

NEW

Greetings from

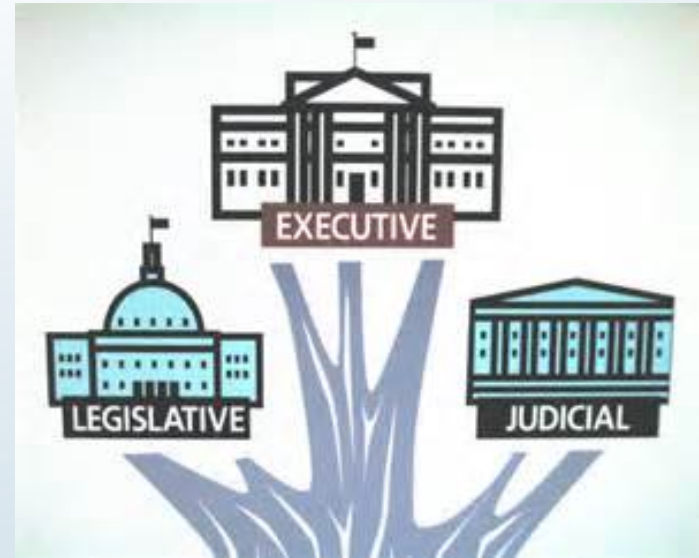
Advocacy 101: Understanding the New Jersey Legislative Process

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Branches of Government

The government of the State of New Jersey, like that of the United States, is divided into three coequal branches:

- The Legislative Branch enacts laws.
- The Executive Branch carries out the programs established by law.
- The Judiciary punishes violators, settles controversies and disputes, and is the final authority on the meaning and constitutionality of laws.

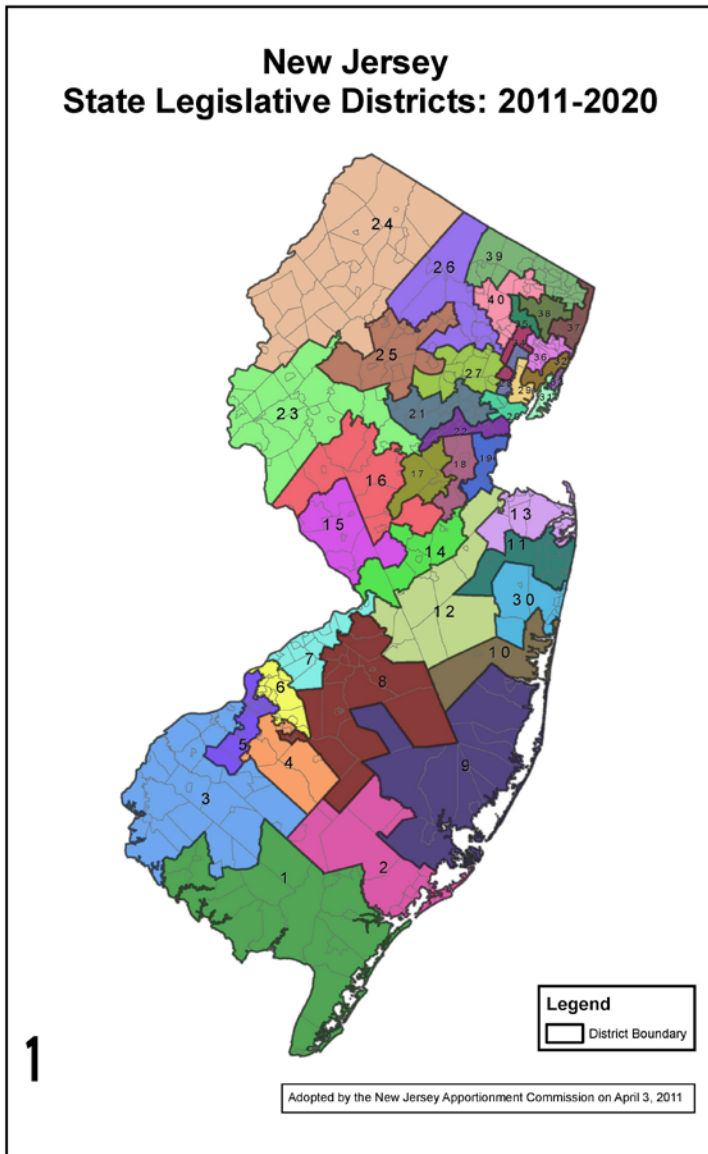


The Legislature

The Legislature has two Houses:
a 40-member Senate and
an 80-member General Assembly.

