



## Legislative Guide for Grassroots Action



# MISSION STATEMENT

**The National Air Traffic Controllers Association, District #1-MEBA/NMU, AFL-CIO was formed to give our nation's air traffic controllers a strong voice in matters bearing on our worklives and the safety of the flying public.**

**Our mission is to advance the status, professionalism and working conditions of all air traffic controllers through collective bargaining, political action and other lawful concerted activity. As air traffic controllers, we play a critical role in providing safe air travel. Thus, NATCA is also dedicated to furthering the public's interest in safe and efficient air transportation.**

*Adapted from the  
National Air Traffic Controllers Association  
Constitutional Preamble*



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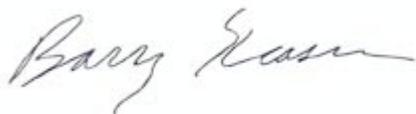
## Dear NATCA Activist:

The National Air Traffic Controllers Association has become a dynamic force on Capitol Hill. More and more elected officials are becoming aware of the issues which affect air traffic controllers and the impact their support can have. This is due to the fact that NATCA has taken advantage of America's democratic form of government and the opportunity to freely participate in our political process.

In recent months NATCA has won victories on issues such as Chapter 71 and the five percent operational differential. These victories would have been impossible without strong, persistent, grassroots political action by NATCA activists.

Because grassroots lobbying is the key to any successful lobbying effort, NATCA has developed this manual, *The Legislative Guide for Grassroots Action*. The information is designed to give air traffic controllers a better understanding of how the political process works and to give activists the basic tools needed to participate. This manual is designed to help you, your co-workers and families be heard, be counted and be effective. Whatever role NATCA chooses to play in the legislative process, this manual will assist in that effort. We hope you will find it useful in answering any questions you may have about the political process and the important part you can play.

In solidarity,



Barry Krasner  
President



Mike McNally  
Executive Vice President

# GRASSROOTS LOBBYING

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## Why We Lobby

**What is lobbying? Who are lobbyists? Lobbying is an American tradition which found its roots in the United States Constitution. Every American is guaranteed the right to petition our government. That is exactly what lobbying is.**

We lobby when we express our views on public issues so our elected representatives know what we as voters are thinking. Thus, in an abstract sense, every NATCA member is a “lobbyist.” Of course, NATCA has a staff of lobbyists to monitor legislation on Capitol Hill and to keep you informed about what’s happening. But as voters and as concerned members of the community, you are NATCA’s best lobbyists. You live and work and vote for – or against – your own elected officials, and they must be responsive to your views.

When NATCA’s membership mobilize fully, we are a formidable team – a team that has demonstrated its effectiveness on issue after issue throughout the nation.

## Influencing the Legislative Process

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The legislative process is a human process.

Individual women and men elected to represent the rest of us meet to vote on laws that affect our communities, our jobs and our families. At the federal level, each of us, no matter where we live, has one representative in the House and two senators in the Senate.

It is important to know who they are. It is our job to build relationships with these lawmakers and hold them accountable for their decisions. If you need help in learning who they are or how to get in touch with them, contact the NATCA Legislative Affairs Team at (202) 223-2900.

It is during the long transition of a bill through Congress to the final vote that NATCA members influence the decisions being made and the final form of the law.

When a bill is introduced, a multitude of conflicting political forces are brought to bear on legislators by various interests. The law that emerges is usually quite different from the original bill.

During the journey of a bill through Congress, however, critical decision points occur during which your efforts as a political activist can make a big difference. It is the job of NATCA’s Legislative Affairs Team to keep track of this process and to identify the points at which we can all work to the best effect.

Political activists know that the progress of a bill is often less than orderly. Long periods of inactivity may alternate with sudden legislative emergencies. In such situations, it is the willingness and ability to act quickly and decisively that gives NATCA its best chance to influence legislation vital to workers. You are the voters. It is what you say that ultimately counts in Congress.

### **Does Grassroots Lobbying Work?**

Yes! Grassroots lobbying probably works better today than it did in the past, partly because Congress has changed and the techniques used to lobby have been enhanced. Today, the average time a member stays in office has decreased. Less than one-half of elected representatives now serving in Congress have held office for less than three terms. As a result, members are aware that reelection is no sure thing –so they listen more closely when voters speak their minds. Because members of Congress are always thinking about reelection, they also tend to spend more time back home in their districts, meeting and listening to the concerns of constituents. This is done partly to combat any future campaign attack from being “out of touch” with the people who elected them. At the same time, this affords organizations like NATCA the ability to have their members and their families lobbying the elected representatives on legislative issues of importance to air traffic controllers and federal workers as a whole.

In December of 1992, the Gallup Organization, in conjunction with Bonner and Associates, gathered data directly from nearly 150 new and returning members of the US House and Senate, over 28% of the entire Congress, to gain their opinion on which type of lobbying activity most affects voting decisions on critical issues. Based on the many types of grassroots lobbying techniques used today, members were asked which were the most effective and which were the least effective. Effectiveness was defined as sources of information to which members of Congress say they pay most attention when deciding how to vote.

#### **The sum of the findings:**

Communications from constituents – the home district individual, head of a group, head of a business – are by far the most influential means of getting a message to a member of Congress, according to these respondents.

There is a large difference in the attention paid to personal non – form communications, such as individual personal letters, as opposed to canned communications, such as form letters, postcards or petitions. Members pay more attention and are more responsive to the concerns of their constituents if they believe that the lobbying being done is

personal, as opposed to being an organized effort that is being controlled by a few individuals or an organization.

The bottom line reaffirms everything this book is based on – democracy works – providing one takes the time to be a part of the system.

For elected officials who are sympathetic, but not strong supporters of air traffic control and federal employee issues, the NATCA grassroots network can help increase their commitment to become more supportive and active on behalf of NATCA legislation.

For those who are sympathetic, grassroots lobbying is a way of reaffirming support for those members who are important to NATCA. The relationships built through this type of effort will pay enormous dividends for years to come.

## ...Grassroots lobbying probably works better today than it did in the past...

Where the bill is...	You can ask your Representative to...
• Introduced	• Be a co-sponsor
• Assigned to Subcommittee	• Support our positions; vote for adoption or rejection.
• Sent to full Committee	• Support our positions; vote to report or not report.
• Sent to the floor	• Vote for or against the rule. Vote for passage or rejection.

## Lobbying on the Hill

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### Some do's and don'ts to remember when meeting with your senators and representative on Capitol Hill.

**DO:** Make certain that you are well-informed on the issues before you discuss the NATCA position on any legislation with a member of Congress, and to answer any questions. The better prepared you are, the more effective your presentation will be. The NATCA Legislative Affairs Team stands ready to assist you with any speaking point necessary for an effective presentation.

