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LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY 101

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Presented by NANN's Health, Policy, and Advocacy Committee



Objectives

- To teach NANN members how to effectively become active in legislative advocacy with confidence
- To increase awareness of pertinent advocacy issues and opportunities

Goals

- **Expose** our members to current legislative efforts, issues, and needs surrounding neonatal legislative efforts
- **Teach** techniques for researching current legislative issues that pertain to neonatal medicine
- **Provide** a forum for our members to share their work on current issues, legislation, and advocacy efforts
- To **foster** awareness about legislative advocacy among NANN/NANN-AP members within their local communities while **empowering** NANN/NANN-AP members to be active advocates for children's health issues, both now and in the future

The Three As of Advocacy

- **Awareness:** Your own friends, family, colleagues, and legislators
- **Advancement:** By getting involved, you can help advance a movement or effect a policy change
- **Action:** Make contacts, write letters, call or visit your elected officials, or support an organization



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Why Should We Be Advocates?

- Babies cannot advocate for themselves
- We have a unique position to see problems and understand their implications
- The problems matter
- We have “respect” and “credibility”



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Advocacy in Action

- Advocacy is a major goal for the association
- Make an impact on neonatal nursing practice regulation, policy, and the health of neonates and their families
- Monitor progress on key issues and seek opportunities to work in coalition with other healthcare-related groups that share its ideals



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Collaboration

Collaborating with numerous organizational partners, including but not limited to the following, on advocacy issues for members of the neonatal healthcare team, our patients, and families:

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing
- American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
- AAP Committee on Fetus and Newborn
- AAP Neonatal Resuscitation Program
- AAP Section on Neonatal Perinatal Medicine
- AAP Section on Transport Medicine
- Alliance for Nurses in Healthy Environments
- American Nurses Association
- Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems
- Council of International Neonatal Nurses
- Family Centered Care Task Force
- International Neonatal Consortium
- Licensure, Accreditation, and Education
- March of Dimes
- National Coalition for Infant Health
- National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
- Nursing Community Coalition
- Nursing Organizations Alliance
- National Task Force for Quality Nurse Practitioner Education
- Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute
- United States Breastfeeding Committee
- Vermont Oxford Network



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Advocacy Toolkit

Building Knowledge

Effective advocacy begins with an understanding of the core issues and positions influencing neonatal nursing and advanced practice. Become familiar with NANN and NANN-AP's position on education, regulation, policy, and patient care.



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Understanding the System

How does a bill become a law? Is it how we learned in school? *Sort of, but not 100%.*



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Take Action

What can you do?

- Get involved – become a member of the [Advocacy myNANN Community](#)
- Become a member of NANN and NANN-AP – this is the first step to getting the advocacy bug
- Get acquainted with the issues affecting nursing, advanced practice nurses and providers, patients, and families at the state and federal levels



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The Legislative “Process”

Slow...

- Varies for different legislative bodies
- Know when your voice will be heard:
 1. Proposal of a bill
 2. Public hearings on the issue
 3. Lobbying individual legislators
- And intervene!



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Tracking Legislation

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/> provides:

- Step by step tracking for all federal legislation as you can instantly see where a bill is in the legislative process
- Lists of related or previous versions of a bill
- Committee assignment and list of committee members
- Pertinent facts about the progress of the bill
- Chance of bill being enacted (as a percentage)



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Congressional Facts

- The 119th Congress is currently in session
- During the 118th Congress
 1. 19,297 bills were introduced in the House and 994 passed (5%)
 2. 6,759 bills were introduced in the Senate and 1,029 passed (15%)
- The usual number of bills introduced in a Congressional session is 7-10,000 in the House and 2-3,000 in the Senate.
- *Visibility on a bill is important. Your lawmaker will not be familiar with many of the bills. Speaking up and telling our story may make all the difference when they vote on a bill.*



<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/statistics>

THE US LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

SENATE

A BILL IS INTRODUCED BY A MEMBER OF THE SENATE AND ASSIGNED TO A COMMITTEE FOR REVIEW.

THE COMMITTEE MEETS TO DISCUSS, AMEND, AND VOTE ON THE BILL.



IF APPROVED, BILL PROCEEDS TO THE FULL SENATE FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION, AMENDMENTS, AND VOTING.



PRESIDENT SIGNS THE BILL AND IT BECOMES A LAW.

IT STARTS WITH AN IDEA...



BILLS MUST PASS THROUGH BOTH CHAMBERS BEFORE BEING SENT TO THE PRESIDENT.

A CONFERENCE COMMITTEE, MADE OF MEMBERS OF BOTH CHAMBERS, MEETS TO RESOLVE ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE HOUSE AND SENATE VERSIONS OF THE BILL.

BOTH CHAMBERS VOTE ON FINAL BILL



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

A BILL IS INTRODUCED BY A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE AND ASSIGNED TO A COMMITTEE FOR REVIEW.

THE COMMITTEE MEETS TO DISCUSS, AMEND, AND VOTE ON THE BILL.



IF APPROVED, BILL PROCEEDS TO THE FULL HOUSE FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION, AMENDMENTS, AND VOTING.



THE VETO CAN BE OVERRIDDEN BY CONGRESS WITH A 2/3 VOTE.

VETO

PRESIDENT VETOES THE BILL AND SENDS IT BACK TO CONGRESS.



The Next Step...

The version of the bill that passes the House and Senate must be identical before the bill can be sent to the President for signature.

Legislative Example:

Protecting Our Infants Act (HR 1462 & S 799) – directs federal agencies to quantify the incidence of maternal opioid use and NAS while gathering and disseminating best practices for prevention and treatment of the problem

- Jointly introduced in the House and Senate in March 2015
- HR 1462 passed the House in September 2015
- S 799 passed the Senate in October 2015 but was amended so the bills were no longer identical
- The Senate version went back to the House and was passed on November 16, 2015
- S 799 was enacted (signed by the President) on November 25, 2015

Health, Policy, and Advocacy Committee

How do we serve you?

- NANN's HPAC tracks nursing, advanced practice, patient, and family legislation both at the state and federal levels
- Yearly, there are more than 1,000 bills introduced in both nursing and healthcare
- Having a basic understanding of how the legislative process works is just beginning

Go to <https://nann.org/about/nann-committees/> to find a current list of Health, Policy, and Advocacy Committee members!



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Legislative Updates

- Nursing scope of practice
- Workplace issues such as
 1. Safe staffing
 2. Mandatory overtime
 3. Safe patient handling and movement
 4. Workplace violence
 5. Telehealth on nursing practice



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NANN's Advocacy Accomplishments and Priorities

- Established partnerships with external organizations recognized in neonatal health policy
- Increased the visibility of the Health, Policy, and Advocacy Committee advocacy agenda
- Signed on to a variety of important bills and letters through the Nursing Community Coalition and other collaborative partnerships
- [From the Hill to the NICU](#) updates
- 2025 [NANNcast](#) advocacy mini-series
- Working with AWHONN on a collaborative Hill Day in 2026



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Advocacy Talking Points

Neonatal advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) scope of practice talking points:

- Professional role
- Education
- Accountability
- Responsibility
- Prescriptive and dispensing privilege



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Why Advocate?

“Unless someone like you cares
a whole awful lot, Nothing is
going to get better. It's not.”

- Dr. Seuss, The Lorax

