

Legislative Action for Occupational Therapy

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Learning Objectives

1. To understand basic information regarding **legislative process** affecting federal policy

2. To identify **current legislation** and how recent changes affect the future of occupational therapy, particularly related to COVID-19

3. To **identify opportunities in leadership, advocacy and legislation** as a student, new graduate, or seasoned practitioner

Understanding the Legislative Process

A field trip to Middle School Social Studies

Congress

SENATE

- 100 members – 2 from each state
- 6 year terms
- 1/3 of Senate up for re-election every 2 years**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- 435 members
- 1 Congressperson per district
- Distribute evenly by population (adjusted each Census)
- Entire House up for re-election every 2 years**

THE US LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

SENATE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

IT STARTS WITH AN IDEA...

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

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.

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

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



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

BOTH CHAMBERS VOTE ON FINAL BILL



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

PRESIDENT SIGNS THE BILL AND IT BECOMES A LAW.

PRESIDENT VETOES THE BILL AND SENDS IT BACK TO CONGRESS.



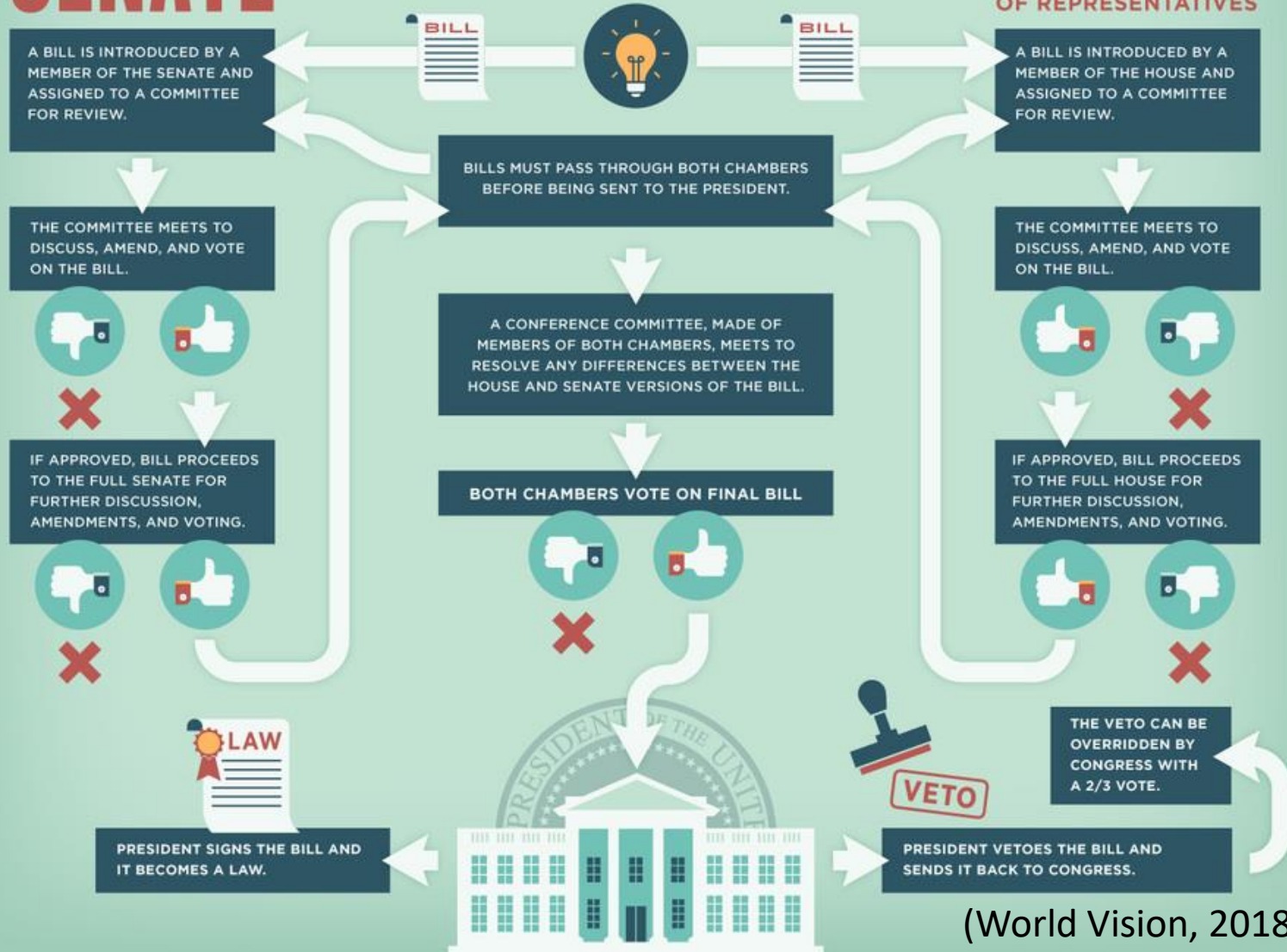
(World Vision, 2018)