**DO:** Be sure to call before your visit to make an appointment with the member or a staff person well in advance. Dress appropriately and be punctual. Clearly state who you are and your relationship with NATCA. Be brief and succinct when discussing the issues.

**DO:** Leave a fact sheet on the issues with the member of Congress before you leave the meeting. Should he or she desire more information, refer them to the Legislative Affairs Team at the NATCA national office.

8 **DO:** Be courteous and respectful when meeting with your senators or representative, even if he or she disagrees with our position on an issue or issues.

**DO:** Offer to meet with a relevant staff person, if the member of Congress is not available. Often times you can make your case with them and if presented well, you can count on them to convey to the member of Congress how you feel on a particular issue. members of Congress rely a great deal on their staff for information on various issues.

**DO NOT:** Be afraid of your elected representatives. They have an obligation to listen to your concerns and are quite willing to do so. If they feel the meeting was a productive use of their time, they will leave with a good impression of you and NATCA and with a good deal of valuable information to assist them.

**DO NOT:** Exaggerate or misrepresent the NATCA position on any issue. Stick to an honest presentation of the facts. Avoid bargaining or trade-offs.

**DO NOT:** Argue with a member of Congress, or threaten them in any way. Nothing could be more devastating to the advance of our legislative agenda than making enemies on Capitol Hill.

## The Grassroots Lobbying Cycle

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During the legislative year, there are several key times when lobbying your representative or senators has the most effect. And whatever action you have planned, it will receive the most attention when your lawmaker hears from you in his or her home office.

Most business in Congress is conducted Tuesday through Thursday. Frequently, members of Congress return home on weekends, a circumstance that can provide opportunities for action. Other members (particularly those from the West Coast) return home only during the recess periods scheduled by the House and Senate leadership each year.

### THE RECESS PERIOD

Congressional recess periods (normally one or two weeks) are by far the best opportunities for persuasive local political action. It is typically during these times that “town meetings” and office visits with constituents are scheduled by members of Congress. For this reason, NATCA often tries to schedule coordinated action on a particular piece of legislation during such recess periods

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### SAME BILL, DIFFERENT ACTION

It is not unusual to hear about the same legislation time and time again. Messages, tactics and targets typically change as a bill moves through the legislative process.

When a bill is introduced, you may be asked to help convince your representative or senators to become co-sponsors. When the bill is in committee, your members of Congress may be needed to support NATCA amendments or help report the bill to the floor. When the bill reaches the floor of the House, your representative's vote will be needed to secure passage.

**Although they vary from year to year, congressional recess periods are generally scheduled around the following holidays:**

- Christmas/Hanukkah/New Year's
- Presidents Day
- Memorial Day
- Mid-August to Labor Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday
- Passover/Easter
- Independence Day
- Veterans Day

During election years, Congress typically adjourns for the year by October.

## Building Coalitions

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An important component of grassroots lobbying that is often overlooked is establishing a local coalition around a key issue. Building coalitions allows you to:

Expand the number of people who support an issue.

Maximize human and financial resources.

Demonstrate diverse support for an issue.

All these capabilities provide greater access to members of Congress and ultimately greater persuasion strength. NATCA often initiates or participates in coalitions on a variety of legislative issues, but building coalitions on the local level is far more effective and provides an important way for NATCA to build stronger ties with the local community.

Here are some items you should consider when proposing a local coalition:

1. Establish clear objectives for your coalition.
2. Make a list of target organizations needed to reach objectives.
3. Evaluate each organization in terms of the following considerations:
  - What resources does the group offer?
  - What is their track record within other coalitions.
  - What are they willing to do to contribute to the effort?
4. Solicit groups based on the evaluation.
5. Make your “sell” based on each group’s self-interest and motivation.
6. Establish a sound decision-making process before conflicts arise.
7. Conduct an initial activity that ensures credibility for the coalition.



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**All these capabilities provide greater access to members of Congress and ultimately greater persuasion strength.**

## Writing Your Legislator

Letter writing is the most effective form of grassroots lobbying because it shows that you, the constituent and voter, are spending the time and effort to express a viewpoint on an important issue. At times, one well written letter may influence a representative. However, effective grassroots lobbying depends upon large numbers of personal letters and other types of communications. Representatives will take note of the large number of constituents who contact them on an issue which may well influence their vote.

Writing letters to elected representatives achieves several purposes: to express an opinion on an issue and urge the member to support your views with their votes; to congratulate and thank a member for a particular vote; or express polite disapproval with a vote they cast. When writing to your representative, just remember to keep it polite. Do not become confrontational or threatening.

Those in a position of leadership within NATCA should use their titles when communicating with members of Congress. State the title and how many NATCA members you represent. An important key to remember is do not exceed your authority in representing NATCA. If a member finds out that you do not have the authority to speak for those you claim to represent, credibility with that member of Congress is damaged and further letters will carry less weight regardless how accurate and valid your claims may be.

### Tips for Writing Your Legislator

**1. Address it correctly.**

The Honorable John Doe  
US House of representatives  
Washington, DC 20515  
Dear Representative Doe:

The Honorable James Doe  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515  
Dear Senator Doe:

**2. Identify yourself fully.**

State your name, affiliation with NATCA and that you are a constituent.

**3. Be specific.**

Use the bill number in the letter. Write about only one issue per letter.

**4. Use a personal example.**

Explain how the issue affects you, your family, or your job.

**5. Be timely.**

Write when the issue is current.

## Sample Constituent Letter

The following is a sample format for a letter to a member of Congress that has been used by NATCA members.

TO THE HOUSE

The Honorable (Full Name)  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

TO THE SENATE

The Honorable (Full Name)  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Congressman/Senator (Last Name):

I am a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) employee and a member of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association. I am writing to voice my support for (HR 2276/S 1239). If passed, this legislation will reform the existing personnel and procurement system of the FAA and will bring about changes that are desperately needed.

I have seen first hand serious problems within the FAA. Many air traffic control facilities have computer systems that are over twenty five years old. Over the past year, system breakdowns have occurred in Chicago, Oakland, Pittsburgh and other facilities around the country. Besides aging equipment, many facilities are understaffed, having controllers work six days a week. I am hopeful that the current FAA reform bills in Congress can remedy many of these problems.

Last year, Congress included language within the Department of Transportation's appropriations bill for FY 1996 (HR 2002) which mandated that the FAA Administrator design and develop a new personnel system for the FAA. This new system is supposed to take effect on April 1, 1996. Under the terms of this legislation, FAA employees will be exempted from certain provisions of Title 5, including Chapter 71.

