

# Government and Virtual Advocacy in 2021



LeadingAge®  
New York

# New York State Government 101

- ❖ Executive Chamber/Governor's Office
- ❖ State Senate = 63 members
- ❖ State Assembly = 150 members
- ❖ Department of Health (DOH)
- ❖ Department of Budget (DOB)
- ❖ State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA)
- ❖ New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR)



# Political Context

- ❖ State Politics
  - In 2020, the Democrats won a Super Majority in the Senate and preserved their Super Majority in the Assembly
  - 41 Brand-New Legislators
  
- ❖ Federal Politics:
  - New Administration Inaugurated this week
  - Democrats have won a Majority in both the House and Senate



# The Assembly Leadership



## Assembly Democrats

- Speaker: Carl Heastie (Bronx)
- Democratic Super-Majority
- Very large, diverse conference
- 106 Majority Members

## Assembly Minority Leader William Barclay (Oswego)

- 43 Minority Members



# The Senate Leadership



## Senate Democrats

- Senate Democratic Leader and Temporary President, Andrea Stewart Cousins (Yonkers, White Plains, New Rochelle)
- Democrats hold a Super Majority
- 43 Majority Members

## Senate Republicans

- Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt (Niagara County)
  - Lost majority in 2018 election
    - 20 Minority Members



# Committee Leadership

- ❖ Senate Health Committee Chair:  
Gustavo Rivera (Bronx)
- ❖ Senate Aging Committee Chair:  
Rachel May (Syracuse)
- ❖ Senate Housing Committee Chair:  
Brian Kavanaugh (Manhattan/Brooklyn)
- ❖ Assembly Health Committee Chair:  
Richard Gottfried (Manhattan)
- ❖ Assembly Aging Committee Chair:  
Ron Kim (Queens)
- ❖ Assembly Housing Committee Chair:  
Steven Cymbrowitz (Brooklyn)



# “All Politics is Local”

Find your  
Legislator here:



<https://p2a.co/sLFV25Y>



Thomas Phillip “Tip” O’Neill Jr.  
Former Speaker of the US House of  
Representatives

“All Politics is Local”

# Budget vs. Legislative Session

 **New York State Legislative Session Calendar**   
January — June 2021

The New York State Legislative Session Calendar provides a general reference calendar for the New York State Legislature. It is not intended to be used as a substitute for the actual calendar of the New York State Legislature. The actual calendar of the New York State Legislature is published in the New York State Legislative Manual. The actual calendar of the New York State Legislature is published in the New York State Legislative Manual.

JANUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

FEBRUARY						
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28						

MARCH						
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28	29	30	31			


APRIL						
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MAY						
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JUNE						
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

January 10: 2021 Legislative Session commences  
 January 18: Winter recess begins (4 days)  
 January 25: First Day for Submission of Executive Budget

February 15: Winter recess ends  
 March 1: Spring recess begins (Final Day)  
 May 21: Recess ends

 Session Dates

## Two Distinct Parts of the Legislative Session:

- January-March: Budget
- April-June: Legislative
- July-December: Members in District



# Understanding the Budget Process

Key Components to a Budget Agreement (*January-March 31<sup>st</sup>*):

- ❖ Executive Budget Proposal (*January 19<sup>th</sup>*)
- ❖ Joint Fiscal Committee Hearings (*Jan-Feb*)
  - Senate Finance; Assembly Ways & Means
- ❖ Economic & Revenue Reports
- ❖ Consensus on Revenue
- ❖ Committee Budget Hearings
  - Held Jointly Between the Assembly and Senate
  - Opportunity for public testimony
  - Housing Hearing: Feb 2, 2021
  - Health/Medicaid Hearing: Feb 3, 2021



# Understanding the Budget Process

- ❖ Senate & Assembly introduce their Budget Proposals, commonly referred to as "One Houses." (*mid-March*)
- ❖ Joint Budget Conference Committees Meet:
  - General Conference Committee, "The Mothership"
  - Conference Subcommittees
- ❖ Negotiations take place between the Assembly and Senate Majorities, the Department of Budget, and the Executive Chamber.
- ❖ Final Budget Bill Enacted, Deadline – April 1
- ❖ Implications of a Two-Way vs. a Three-Way Process

