

SPAR POLICY AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVES (SPAR) STATE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

ASSOCIATION LIAISON

One of the most vital aspects of being an NPMA State Policy Affairs Representative (SPAR) is your volunteer role as the liaison between NPMA and your state association's work in state legislative and regulatory matters.

Our SPARs have varied levels of experience with engaging their local officials and regulators; some are new to the role and are growing their networks, while others proactively engage with their elected officials and have longstanding relationships with their regulators. The purpose of this document will be to assist you with general legislative processes that will be commonly referenced in your work as SPAR.

LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Each state has their own legislative branch tasked with governing through the passage of legislation. Each state is a little different, while most sessions run part of the year, some meet year-round like California or New York. While others, such as Texas and Nevada, only convene every two years.

Typically, each state has a bill filing deadline, meaning that any new legislation for consideration must be officially filed by a member before a specific date. Legislatures have an adjournment date, where all legislation must pass before the end of the session, or it dies.

A key aspect of the legislative process is the committee hearing. Here, most legislatures allow public comment or testimony on bills under consideration. This is a critical time for our industry to engage on a bill by testifying in opposition or support.

Testimony is the oral and/or written position someone takes on a bill that is submitted to the governing body (committee) for public record.

Each committee meeting varies, but usually, an advocate has approximately two minutes to testify in person. This gives committee members and the public the opportunity to interact and ask questions about the bill under consideration.

Because of these time limitations, NPMA recommends submitting longer written testimony ahead of the hearing, so committee members can be better informed when considering the bill for a vote.

LEADING INDUSTRY'S RESPONSE

There are numerous items and dates to keep track of as a SPAR; however, NPMA is here to help! As you are first getting started, we recommend you stay up to date on the following:

- State session dates and deadlines
- Bill introduction deadlines
- Tracking bills and committee hearings throughout the legislative session

NPMA SUPPORT

NPMA provides the following services to assist in the legislative process:

- Tracking legislation and alerting SPARs of any relevant bills
- Drafting testimony
- Preparing SPARs and other industry advocates
- VoterVoice grassroots messaging campaigns
- Industry fact sheets and publications
- Drafting letters to elected officials
- Communicating with other stakeholders and facilitating partnerships

If you have any questions about the legislative processes in your state, please reach out to the public policy team at NPMA. We are happy to work with you to find resources and/or examples of previous legislation in your state.

NPMA CONTACTS

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HELPFUL RESOURCES

State Legislature Links: <https://www.statescape.com/resources/legislative/legislature-links/>

State Legislative Sessions: <https://www.multistate.us/resources/2023-legislative-session-dates>