Language in (HR 2276/S 1239) would continue long standing employee protections found in Chapter 71.

These protections currently apply to almost every other federal employee. In fact, if Chapter 71 is not restored by April 1, 1996, I will lose protections enjoyed by almost all employees in the U.S. - both public and private sector.

Again, I urge you to vote in favor of (HR 2276/S 1239). If (HR 2276/S 1239) is not brought to a vote before April, please support any other means which preserves Chapter 71 for FAA employees before this deadline. It is crucial that Congress continue to send the message that air traffic controllers are valued for our service.

Sincerely,

Name

## Meeting Your Legislator

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Members of Congress return frequently to their congressional district and state. One of the most effective ways of getting your views known is to meet with him or her in the local office. How do you prepare for this meeting?

1. Call the office for an appointment.
2. Call or write to confirm the appointment shortly before the date set for the meeting.
3. Select a group for your delegation. Keep the group to no more than three people. Besure the members of your delegation are constituents.
4. Meet with the delegation prior to the appointment.
5. Agree on an individual to lead the delegation.
6. Brief your delegation on the reasons you support or oppose the legislation. It is very important that you take enough time to organize your arguments and thoroughly prepare your delegation.
  - Assign the responsibility for communicating different points that should be made to different members of the delegation.
8. Be clear on what it is you want your representative or senator to do.
9. When you enter the office, the leader should introduce each member of the delegation.
10. Tell the legislator why you are there and clearly state what it is you want him or her to do.
11. Keep the legislator on the subject. Politely but firmly pull the meeting back to the main issue if the conversation wanders.
12. Try to get a firm commitment from your senator or representative. This may not be possible. Repeat your position with a “hope” that he or she will vote with your position.

Your representative or senator depends on your vote to get reelected. The fact that you take the trouble to come to the office and discuss an issue that is important to you means you are a concerned voter. The views of your delegation will have to be considered.

Remember, follow up your meeting with a letter thanking your member of Congress for hearing your position.

## Congressional Staff

An effective member of Congress has an extremely tight schedule. Even with a scheduled appointment, there is always the risk of the legislator being called away for an important vote.

Even if your member of Congress has difficulty talking with you directly, he or she is interested in hearing what a constituent has to say. In these cases, a member of the congressional staff will be assigned to you. These people are knowledgeable and often act as the eyes and ears for the legislator.

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## LOBBYING TIPS

- Never be argumentative or disagreeable.  
Be ready to defend your position but always in a polite manner.
- Always know your material.  
Be prepared.
- Let your representative or senator know you appreciate any support received on NATCA issues by following up with a thank you letter.
- When possible, a specific commitment on legislation should be your goal when you contact your member of Congress. Ask the member either to co-sponsor or pledge their support on specific legislation. Be sure to pass along any information from your contact to the NATCA Legislative Affairs Team.



*NATCA delegation meets with Representative Peter King.*

## Guide For Telephoning Your Legislator

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**When local NATCA members are asked by the national office or their legislative representatives to call members of Congress on current legislative issues, the following guidelines will help to make the call easier. Calls from the legislator's constituents can make a difference in how the member votes on relevant NATCA and federal employee issues.**

All members of Congress can be reached through the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121. Simply ask for the office of your senator or representative and you will be put through to his or her office. When you are connected to the office, ask for the relevant staff member, i.e. person who handles aviation issues, if you do not know that person's name.

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You can also call the legislator's local office. This is especially effective during district work periods when they are back in the state. NATCA locals should have the local office phone numbers for the respective state's senators and representatives.

Some people may be reluctant to call their representatives because they are afraid they do not know enough about a particular issue. You do not have to be an expert when you call your member of Congress. Whomever answers will simply register your opinion, perhaps ask where you live to make sure you are in the right congressional district, and thank you for calling.

When you speak with a staff member, remember to keep your call concise. Do not be argumentative or threatening. Even when speaking with staff, express your thanks for the legislator's past support, express polite disappointment on actions taken that hurt air traffic controllers or encourage them to vote with NATCA on an upcoming issue. Always report any information you receive to your local as well as the national office.

## Sample Telephone Conversation

**Office:** Hello, Congressman Smith's office. May I help you?

**Caller:** Yes, my name is John Doe and I am a constituent and air traffic controller in the Congressman's district. Is the Congressman available?

**Office:** I'm sorry, but he is unavailable at the moment. May I help you?

**Caller:** Yes. Who handles the transportation issues?

**Office:** That would be Susan Wolf. Let me transfer you to her.

**Caller:** Hello, Ms. Wolf. My name is John Doe and I am an air traffic controller at (name of facility). I am calling about HR 2002, the FY '96 Transportation Appropriations bill. This bill contains provisions which would exempt air traffic controllers from Chapter 71 of Title 5, U.S.C. as of April 1, 1996. That is the provision which gives us the right to join a union, have disputes settled by outside parties, and collective bargaining. Without Chapter 71, morale will decrease and uncertainty and fear will increase. Such an atmosphere is not conducive to the safety mission of the FAA and its employees. By being exempt by Chapter 71, air traffic controllers will lose protections enjoyed by all federal employees. I would appreciate it if you would pass along my concern on this issue to the Congressman. Can you tell me how he feels about it? Would he be willing to sign onto a Dear Colleague letter calling for the removal of this provision?

**Aide:** The Congressman has not made a decision about the issue yet, but is interested because he has received several calls and letters about it.

**Caller:** Will you please get back to me with his position and views on Chapter 71?

**Aide:** Yes. Will you give me your address and phone number?

**Caller:** It's John Doe, 111 Main Street, Anytown, USA 12345. My phone number is (000) 555-1234. Thank you for your help. Good bye.

**Aide:** Good bye.

## Leaflets, Flyers, Brochures and Bulletins

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Getting union members interested in legislative issues, and politics in general, can be a challenge. Often, union members don't see the connection between politics and the union, so it may take some creativity to get their attention. Sometimes union members aren't aware of what's happening in Congress or how it may affect them and their families. There are many ways to begin the education process. One useful technique is to convey NATCA's concern about an issue or campaign in written form:

- an article in the NATCA local's newspaper or newsletter;
- a short leaflet, flyer, bulletin or brochure; or
- a letter from the local NATCA leadership to the members.

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A written format is one way to provide people with the facts in black and white and can become a building block to stimulate their future involvement.

### How do we decide which written format to use?

#### **An article in the NATCA local's newspaper or newsletter —**

- can be extremely useful to provide in-depth information in the short-term or over a period of time; and
- can educate and interest other family members if it is received at home.