THE US LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

SENATE

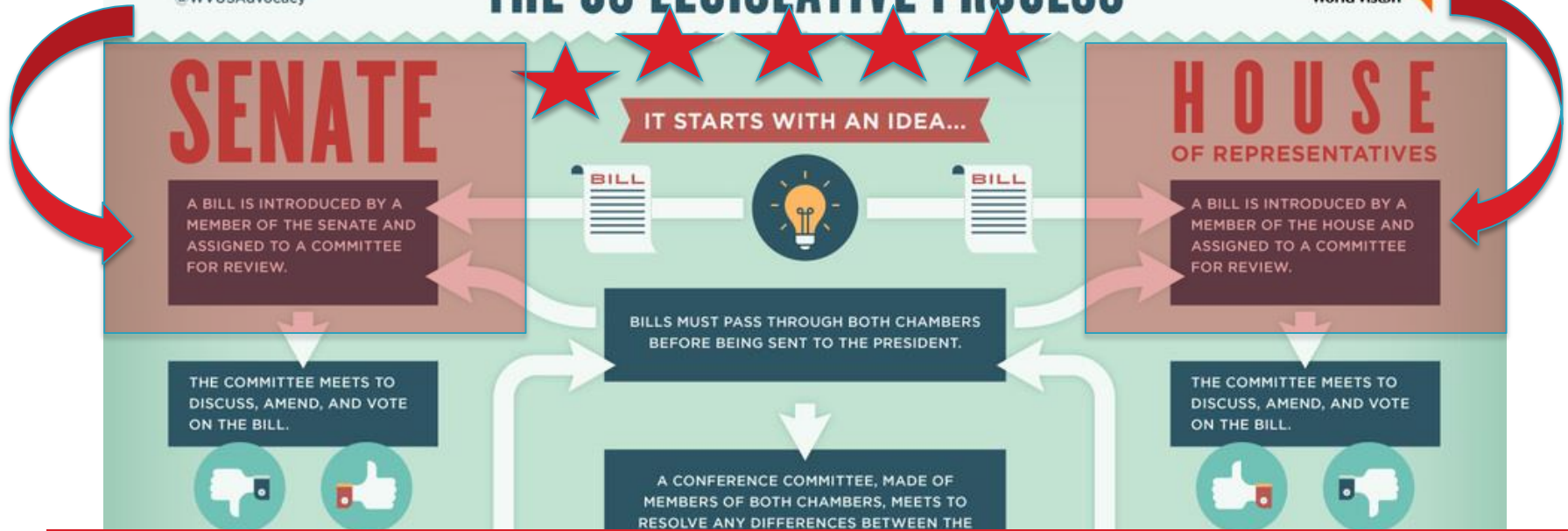
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

IT STARTS WITH AN IDEA...



(World Vision, 2018)

THE US LEGISLATIVE PROCESS



All bills must be re-introduced at the beginning of each Congress!

Each Congress is 2 years long, beginning January 3rd of odd numbered years

THE US LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

SENATE

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



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

SENATE

(100 members total)

- 60 votes needed to pass same bill

53 Republicans
45 Democrats
2 Independents

HOUSE

(435 members total)

- 218 votes needed to pass same bill

234 Democrats
197 Republicans
3 Vacancies

2020 Elections

General: Tuesday, November 3, 2020

What's at Stake Federally:

- House – all US Representatives up for re-election
- Senate – MA Sen. Markey in anticipated tight battle
- President

Current Legislation

116th Congress (2019-2021)

Legislative Priorities by AOTA, prior to COVID-19

116th Congress
(2019-2021)

- Affordable Care Act – avoiding repeal
- Medicaid expansion
- Issues following Medicare Cap Repeal
 - Home Health reimbursement (to be implemented in 2020)
 - OTA reimbursement (to be implemented in 2022)
- Value-based payment model for Medicare (October 2019)

Before COVID-19...

THREE TOPICS WERE MAKING PROGRESS:

- 1) HOME HEALTH
- 2) DIVERSITY IN WORKFORCE
- 3) MENTAL HEALTH AND LOAN FORGIVENESS

BREAKOUT ROOM ACTIVITY

During COVID-19...