# 2021: An Unprecedented Budget

- The State has a \$15 Billion Budget Deficit that will need to be accounted for in the SFY 2021-2022 Budget Cycle
- The State is relying heavily on anticipated Federal Relief
- The Executive Budget, and this year's Budget process overall, will be fluid and subject to changes dependent on that relief

## Our Reality....

- COVID-19 has hit aging services providers unlike any other sector
- Increased costs, staffing challenges, and unfunded mandates have been exacerbated
- Already inadequate Medicaid reimbursement for services being rendered and funding challenges across the board
- Reaching the end of the 5-year, \$125 million housing commitment
- More cuts to Medicaid may be on the way...

# The Legislative Process

## How a Bill Becomes a Law

### Timeline

- Bills can be introduced year-round, but can only be acted upon during session
- Focus is after budget (April – June)

### Committees

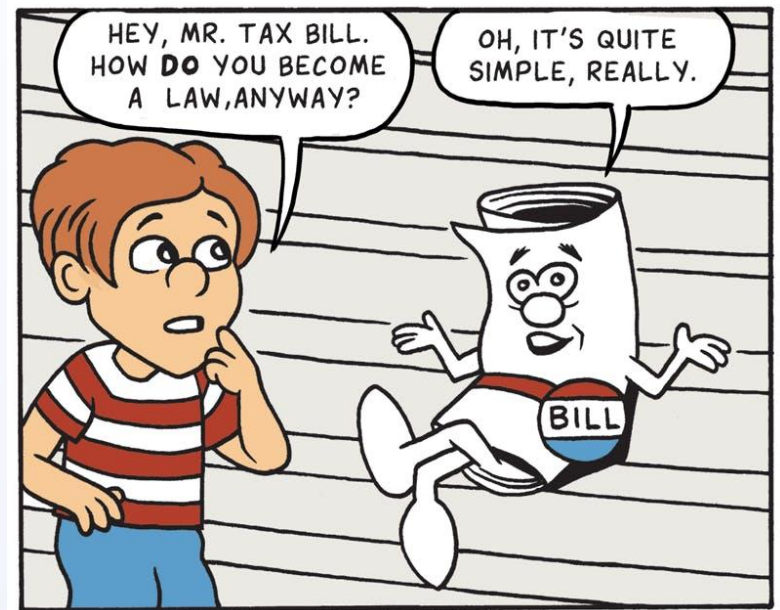
- Where a bill begins its journey
- Senate and Assembly Committees
- "Report" / "Hold"