#### **Leaflets, flyers, bulletins and brochures —**

- are a way to quickly get information to members at the worksite;
- can be designed to grab people's attention with a cartoon, graphic or provocative header;
- can provide people with enough basic information to encourage them to ask for more;
- can become a catalyst for discussion when they are handed out personally; and
- can encourage union members to get actively involved with the issue.

#### **A letter or special mailing from the local leadership —**

- can personalize the need for membership education and involvement about an issue; and
- can accompany the leaflet, flyer, bulletin or brochure, or it can be a follow-up request for action.



*NATCA legislative issues generate media interest.*

Whichever format is selected, timeliness and cost may become key consideration. Does the local have a regular newspaper or newsletter? How urgent is the issue and how does this match up with the publication date? Who is going to design the leaflet, flyer, bulletin or brochure? How many are needed? What about printing/reproduction costs? How will they be distributed? Is there time to get a letter mailed out? Are postage costs a factor? These are just a few questions to consider before making your choice.

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### **Basic Preparation Questions**

**No matter which format you choose to communicate the issue, there are a few basic questions to keep in mind when putting your written piece together:**

1. Why are you writing the article, leaflet, flyer, bulletin, brochure or letter? What action or attitude do you hope to influence?
2. What do you want to communicate to the reader? Clearly define your objective in your own mind.
3. Who are you trying to reach with this message? Your audience will determine the tone of your article, the kinds of arguments used and the action requested.
4. What are your most persuasive arguments? Identify the main reasons why it is in the reader's interest to act in the manner you suggest.

## After Thinking About An Issue, You Are Ready To Write

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### 1. Get attention through a headline.

“Computer Outage Can Ruin Air Traffic Controller’s Day”<sup>1</sup>

“Outages Plague Control Towers”<sup>2</sup>

A good headline should give people reason to read on. It also helps if you try to see things from the audience’s position. What is likely to make them stop and think?

### 2. Use a cartoon, picture or graphic if possible.

Leave plenty of space around the headline, the cartoon or the picture. Most people don’t want to read a long, rambling sheet of information. There are many labor cartoonists whose work can be incorporated into your publication. Also, there may be many talented NATCA members who can contribute ideas.

### 3. Outline your major points and use them as subheadings. Subheadings allow people to get the overall picture of the issue.

“Outmoded equipment raising new questions about air safety.”

“System breakdowns occurring nationwide.”

### 4. Explain each subheading and decided how much detail you will use.

- A one page flyer, bulletin or leaflet will probably just include highlights of information.
- A longer newsletter article or brochure will likely contain more specific details.

### 5. End with your main idea (what you want NATCA members to remember).

Wrap up your publication with a main point statement. The ending may also include an appeal for action:

“Call your representative and senators.”

“Write a letter to your representative.”

“Schedule a meeting with your representative.”

### 6. Consider choosing a regular layout or style for your publication.

People will begin to recognize your work and become familiar with its purpose. This will add a degree of comfort and confidence to their understanding the issues.

<sup>1</sup> The Times Leader. “Computer Outage Can Ruin Air Traffic Controller’s Day” Wilkes-Barre, PA, (August 28, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> Lisa Daniel. “Outages Plague Control Towers.” The Federal Times. (August 28, 1995).

## Other Points to Keep in Mind

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There is a wealth of information on legislative and political issues available from international unions, the AFL-CIO and state federations. This information may also be available electronically through LaborNET, the AFL-CIO's on-line computer connection, or through NATCA's home page on the Internet.

1. One issue at a time - focus your leaflet and make sure you do not cram it with too much information.
2. Stick to the point - you want it to be clear and orderly.
3. Keep issues local and specific - include perspectives that your audience can relate to.
4. Emphasize a pro-active message - suggest a convincing solution to the issue raised; don't just complain about it.
5. Don't get defensive - keep your message on target. Avoid getting bogged down trying to defend every position you take.
6. Think about how you are going to distribute the publication.

By hand - Who will distribute them and when?

By mail - Address labels, postage, timing?

Remember, any of the aforementioned written formats are very useful tools for NATCA locals to educate and involve the members. However, any effective grassroots campaign will involve several different methods. Try and add a personal contact component in the distribution or as a follow-up to the written materials.

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# THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

HOW

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## How A Bill Becomes Law

A bill can be introduced in either the House of the Senate. The process through each chamber is similar but not identical.

After a bill is introduced, it is numbered and referred to the appropriate committee. Legislation introduced in the House carries the prefix “H.R.” and its number, while Senate bills are prefixed by “S.” Other measures which can be introduced are:

**Joint Resolutions** – Designated H J Res or S J Res. They are subject to the same procedures as bills, with the exception of a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution. The latter must be approved by two - thirds of both houses and is thereupon sent directly to the administrator of general services for submission to the states for ratification instead of being presented to the president for his approval.

**Concurrent Resolutions** – Designated H Con Res or S Con Res. They are used for matters affecting the operations of both houses. These resolutions do not become law.

**Resolutions** – Designated H Res or S Res. They are used for a matter concerning the operation of either house alone and adopted only by the chamber in which it originates.

With few exceptions, bills are referred to the appropriate committees. For example, an FAA reform bill in the House would be referred to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and then that committee’s aviation subcommittee. When a bill reaches a committee it is placed on the committee’s calendar. The committee chairman may assign the bill to a subcommittee for study and hearings, or it may be considered by the full committee. Hearings may be public, closed or both. A subcommittee, after considering a bill, reports to the full committee its recommendations for action and any proposed amendments.

The full committee then votes on its recommendation to the House or Senate. This procedure is called “ordering a bill reported.” Occasionally a committee may order a bill reported unfavorably; most of the time a report, submitted by the chairman of the committee to the House or Senate, calls for favorable action on the measure since the committee can effectively “kill” a bill by simply failing to take any action.

Usually, the committee “marks up” or proposes amendments to the bill. If they are substantial and the measure is complicated, the committee may order a “clean bill” introduced, which will embody the proposed amendments. The original bill then is put aside and the clean bill , with a new number, is reported to the floor.



If a bill passes one chamber, similar legislation must pass through the other. That body may pass the bill as is, send the bill to committee for alteration or reject the entire bill. Or, it may ignore the bill submitted while it continues work on its own version of the proposed legislation. Unless the House and the Senate pass identical bills, a “conference committee” is appointed to merge the two versions into one bill. Once the conference committee reaches agreement on a compromise bill, it is returned to the full House and Senate as a conference “report” to be voted on by each body. If the bill is approved by both houses, it is then sent to the President for his signature. If the President signs the bill, it becomes law.

