

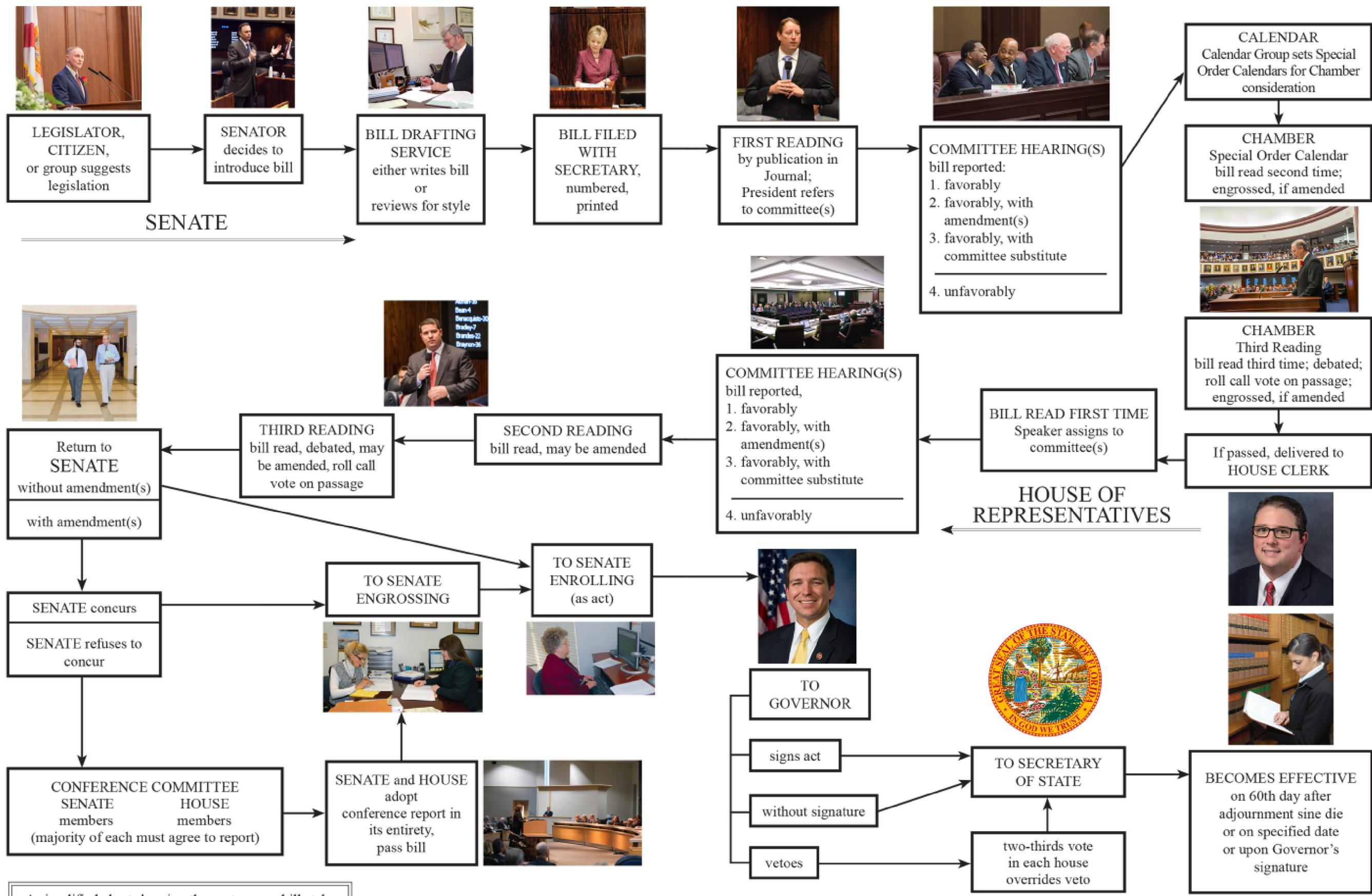


# FLORIDA MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY COALITION



Understanding Florida Government in Relation to Mental Health

Part 2



A simplified chart showing the route many bills take through the Florida Legislature. Bills may originate in either house. This bill originated in the Senate.



Reading legislation  
(or regulation/code)

- What does the underlining and overstriking in bill and amendment text mean?
- Underlining and overstriking indicate changes being made to the text of existing law/rule/etc.
- Underlined text is new language and overstriking indicates text being removed from existing law.



