks and contacts take time to develop. But it is not that hard to maintain, once established. There are a lot of ways to develop a grassroots campaign and spin the message to our advantage. This avenue has, quite frankly, been overlooked in more recent endeavors.

After Legislative Session Negotiations:

Most people think that once the bill is passed, that the bill is done and the process is over – Far from it! The rules that administer the bill also need to be developed. What goes into these rules and regulations determine how the law is administered. Since the governor appoints the members of the board, these are political appointments, and "politics" can come into play here as well.

In conclusion, it's important for each of us to understand how the process works and the effect it can have upon the profession. As the old say goes, "knowledge is power." This little bit of information is just the tip of the iceberg in helping you to understand what happens before, during, and after the Legislative session. We hope that you find it useful.