If the President vetoes the bill, it is returned to Congress. A two-thirds vote in both the House and the Senate is needed to override the veto.

The House and Senate leadership and committee chairs are instrumental in deciding who is assigned responsibility for legislation, how the legislative process is structured for debate and when it is scheduled for action on the floor and in committee. These decisions also play an important role in the final outcome of the bill.

A peculiarity of the Senate rules is the filibuster, or unlimited debate. This enables small numbers of Senators, or a single Senator, to block legislation supported by a majority. To end a filibuster, the Senate must vote for cloture, gaining the votes of at least 60 Senators. In the House, rules strictly limit debate and amendments.

**...The House and Senate leadership  
and committee chairs are instrumental  
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# THE BUDGET PROCESS



# Three

## The Congressional Budget Process

In order to prevent abuses of presidential power, the Framers of the Constitution deliberately gave the power of the purse to Congress. Only Congress can authorize the government to collect taxes, borrow money and make expenditures. The executive branch can spend funds only for the purposes and in the amounts specified by Congress. Article I, Section 9 of the Constitution states, “No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law.”

The process for the annual federal budget has been wrought with intense political struggles in the past two decades, and continues to be a forum for complicated political maneuvering and confusion. The following is an overview of the budget process.

### Authorization

Every piece of legislation establishing a federal program or directing government action includes an authorization for the government to spend money. These bills are called authorizing legislation and the committees that produce them are called authorizing committees. Usually, the authorization sets a maximum amount that Congress may spend on the program in a given year. Sometimes the legislation simply authorizes “such sums as may be necessary.”

### Appropriations

After a program is authorized, the focus then turns to how much money will actually be spent on the program, as opposed to how much is authorized to be spent. The decisions about actual spending are contained in appropriations bills which are written by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. The committees may not appropriate more than the amount authorized, but they can appropriate less - all the way down to zero.

The line item veto is a particularly controversial measure in the appropriations process. On March 29, 1996 President Clinton signed into law HR 2136 (PL 104-121), the Contract with America Advancement Act of 1996. This bill gives the president limited line-item veto authority and represents a significant shift in power from Congress to the president. The new law permits the president to strike any dollar amount mentioned in

an appropriations bill, any new entitlement spending or any tax benefit targeted to a group of 100 or fewer people. However, the president cannot touch any existing entitlements. Congress would need to have a two thirds vote to reject the cuts. The new veto powers will become effective January 1, 1997.

## **Revenue**

The decision about raising revenue to fund federal programs rests in the two tax writing committees– the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee. These two committees have jurisdiction over all taxes, user fees and other sources of revenue.

## **Budget Resolutions and Reconciliation**

Prior to 1974, the entire budget process consisted of three steps: authorization, appropriations and raising revenue. The problem with that system was that the three parts were separate; there was no unifying mechanism in the budget. The Budget and Impoundment Act of 1974 sought to unify the budget process by creating the House and Senate Budget Committees. These committees have two functions. First, they produce a budget resolution which outlines the amount of money the government will spend in the coming fiscal year in several categories. The budget resolution does not have the force of law; it does not require the president's approval.

Second, the committee writes a reconciliation bill. If the spending in the appropriations bills exceeds the levels in the budget resolution, the committee must specify which appropriations to cut. In some years, the reconciliation bill is the most significant piece of legislation enacted because it makes major changes in government spending.

## **Continuing Resolutions**

The government's fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30. In theory, all appropriations bills must be completed by that date, but they often become bogged down in the process. In these circumstances, Congress may pass a continuing resolution. This measure formally appropriates money for a period of time while the appropriations bills are still under consideration. Continuing resolutions can be designated for any amount of time.

## **Sequestration**

The final stage in the budget process is a tool designed to help reduce the federal budget deficit. Sequestration is a way to automatically reduce government spending without Congress having to vote to cut certain programs. Before sequestration can be triggered, Congress first passes a cap either on the size of the deficit or on total federal spending.

If the deficit or spending level exceeds the cap, sequestration occurs which reduces all federal spending equally in the amount necessary to meet the cap. For example, if the total amount that Congress appropriated for a given year exceeds a previously set cap on spending by one percent, then every federal program would be reduced by one percent.

**“No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law.”**



# 4 o n r

NATCA PAC

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## What Is A PAC?

A political action committee (PAC) is made up of a group of individuals who share a common interest, and who join together to have an impact on the political process. PACs make contributions to and expenditures on behalf of federal candidates and other committees. Such contributions are strictly regulated by the federal government and are made available to the public for review.

### Why should I contribute to NATCA PAC?

As a federal employee, government policies influence your livelihood and career more than any other factor. The type of individual who sits in Congress is of the utmost importance to air traffic controllers. The PAC identifies and contributes to qualified candidates who consider the interests of NATCA's members in deciding matters affecting federal workers and the FAA. By law, NATCA cannot provide this type of service since it is a labor union; it must be a separate entity. Therefore, we have NATCA PAC.

Campaign reform in the 1970s changed dramatically the way people could contribute to political campaigns. The importance of single, large donors diminished greatly, while modest contributors saw their influence grow by leaps and bounds through combining their resources. As an individual, you could only contribute to a few political races – most likely those in your state or congressional district. However, the PAC can support candidates in key districts across the nation. This is crucial since all members of Congress vote on issues critical to you as an air traffic controller and as a bread winner. Not only do PAC contributions give NATCA name recognition on Capitol Hill, they gain access to members of Congress.

Many people feel shut out or do not have the time to participate fully in the political process. Thus, the PAC is a good way to get involved. After all, you have more than the usual stake at hand – you are a federal employee. Participation is the key to effective and representative democracy. Encouraging this participation is one of the goals of the PAC.

NATCA PAC is independent of any political party. Our concern is electing qualified men and women, regardless of political affiliation, who are willing to give us a fair hearing and who are committed to a safe and efficient air traffic control system. There are no strings attached to the contributions candidates receive from NATCA PAC.

Contributors are free to contribute any amount of money they wish, even as little as a dollar or two per pay period. NATCA PAC has three donor categories:

Member of PAC-\$1 to \$3 per pay period

Century Club-\$4 to \$9 per pay period

Inner Circle-\$10 and above per period

## **NATCA PAC**

### **Guidelines and Regulations**

**The following represents guidance under current Hatch Act and Federal Election Commission (FEC) regulations with regard to the solicitation of PAC funds for your union's political action committee.**

## **I. Federal Election Commission**

### **A. Definitions**

Under FEC law, 11 CFR, Part 114, PACs are known as separate segregated funds (SSF). NATCA PAC is a separate segregated fund.