**TEMPORARILY,
OTs can open home health
cases**

**Will need to advocate after
provisions are lifted**

During COVID-19...

**TEMPORARILY,
OTs (PTs and SLPs) can provide
telehealth services for clients
using Medicare**

**Will need to advocate after
provisions are lifted**

Getting Involved and Staying Informed

Advocacy for students and practitioners

AOTA Federal Affairs Department



Heather Parsons
VP of Federal Affairs
Twitter: @HParsonsAOTA



Andrew Bopp
**Senior Legislative
Representative**
Twitter: @AndyBAOTA



Abe Saffer
**Legislative
Representative**
Twitter: @AbeAOTA



Jill Tighe
**PAC/Grassroots
Associate**
Twitter: @JTigheAOTA

Get and Stay Updated!

AOTA Federal Affairs Resources

Legislative Action Center

www.aota.org/takeaction



The American
Occupational Therapy
Association, Inc.

HOME

TAKE ACTION ▾

BILLS/LEGISLATION

ADVOCACY RESOURCES ▾



Support Occupational Therapy in Home Health!

Contact your Elected Representatives Today!

The Medicare Home Health Flexibility Act would specifically allow home health agencies the flexibility to use the most clinically appropriate skilled service to conduct the initial assessment visit and to complete the comprehensive assessments on a permanent basis.

TAKE ACTION ►



Get and Stay Updated!

AOTA Federal Affairs Resources



- “Health Care Reform”
- “AOTA Federal Policy”
 - “AOTA State Policy”

Writing Your Letter or Email

Using existing resources (aota.org/takeaction)



The American
Occupational Therapy
Association, Inc.

HOME

NEWS

TAKE ACTION ▾

Ask Your Representative to Support Workforce Diversity in the Allied Health Professions!



Rep. Bobby L. Rush (D-IL), and Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), introduced the Allied Health Workforce Diversity Act of 2019 (**H.R. 3637**). This legislation would increase opportunities for individuals from underrepresented backgrounds, including those from racial and ethnic minorities, in the professions of occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech language pathology, and audiology.

Virtual AOTA Hill Day 2020

- **Monday, September 14th**—Live Webinar with AOTA Staff about current events on the Hill, and Advocacy 101. This will include time for Q&A.; First Grassroots Activity Assignment—Specific Issue TBD
- **Tuesday September 15th**—Second Grassroots Activity Assignment & Learning Activities; AOTA Staff “office hours” to answer questions.
- **Wednesday, September 16th**—Third Grassroots Activity Assignment & Learning Activities; AOTA Staff “office hours” to answer questions.
- **Thursday, September 17th**—Live Conversation with Members of Congress or their staff led by AOTA Staff & Volunteer Leadership
- **Friday, September 18th**—Live Webinar debrief (including Q&A participation) & Reflection Activity

News and outcomes from this event:

<https://cqrcengage.com/aota/Virtual-Hill-Week>

AOTPAC regions

- - Region I
- - Region II
- - Region III
- - Region IV
- - Region V

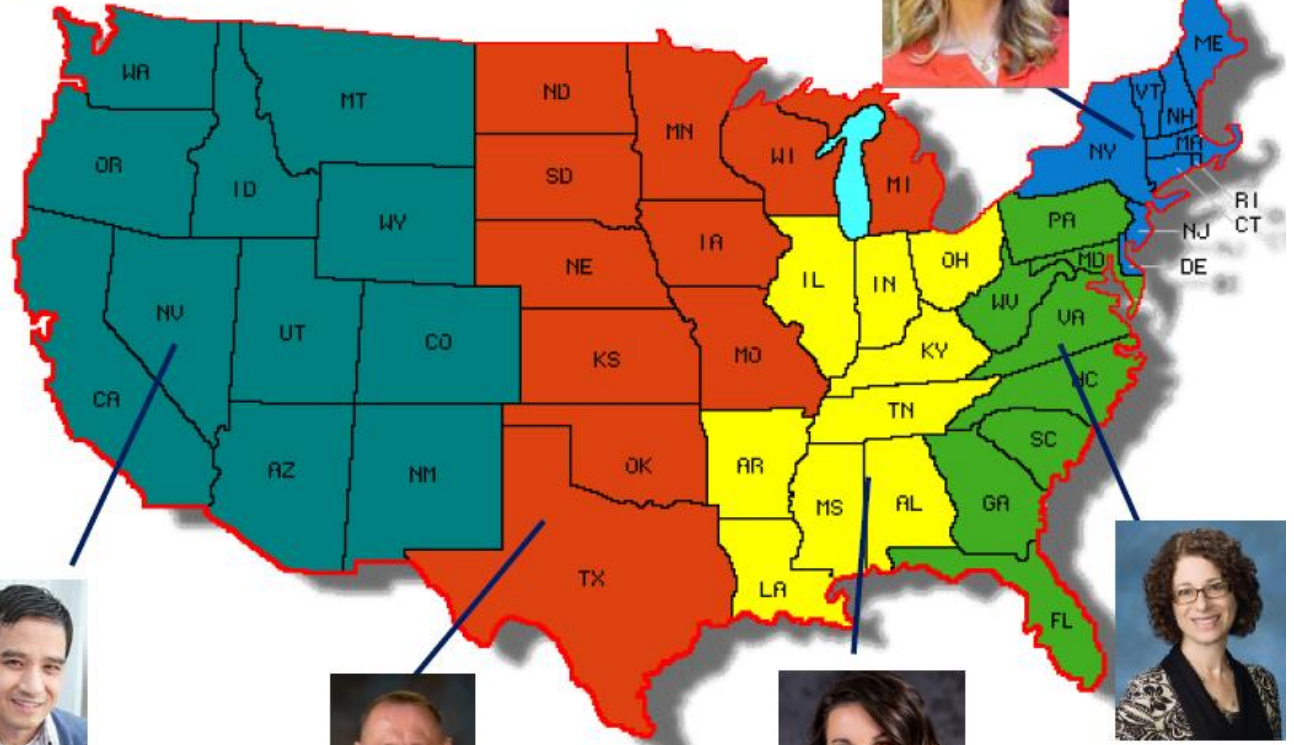


AOTPAC Chair
Yvonne Randall

Your 2019 AOTPAC Board of Directors



Region I
Sarah
McKinnon



Region V
Luis Arabit



Region IV
Brent Braveman



Region III
Dawn Sonnier



Region II
Rachelle
Dorne

American Occupational Therapy Political Action Committee



What is a Political Action Committee?

A **PAC** is a committee that provides funding to state and federal candidates who support a profession or industry and their initiatives through private donations from association members.

AOTPAC: Being involved and contributing

SUPPORT LEGISLATORS

- We want to **elect and retain legislators** that understand OT and are supportive to our causes
- AOTPAC contributions help elect candidates who endorse occupational therapy concerns

EXPAND OUR MISSION

- Occupational therapy is not fully understood in the political arena where health care decisions are being made
- Occupational therapy must have an advocacy presence to **protect the practice of occupational therapy** and access to services for our clients

Comparison of AOTPAC with other Health PACs (2017 Contributions)

PAC	Association Membership	Mean Professional Salaries*	Receipts
AOTA PAC	60,000	\$81,900 (OT) \$56,070 (OTA)	\$196,833
APTA PAC	100,000	\$85,400 (PT) \$45,290 (PTA)	\$594,856
ASHA PAC	198,000	\$74,680 (SLP) \$75,980 (audiologist)	\$222,423

**Mean Salaries according to United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016)
Updated: 3/22/18*

AOTPAC Student Challenge

- **AOTPAC Student Challenge**
 - An annual fundraising initiative started in 2003 to encourage student participation in efforts to support AOTPAC.
- **Participation**
 - The **AOTPAC Student Challenge** encourages Student Occupational Therapy Associations (SOTAs) to participate during each calendar year
 - Since 2016, **over fifty SOTA groups participated** in the AOTPAC Student Challenge, raising over **\$10,000** in much needed funds

AOTPAC Student Challenge

Interested? Here are steps you need to know!

1. Brainstorm event ideas

Download the “AOTPAC Student Challenge Event Ideas” handout



2. Publicize and host your event



3. Share the outcome of your event

Be in touch with your AOTPAC Board Member



4. Send your contribution to AOTPAC

Download “AOTPAC Student Challenge Contribution Form”



5. Be recognized!

AOTPAC and the entire OT profession thanks you for your leadership

The bottom line is...

- **We are all leaders** who have the ability to advocate for ourselves and the occupational therapy profession
- Change doesn't happen overnight. Continue to **stay informed, be involved, and speak up** to support OT.
- **Supporting advocacy causes, such as AOTA membership and AOTPAC,** helps the future of OT

Questions?

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Join the Ambassador Program or participate in the AOTPAC Student Challenge!

www.aota.org/AOTPAC

www.aota.org/takeaction