### Floor Action or Inaction

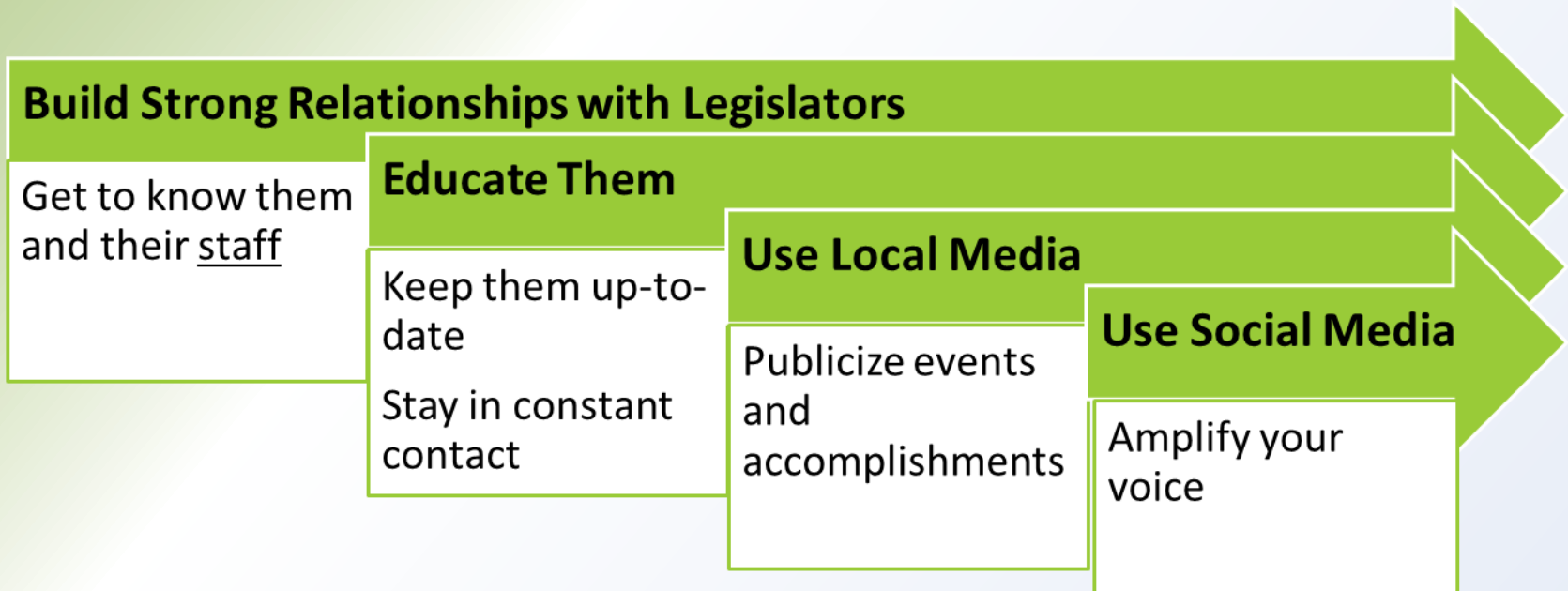
- Senate/Assembly Calendar
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading = Active List
- Lay-Asides = Debate List
- Aging and Messages of Necessity

### Vetoes and Overrides

- Governor must sign or veto all legislation that passes both houses



# Engaging in the Process



Advocacy Action Plan Worksheet → <https://bit.ly/32AFdbs>

# A Message About Messaging...



**Keep it Simple!**

# Making the Most of Virtual Advocacy

❖ The New Normal for Advocacy → Virtual Meetings

❖ Your lawmakers *want* to hear from you. The best way to connect with them is via a virtual meeting.

❖ Schedule a meeting with your legislators for our 2021 Advocacy Days!



## LeadingAge NY *Virtual Advocacy Days!*

- Thursday, Feb 4th
- Friday, Feb 5th
- Thursday, Feb 11th
- Friday, Feb 12th

# Benefits of Virtual Advocacy



- ❖ Amplify Your Advocacy!
  - Easily engage board members, directors of nursing, resident council and others in advocacy initiatives
- ❖ Meetings just a few clicks away – no travel necessary

*Virtual advocacy poses a unique opportunity for higher impact on lawmakers with less time required from advocates.*



# Engaging in the Process

## Social Media

- Follow your Lawmakers on Social Media to stay informed
- When you meet them, or want to get their attention, tag them in a social media post!



## Local Media

- If there's an issue you care about, for which you'd like to take a public stance, reach out to local media – *newspapers, public radio, etc.*

## Letters & Phone Calls

- The "old school" - and often the most effective - way to have your concerns heard and addressed by your lawmakers

## Town Halls & Fundraisers

- Attend your Lawmakers' local events, town halls and fundraisers to begin building a relationship and familiarity with one another

## Virtual Face-to-Face Meetings

- Set up meetings with your lawmakers to talk about substantive issues – LeadingAge is here to help you prepare or join you for meetings

# LeadingAge New York Resources

- ❖ LeadingAge NY Website
  - Visit our Advocacy Page!
  - <https://www.leadingageny.org/advocacy/>
- ❖ Advocacy Action Plan Worksheet → <https://bit.ly/32AFdbS>
- ❖ Issue Breakdown Worksheet → <https://bit.ly/32Knm21>
- ❖ How-to Scheduling Guide → <https://bit.ly/392eUk8>
- ❖ Hinman Guide to Virtual Advocacy → <https://bit.ly/39T1c27>
- ❖ 6 Tips for a Good Virtual Meeting → <https://bit.ly/305ibDw>

# Questions?

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