A labor organization or its SSF may solicit only from its restricted class. The restricted class includes the union's members, its executive and administrative personnel and the families of both groups. CFR 114.5(g)(2). These contributors may utilize payroll deductions as a method of payment.

A member is someone who has some right to participate in the governance of that organization, i.e. voting rights, or has some significant financial attachment to the organization, such as ownership stake, but not payment of dues or PAC funds. CFR 114.1(e)(2).

NATCA's associate members do not qualify.

### **B. Prohibitions**

Contributions must be voluntary. SSFs may establish guidelines and memberships for contributions but must ensure that an individual is free to contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest. NATCA PAC has established a three level donor club in which suggested contributions will place contributors in the Member of PAC level, Century Club level or Inner Circle level. However, a contributor may give any amount he or she determines appropriate.

NATCA PAC is prohibited from making a contribution or expenditure by utilizing money or anything of value secured by physical force, job discrimination, financial reprisals or the threat of force.

NATCA PAC may not use money obtained as the result of a commercial transaction.

### **C. Solicitations**

The most common methods of soliciting PAC contributions from the restricted class are oral solicitations, mail solicitations, solicitations in internal publications, solicitations at conventions and payroll deduction. The most efficient way to collect PAC contributions is through the use of payroll deductions. Only members of the union's restricted class may make payroll deductions.

However, labor organizations may make a total of two written solicitations per calendar year of nonmember employees of the organization where members of the union are employed, i.e. supervisors, staff, managers. CFR 114.6(b). These people are part of the union's expanded class. members of the expanded class may, at any time, give unsolicited contributions, provided they do not exceed \$5,000 per calendar year. Once again, they may not be on payroll deduction. The written solicitations will be coordinated by the national office and should not be organized by the locals.

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### **D. Fundraising Events and Special Promotions**

The full price of a fundraising item purchased (such as a t-shirt, a ticket to a fundraising event or a chance at a raffle) counts as the purchaser's contribution, even if part of the price paid is used to defray the costs of the fundraising program.

NATCA may use dues monies for the establishment, administration and solicitation of contributions to the PAC. Although 11 C.F.R. Section 114.1(a)(2)(iii) excludes the costs of establishing, administering and soliciting contributions to a PAC, a union may not use the solicitation process as a means of exchanging general treasury moneys for contributions. In other words, although raffles and prizes in connection with soliciting contributions are legal, the prizes may not be so numerous or valuable in relation to the contributions that it creates a "trading" situation.

NATCA or its locals may generally use their treasury funds to pay all costs associated with fundraising events, such as dinners, luncheons, receptions, dances and concerts. However, a portion of the costs of entertainment (other than food and drink) paid by NATCA or the connected local is subject to the "One-Third Rule."

The “One-Third Rule” provides that when a union raises PAC money through gifts to those giving, its dues money expenditures must not exceed more than one third of the individual voluntary separated segregated fund, a PAC need not include the costs of solicitation associated with an entertainment event in determining the total costs of the event for compliance with the One-Third Rule.

Example: Your local spends \$300 in treasury funds to purchase a TV set as raffle prize. Sales of raffle tickets raise \$600 in PAC contributions. Since one-third of the amount raised (\$200) is less than the cost of the prize (\$300), then the PAC should reimburse the local for the \$100 difference. On the other hand, if the PAC raises \$900 and one-third of that is \$300, no reimbursement is necessary.

Union dues may not be used to make a contribution to a candidate.

#### **E. Record Keeping**

An individual may donate a maximum of \$5,000 per year to NATCA PAC. The law permits an individual to contribute no more than \$100 in cash to NATCA PAC. Contributions exceeding \$100 must be made by check or money order. If you are to collect cash from an event, be sure to record each contribution.

PACs must keep detailed records of their financial activities. NATCA PAC is required to report receipts monthly to the FEC. These reports are open to public inspection.

Contributions from individuals and from groups must be recorded as follows:

Contributions aggregating over \$200 and contributions of more than \$50. For each contribution that exceeds \$200, either by itself or when aggregated with previous contributions from the same donor to the PAC during the same calendar year and for contributions over \$50, records must identify the:

- Amount
- Date of receipt
- Donor’s name and address

Contributions of \$50 or less. The FEC recommends two possible accounting methods:

1. Keep the same records as those above
2. In the case of small contributions collected at a fundraising event (cash contributions, etc.), keep a record of the name of the event, the date and the total amount of contributions received on each day of the event.

For contributions less than \$50, NATCA prefers to have the donor’s name and address. That way the donor can receive full credit for his or her contribution.

## **F. Rules for Transferring Money to NATCA**

Locals are encouraged to serve as collection agents for individual voluntary funds raised at the local level and then transfer these funds in a timely fashion to NATCA. FEC regulations require that certain time periods be followed:

- Contributions of \$50 or less must be forwarded within 30 days of receipt.
- Contributions exceeding \$50 must be forwarded within 10 days of receipt.

Collect individual personal checks, made payable to NATCA PAC. A local may use its own account for the temporary deposit and transmittal of contributions to the pac. The local must keep separate records of all receipts and deposits that represent contributions to NATCA PAC.

Cash collected must be transferred to NATCA PAC in the form of a cashier's check or money order made payable to NATCA PAC. Cash contributions may also be deposited into the local's account temporarily. Cash contributions must be deposited separately so that separate deposit slips are retained in the records.

Please record each individual's contribution, their name and SSN. Any contribution received without the proper record will be returned.

Funds should be transferred within 30 days.

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## **II. Hatch Act Regulations Regarding PAC Solicitations**

Generally, the Hatch Act provides that a federal employee may not solicit political contributions from the general public. An employee may solicit, accept or receive a political contribution from another person where that person is a member of the same labor organization, not a subordinate and the solicitation is for the multi-candidate political committee within the meaning of the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA), i.e. NATCA PAC.

Since the Hatch Act prohibits political activity on federal property, NATCA members cannot solicit political contributions from other NATCA members at the worksite, unless it occurs inside the union office. Such activity is also permissible outside a federal building on public sidewalks adjacent to the building.

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# GLOSSARY

# FIVE



## Glossary Of Congressional Terms

**ACT** – The term of legislation which has passed both houses of Congress and has been signed by the President or passed over his veto, thus becoming law.

Also used technically for a bill that has been passed by one house and engrossed. (See Engrossed Bill)

**ADJOURNMENT SINE DIE** – Adjournment without definitely fixing a day for reconvening; literally "adjournment without a day." Usually used to connote the final adjournment of a session of Congress. A session can continue until noon, January 3, of the following year, when a new session usually begins.

