

**Colorado State's Legislative Process**  
**Notes from NAMI-CO Legislative Day 1/15/03**  
**Senator Moe Keller's Presentation**  
**By Ann L. Schrader**

- Over 700 bills are introduced each session.
- Each legislator is allowed to introduce 5 bills (although this doesn't always happen) there are 35 state senators and 65 state legislators.
- There are 13-15 different times a bill can be killed – it is hard to get legislation passed. Only about a third of the bills introduced get to the Governor.
- As a citizen, you have a huge influence over the passage of a bill/or the failure by writing a letter to your senator or representative. You can find out who they are and contact info by going to [www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org) Sometimes one letter can change a vote. Phone calls are fine, but not quite as memorable.
- As a citizen, always be honest have the facts straight, and tell them when you don't know something.
- A bill can be introduced in either house.
- Once introduced it be referred to a relevant committee.
  - a. In committee there will be 2-3 readings, testimony from citizens, amendments made. \*\*This is the best time to advocate to kill bill or make amendments. You have the right to request an amendment, changing or adding to the idea.
  - b. If your district's representative or senator is on the committee – be sure to call first and let them know you are coming to the meeting and your position.
  - c. Be sure to know the number of the bill, its name, and the sponsor(s). You can find all of this info at [www.state.co.us](http://www.state.co.us) then click on legislation or general assembly and follow the links from there. You can also find out meeting times and locations.
  - d. All session bills have a deadline to be introduced – usually by 1/15 but there may be some “Late bills.”
  - e. If bill passes out of committee it may go to a 2<sup>nd</sup> committee, i.e. Financial. As a citizen you can testify at each committee except for appropriations committee, which just looks at budget and cost to implement.

If a bill passes out of a committee to the house or senate floor, as a citizen, you may still come down and lobby on the floor and watch the debate.

- a. Your legislator must invite you. To do this, speak to the Sergeant at Arms and tell him you are here to see your legislator.
- b. Usually the bill has 2-3 readings before a vote is taken. Debate, and then wait at least 24 hours before the final reading and vote. This is another time to advocate for your position on a bill.
- c. If a bill is passed, then it goes to the other house and follows the same process as above.

If a bill is approved by both state houses, then it goes to the governor to sign. As a citizen you can give your position on the bill to the governor via a letter.