# Types/Versions of Bills

- Different types of bills include:
    - Appropriations, Claim, General, Local, Memorial, Resolution, Reviser, and Trust Fund
  - Different versions of bills include:
    - Committee Substitute, Engrossed, Enrolled, Proposed Committee Bill, and Proposed Committee Substitute
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# Types of Committees/Councils



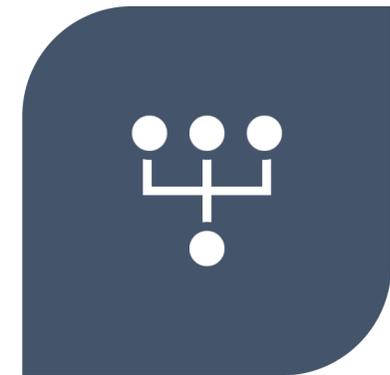
STANDING COMMITTEES (I.E.  
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS)



SELECT COMMITTEES (I.E. WATER  
POLICY)



CONFERENCE COMMITTEES (I.E.  
BUDGET)



JOINT COMMITTEES (I.E. JAPC)

## Contacting Legislators & Effective Communication

- Supporting and voting for candidates running for the legislature is only the first step.
- Once elected, citizens and groups (such as the FMHAC) should share their opinion and ideas with their elected officials.
- We can help them decide what to do about the issues and pending legislation.



## Contacting Legislators & Effective Communication

Know who your legislators are and how to contact them.

If you don't know who represents you, you can find out by visiting [flsenate.gov](http://flsenate.gov) and [myfloridahouse.gov](http://myfloridahouse.gov)

Make sure you understand the legislative process. Even the most basic understanding of the process will help you effectively express your ideas.

# Contacting Legislators & Effective Communication

- Contact your legislator about a particular issue before the Legislature takes action on it.
- Use a variety of communication methods (phone, email, or visit your legislator).

# Contacting Legislators & Effective Communication

01

Tell your legislator what affect you think a particular bill, if it becomes law, will have on you, your children, business, or community. Alternatively, share a personal experience if it *directly* relates to the bill or amendment being discussed. Be concise, but specific.

02

Be polite, even if you disagree strongly with the legislator and/or his or her opinion on matter you are addressing. Your communication will be more effective if you are perceived as being reasonable in your approach.

03

Suggest a course of action and offer assistance.

## Contacting Legislators & Effective Communication

- If writing/emailing legislators, address them with their appropriate title (i.e. Chairman, Chairwoman, Senator, Representative, etc.) and be absolutely certain you spell your legislator's name correctly and use the correct address.
- Type legibly and give your name, address or email correctly so they can respond.
- Keep letters and email brief. Never write more than one page. Concise = keep their attention.

## Contacting Legislators & Effective Communication

- Identify your issue or opinion at the beginning of the letter, don't bury your main point under trivial text.
- Cover only one issue per letter.
- Back up your opinions with supporting facts.
- If all possible, personalize the letter, the same letters to multiple legislators have less of an impact and can have an adverse and unintended causation.



## Contacting Legislators & Effective Communication

If visiting or calling your legislator, plan ahead. Keep to the point and discuss only one issue.

Organize your thoughts ahead of time and make notes to help you stay on track.



# Contacting Legislators & Effective Communication

- When planning to visit your legislator, make an appointment if all possible.
  
  - Bring a one-page fact sheet concerning your issue to give to your legislator that has been either received from or vetted by the FMHAC.
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Executive Branch

The executive branch of Florida  
consists of the:

Governor

Lieutenant Governor

Attorney General

Commissioner of Agriculture

Chief Financial Officer

## Executive Branch

- State agencies & departments, that are specific to our industry include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Department of Children and Families
- Agency for Health Care Administration
- Department of Health



## Contacting the Executive Branch & Effective Communication

When contacting and communicating with any of the Florida Cabinet members or State agency heads and staff, apply many of the same techniques when addressing legislators.

**The rulemaking process each agency must follow provides for public input when developing rules.**

A background image of a snowy mountain range under a blue sky. The mountains are covered in snow and are set against a clear blue sky. The foreground is a snowy field.

# Conclusion

Understanding the Government that regulates our industry  
makes us more effective!



Goals/agenda

1. Educate legislative members of FMHAC, our goals, and make up (NAMI & MHA Affiliates).

- A. *Remain in constant contact with the appropriate committees, committee staff, and members.*

2. Ensure a cohesive relationship with as many organizations/coalitions that jointly support our goals.

3. Remain in contact with the appropriate departments/agencies as necessary.