**AMENDMENT** – Proposal of a congressman to alter the language or stipulations in a bill or act. It is usually printed, debated, and voted upon in the same manner as a bill.

**APPEAL** – A senator's challenge of a ruling or decision made by the presiding officer of the Senate. The senator appeals to members of the chamber to override the decision. If carried by a majority vote, the appeal nullifies the chair's ruling. In the House, the decision of the Speaker normally is final, with no appeal to the members to reverse his stand. To appeal a ruling would be considered an attack on the Speaker.

**APPROPRIATIONS BILL** – Grants the actual monies approved by authorization bills, but not necessarily to the total permissible under the authorization bill. An appropriation bill originates in the House, and normally is not acted on until its authorization measure is enacted. General appropriations bills are supposed to be enacted by the seventh day after Labor Day before the start of the fiscal year to which they apply. (See Continuing Appropriations) In addition to general appropriations bills, there are two specialized types—deficiency and supplemental.

**AUTHORIZATION BILL** – Authorized a program, specifies its general aim and conduct and, unless 'open-ended,' puts a ceiling on monies that can be used to finance it. Usually enacted before appropriations bills are passed.

**BILLS** – Most legislative proposals before Congress are in the form of bills, and are designated as HR (House of representatives) or S (Senate) according to the chamber in which they originate and by a number assigned in the order in which they were introduced, from the beginning of each two year congressional term. "Public bills" deal with general questions, and become Public Laws in approved by Congress and signed by the President. "Private bills" deal with individual matters such as claims against the government, immigration and naturalization cases, land titles, etc., and become Private Laws if approved and signed.

The introduction of a bill, and its referral to an appropriate committee for action, follows the process given in "How a Bill Becomes Law."

**BUDGET** – The document sent to Congress by the President in January of each year's estimated government revenue and

expenditures for the ensuing fiscal year and recommending appropriations in detail. The President's budget message forms the basis for congressional hearings and legislation on the year's appropriations.

**BY REQUEST** – A phrase used when a senator or representative introduces a bill at the request of an executive agency or private organization but does not necessarily endorse the legislation.

**CALENDAR** – An agenda or list of pending business before committees or either chamber. The House uses five legislative calendars.

In the Senate, all legislative matters reported from committee go on a single calendar. They are listed there in order, but may be called up irregularly by the majority leader either by a motion to do so, or by obtaining the unanimous consent of the Senate. Frequently, the minority leader is consulted to assure unanimous consent. Only cloture can limit debate on bills thus called up.

The Senate also uses one non legislative calendar, for treaties, etc.

**CHAMBER** – Meeting place for the total membership of either the House or the Senate, as distinguished from the respective committee rooms.

**CLEAN BILL** – Frequently after a committee has finished a major revision of a bill, one of the committee members, usually the chairman, will assemble the changes plus what is left of the original bill into a new measure and introduce it as a "clean bill." The new measure, which carries a new number, is then sent to the floor for consideration. This often is a timesaver, as committee—recommended changes do not have to be considered on at a time by the chamber.

**CLOTURE** – The process by which a filibuster can be ended in the Senate, other than by unanimous consent. A motion for cloture can apply to any measure before the Senate, requires 16 senators' signatures for introduction and the votes of three—fifths of the entire Senate membership (60 if there are no vacancies), except that to end a filibuster against a proposal to amend the Standing Rules of the Senate a two—thirds vote a senators present and voting is required. It is put to a roll—call vote one hour after the Senate meets on the second day following introduction of the motion. If voted, cloture limits each senator to one hour of debate.

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** – A concurrent resolution, designated H Con Res or S Con Res, must be passed by both chambers but does not require the signature of the President and does not have the force of law. Concurrent resolutions generally are used to make or amend rules applicable to both chambers or to express the sentiment of the two chambers. A concurrent resolution, for example, is used to fix the time for adjournment of a Congress. It might also be used to convey the congratulations of Congress to another country on the anniversary of its independence.

**CONFERENCE** – A meeting between the representatives of the House and the Senate to reconcile differences between the two houses over provisions of a bill. Members of the conference committee are appointed by the Speaker and the President of the Senate and are called “managers” for their respective chambers. A majority of the managers for each house must reach agreement on the provisions of the bill (often a compromise between the versions of the two chambers) before it can be sent up for floor action in the form of a “conference report.” There it cannot be amended, and if not approved by both chambers, the bill goes back to conference. Elaborate rules govern the conduct of the conferences.

**CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS** – When a fiscal year begins and Congress has not yet enacted all the regular appropriations bills for that year, it passes a joint resolution “continuing appropriations” for government agencies at rates generally based on their previous year’s appropriations.

**ENGROSSED BILL** – The official copy of a bill or joint resolution as passed by one chamber, including the text as amended by floor action, and certified by the clerk of the House or the secretary of the Senate (as appropriate). Amendments by one house to a measure or amendments of the other also are engrossed. House engrossed documents are printed on blue paper; the Senate’s are on white paper.

**FILIBUSTER** – A time–delaying tactic used by a minority in an effort to prevent a vote on a bill which probably would pass if brought to a vote. The most common method is to take advantage of the Senate’s rules permitting unlimited debated, but other forms of parliamentary maneuvering may be used.

**FISCAL YEAR** – Financial operations of the government are carried out in a 12 month fiscal year, beginning on October 1 and ending on September 30. The fiscal year carries the date of the calendar year in which it ends. Before fiscal 1977 the fiscal year began July 1.

**HOPPER** – Box on House clerk’s desk where bills are deposited on introduction.

**HOUSE CALENDAR** – Listing for action by the House of representatives of public bills that do not directly or indirectly appropriate money or raise revenue.

**JOINT RESOLUTION** – A joint resolution, designated H J Res or S J Res, requires the approval of both houses and the signature of the President, just as a bill does, and has the force of law if approved. There is no real difference between a bill and a joint resolution. The latter is generally used in dealing with limited matters, such as a single appropriation for a specific purpose. Joint resolutions also are used to propose amendments to the Constitution. They do not require presidential signature, but become a part of the Constitution when three–fourths of the states have ratified them.

**MAJORITY LEADER** – Chief strategist and floor spokesman for the party in nominal control in either chamber. He is elected by his party colleagues and is virtually program director for his chamber, since he usually speaks for its majority.

**MAJORITY WHIP** – If effect, the assistant majority leader in the House or Senate. His job is to help marshal majority forces in support of party strategy.

**MARKING UP A BILL** – Going through a measure, usually in committee, taking it section by section, revising language, penciling in new phrases, etc. If the bill is extensively revised, the new version may be introduced as a separate bill, with a new number.