One Senator and two
Assembly members
represent each of the
40 legislative districts
in New Jersey.

Every ten years, after the Federal census, the
boundaries of the 40 districts are redrawn to
maintain an equal population in each district.



Leadership



Senate President
Stephen M. Sweeney
(D-3)



Assembly Speaker
Craig Coughlin
(D-19)

- Second and third in line of succession to the governorship after the Lieutenant Governor.
- Leadership decides the meeting schedules and the daily calendar of bills to be considered, appoints committee chairs and members, and refers bills to committees for consideration.

How a Bill Becomes a Law – Bill Drafting



- Ideas for legislation can come from a legislator’s constituent, an interest group, a public official, or the Governor to name a few.
- Legislators will ask their colleagues in the same House to join as co-sponsors.
- The Office of Legislative Services, a non-partisan agency of the Legislature, provides research and drafts bills.
- Once the bill is in it’s final form and ready for introduction a legislator must introduce the bill on a day where the legislature is in session and a “quorum” or necessary amount of members are present to conduct business.

How a Bill Becomes a Law – Committee Action

- The Senate President or Assembly Speaker refers bills to the appropriate committee.
- The chairman of the committee schedules a public hearing where bills will be discussed and potentially voted on.
- A bill can be amended in committee or be held for “discussion only” purposes.
- Once the bill is passed by the committee it is either referenced to another committee (when appropriate) or it is ready to be considered and voted on by the full house.



How a Bill Becomes a Law – House Votes

- A bill passes when it's approved by a majority of the authorized members (21 votes in the Senate, 41 in the Assembly) and is sent to the other House.
- A bill is delivered to the second House where it goes through the same process. If the second House amends the bill, it is returned to the first House for a vote on the changes.
- A bill receives final legislative approval when it passes both Houses in identical form.



How a Bill Becomes a Law

Governor's Action

- After final passage, a bill is sent to the Governor.
- The Governor may sign it, conditionally veto it (returning it for changes) or veto it absolutely. The Governor may veto single line items of appropriation bills. Bill passed in the last 10 days of a 2-year session may be "pocket vetoed."
- A bill becomes law upon the Governor's signature or after 45 days if no action is taken.
- If vetoed, a bill may become law if the Legislature overrides the veto by a 2/3 vote. A law takes effect on the day specified in its text or, if unspecified, the next July 4th.





The CARE Act

- **Idea** – AARP advocated for legislation that would provide for the identification of and training for designated caregivers for patients upon hospital discharge. To date, 16 states including New Jersey have signed some form of the CARE Act into law.
- **Sponsorship** – To turn an idea into a bill you must have legislative sponsors in both houses. The “prime sponsors” are the legislators that get top billing and weigh in about changes to legislative proposals. The “co-sponsors” are the legislators that sign their name to a bill to indicate their support. Assembly Speaker Prieto and Senator Vitale are the prime sponsors of the CARE Act.
- **Bill Drafts** – Bills can be drafted one of two ways. Either the Office of Legislative Services will take a legislators idea and put it into draft bill language, or in this case the advocate for the bill will provide language themselves. Since AARP used a similar model for legislation in other states they provided the draft language that OLS used to craft a bill.

The CARE Act

- Timeline

3/24/2014 - Introduced, Referred to Assembly Health and Senior Services Committee

5/8/2014 - Reported out of Assembly Comm. with Amendments, 2nd Reading

5/22/2014 - Passed by the Assembly (74-0-3)

6/2/2014 - Received in the Senate, Referred to Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee

9/15/2014 - Reported from Senate Committee with Amendments, 2nd Reading

9/22/2014 - Substituted for S2127 (1R)

9/22/2014 - Passed by the Senate (36-0)

9/22/2014 - Received in the Assembly, 2nd Reading on Concurrence

9/29/2014 - Passed Assembly (Passed Both Houses) (73-0-0)

11/13/2014 - Approved P.L.2014, c.68.

Online Advocacy Tools

- Governor Murphy's website - <http://www.state.nj.us/governor/>
- The State Legislature's website - <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/>
- Govnet, Legislative tracking service - <http://govnetnj.com/>
- LexisNexis, Total research system – www.lexisnexis.com
- New Jersey Register - <http://www.lexisnexis.com/njoal>
- New Jersey Administrative Code - <http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/njcode>
- Glossary of Terms - <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/legislativepub/GlossaryofTerms.pdf>

Questions / Discussion



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