**MINORITY LEADER** – Floor leader for the minority party.

**MINORITY WHIP** – Performs the same duties as the whip for the majority party.

**OVERRIDE A VETO** – If the President disapproves a bill and sends it back to Congress with his objections, Congress may override his veto by a two–thirds vote in each chamber. The Constitution requires a ye–and–nay roll call.

**POCKET VETO** – The indirect veto of a bill as a result of the president withholding approval of it until after Congress has adjourned sine die. A bill the president does not sign, but does not formally veto while Congress is in session, automatically becomes a law ten days (excluding Sundays) after it is received. But, if Congress adjourns its annual session during that ten–day period, the measure dies, even if the president does not formally veto it.

**POINT OF ORDER** – A parliamentary term used in committee and on the floor to object to an alleged violation of a rule and to demand that the chair enforce the rule. The objector cites the rule violated, the chair sustaining his objection if correctly made. If the chair sustains a point of order against a measure or an amendment, it may not be considered; against a provision in a measure, it is immediately deleted; against a conference report, it is automatically rejected; and if against unparliamentary remarks by another member, that member must sit down or proceed in order.

**PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE** – The Vice President of the United States in his constitutional role as presiding officer of the Senate. The Constitution permits the Vice President to cast a vote in the Senate only to break a tie, but he is not required to do so.

When the Vice President is absent, the president pro tempore or a senator designated by him presides over the Senate.

**PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE** – Under the Constitution, an officer elected by the Senate to preside over it in the absence of the Vice President. The recent practice has been to elect the majority party senator with the longest continuous service in the Senate and also, by virtue of his seniority, a committee chairman.

**REPORT** – Both a verb and a noun, as a congressional term. A committee which has been examining a bill referred to it by the parent chamber “reports” its findings and recommendations to the chamber when the committee returns the measure. The process is called “reporting” a bill. Both houses require a committee’s chairman to report an approved measure promptly and to take whatever steps are necessary to bring it to a vote. If a chairman fails to report a measure promptly, a majority of the committee can force its filing.

As a noun, a “report” is the document setting forth the committee’s explanation of its action. House and Senate reports are numbered separately and are designated S Rept. or H Rept. Conference reports are numbered and designated in the same way a regular committee reports.

Most reports favor a bill’s passage. Adverse reports are occasionally submitted, but more often, when a committee disapproves a bill, it simply fails to report it at all. When a committee report is not unanimous, the dissenting commitment may file a statement of their views, called minority views and referred to as a minority report. Sometimes a bill is reported without recommendation.

**RESCISSION** – An item in an appropriations bill rescinding, or cancelling funds previously appropriated but not spent. Under the Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, the president can impound such funds by sending a message to Congress requesting one or more rescissions and the reasons for doing so. If Congress does not pass a rescission bill for the programs requested by the president within forty five days of continuous session after receiving the message, the president must make the funds available for obligation and expenditure. A rescission bill may rescind all, part, or none of an amount proposed by the president, and may rescind funds the president has not impounded.

**RESOLUTION** – A simple resolution, designated H Res. or S Res., deals with matters entirely within the prerogatives of chamber or the other. It requires neither passage by the other chamber nor approval by the President, and does not have the force of law. Most resolutions deal with the rules of one chamber. They also are used to express the sentiments of a single chamber, as condolences to the family of a deceased member or to give “advice” on foreign policy or other executive business.

**RIDER** – A provision, usually not germane, tacked on to a bill which its sponsor hopes to get through more easily by including in other legislation. Riders become law if the bills embodying them do. Riders providing for legislation in appropriations bill are outstanding examples, though technically they are banned. The House, unlike the Senate, has a strict germaneness rule, thus riders are usually Senate devices to get legislation enacted quickly or to bypass lengthy House consideration.

**RULE** – The term has two specific congressional meanings. A rule may be a standing order governing the conduct of House or Senate business and listed in the chamber’s book of rules. The rules deal with duties of officers, order of business, admission to the floor, voting procedures, etc.

In the House, a rule also may be a decision made by its Rules Committee about the handling of a particular bill on the floor. The committee may determine under which standing rule a bill shall be considered, or it may provide a “special rule” in the form of a resolution. If the resolution is adopted by the House, the temporary rule becomes as valid as any standing rule.

A special rule sets the time limit on general debate. It may also waive points of order against provisions of the bill in question or against specified amendments intended to be proposed to the bill. It may even forbid all amendments except, in some cases, those proposed by the legislative committee which handled the bill. In this instance it is known as a “closed” or “gag” rule as opposed to an “open” rule which puts no limitation on floor amendments.

**SPEAKER** – The presiding officer of the House of representatives, elected by its members.

**SPECIAL SESSION** – A session of Congress after it has adjourned sine die, completing its regular session. Special sessions are convened by the President of the United States under his constitutional powers.

**SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS** – Normally are passed after the regular (annual) appropriations bills, but before the end of the fiscal year to which they apply. Also referred to as “deficiencies.”

**SUSPEND THE RULES** – Often a time-saving procedure for passing bills in the House. A favorable vote by two-thirds of those present is required for passage. Debate is limited to 40 minutes and no amendments from the floor are permitted. If a two-thirds favorable vote is not attained, the bill may be considered later under regular procedures. The suspension procedure is in order on the first and third Mondays and Tuesdays of each month.

**VETO** – Disapproval by the President of a bill or joint resolution, other than one proposing an amendment to the Constitution. When Congress is in session, the President must veto a bill within 10 days, excluding Sundays, after he has received it. Otherwise, it becomes law with or without his signature. When the President vetoes a bill, he returns it to the chamber of its origin with a message stating his objections. The veto then becomes a questions of high privilege.

When Congress had adjourned, the President may pocket veto a bill by failing to sign it. (See Pocket Veto).

**VOICE VOTE** – In either House or Senate, members answer “aye” or “no” in chorus and the presiding officer decides the result. The term also is used loosely to indicate action by unanimous consent or without objection.

# A CALL TO ACTION

Involvement is important. Air traffic controllers must take an active part in the political process to protect their jobs and rights. NATCA is fortunate to have so many union activists and organizers among our members. The main principle behind our political activity is that we want to be able to represent the interests of all NATCA members to the best of our ability in all facets of the legislative arena.

However, to best serve our members, NATCA needs to know what members of Congress are saying at home. Our influence increases when you take the time to write or call the national office about what is being said. Without such information, we cannot be truly sure who supports us and who does not.

## Resources

The NATCA Legislative Affairs Team is ready to assist all members with any help needed in undertaking grassroots lobbying. Additionally, there are many other people with legislative experience to turn to if you have any questions or need assistance. Some are listed below. Do not hesitate to contact any one of them.

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