



# Coalition

*Working Together for Supports, Alternatives and Opportunities*

To BE an ADVOCATE Handbook

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# The Coalition

The Coalition is a group of statewide organizations who speak on behalf of North Carolinians and their families living with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and the disease of addiction. We bring the needs of these individuals to the attention of state legislators and other leaders. We hold our lawmakers accountable to provide the resources necessary for innovative, quality services that have a lasting positive impact on the lives of these citizens of the state of North Carolina.

The Coalition began in 1991 (as Coalition 2001) to advocate for adequate funding for the mental health / developmental disability / substance abuse (MHDDSA) system. Our goal has not yet been met and we continue to advocate today.

Each year The Coalition works together to create a set of budget priorities for the MHDDSA system and works to ensure those budget items are prioritized in North Carolina's budget process through the introduction of an appropriations bill, legislative advocacy and grassroots support.

We Believe:

- People with disabilities have the same rights as all North Carolinians. We all have the right to dignity.
- People with disabilities have the same basic needs as all North Carolinians. We all need housing, education, jobs, transportation, access to community services and other necessary supports.
- Quality services for individuals with disabilities have a direct, positive impact not only on the individuals served, but also on the communities that make up the state of North Carolina. Quality services make good business sense.
- Ongoing state commitment to develop and support an adequate, equitable spectrum of state and local services is essential to an effective system of services for individuals with disabilities.

*We advocate that the state of North Carolina provide the necessary services and supports individuals with disabilities need to strive for economic and social independence.*

For more information on The Coalition, our members, our budget priorities and our upcoming events please go to [www.thecoalitionnc.org](http://www.thecoalitionnc.org).

# How Did We Get Where We Are? What is Happening Now?

## Budget Crisis 2009-2011 and 2011-2012 Budget Gap

In 2009 -2010 The General Assembly, our NC State Legislators chose to

- CUT \$155 million from the Division of MH/DD/SAS
- CUT \$20 million from state service funds for mental illness, developmental disabilities and addictive diseases. [Total cut in 2009 was \$60 million, \$40 million was returned in 2010.]
- CUT \$500 million from Medicaid in the first year and about 700 million in the second year (includes all Medicaid, not just MHDDSA).
- Advocates estimate that the total state and federal dollars removed from the MHDDSA system due to state budget cuts is in the range of 500 million dollars.

In August 2009 after the budget was passed The Governor asked for a 5% cut from all state agencies, totaling \$15 million from MHDDSA in addition to the above cuts. In October, the Governor agreed to return \$15 million dollars to MHDDSA. However, this return of money did nothing to impact the cuts made by the General Assembly.

We know

- individuals with addictive diseases, developmental disabilities and mental illness are
  - losing services,
  - losing access to necessary medical treatments,
  - losing supports,
  - losing quality of life,
  - losing independence,
  - losing **life**.
- providers are closing their doors,
- and services across the state are being lost

## 2011-2012 Budget Picture

North Carolina faces a 2.4 billion dollar budget deficit in the 2011-2012 budget. This is down from a \$3.5 billion project in late 2010. Here is what accounts for the deficit:

- loss of one-time federal stimulus funds
- \$1.6 billion in sales tax increase and other temporary taxes that will expire on June 30, 2011
- use of one-time non-recurring dollars in the 2009-2010 budget
- increased cost for the State Health Plan

## Impact on Jobs and People

In a 2011 survey of agencies providing services and supports, 115 agencies responding reported that they employ 21,946 people who serve 314,160 North Carolinians. In many counties, these agencies are some of the larger employers in the area. The economic impact of cuts to jobs and services will have a negative impact on the economy throughout North Carolina.

## The Governor's Budget Proposal for 2011-2012

The Governor recommended in her proposed budget \$75,000,000 for the Mental Health Trust Fund to increase the availability of community-based services and supports.

## The General Assembly

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees are in the process of reviewing the Governor's budget proposal and developing its own recommendations due out in mid-April.

## **FINDING SOLUTIONS**

The Coalition recognizes the significance of North Carolina's difficult budget issues and the economic condition of our state. The individuals and families who rely upon the public mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse system for the basic services and supports necessary to live in communities have truly felt the effects of recession. All too often the impact has resulted in serious harm to the well being of these individuals.

Coalition members who provide these basic services and supports have had the triple impact of:

1. state and federal funding reductions
2. increases in the number of new people in need of services and supports
3. reduced ability to access other funding sources such as fundraising or credit markets.

The Coalition believes the services and supports provided all across North Carolina are critical to the well being of North Carolina citizens, and that the jobs needed to provide these services are part of the fabric of local communities.

**We cannot solve this fiscal crisis with budget cuts alone.** There must be a balanced approach of

- creative methods of service provision
- budget reductions
- prioritizing services that avoid cost-shifting

Taking this balanced approach can lead to a better North Carolina for all our citizens. We want to work with the General Assembly and the Administration to develop solutions. As we work toward these solutions The Coalition will adhere to the following principles:

- Save jobs – cuts to services would increase unemployment in communities already hard-hit by recession
- Seek business efficiencies – eliminate costly over-regulation and duplicative administrative functions which waste resources
- Protect federal match – many services bring in funds from federal sources that stretch our resources to serve more people
- Protect community services as the first priority - any reductions in community services must be paired with comparable reductions in state-operated healthcare facilities.
- If there are reductions in service funding they must be paired with a comparable reduction in administrative funding.

## **Action Steps to Advocacy**

***YOU can do something about it.*** We elected these people to represent us. They need to hear from us – the consumers, families, advocates and providers. They need to hear the life stories of persons with developmental disabilities, addictive diseases and mental illness – and the services and supports they need to live as citizens in North Carolina.

The Coalition believes that government works better with people taking action: telling policymakers what is needed, voting in elections, participating in town halls, going to advocacy days at the legislature, making phone calls and writing letters are just a few of the ways you can take action.

### **ME?**

Yes, YOU!

1. You know how the system works and doesn't work.
2. You know the good and the bad.
3. You know what happens when you or a family member or friend does not get the services and supports they need.
4. **You are an expert in the area of mental illness, addictive disease and/or developmental disabilities.**

**Do what you are comfortable with, when you have the time... *some is BETTER than none.***

And you are NOT alone. Need help, advice, information? Contact Elizabeth Cloud at [ncpaelizabeth@mindspring.com](mailto:ncpaelizabeth@mindspring.com) or Sally Cameron at [ncpasally@mindspring.com](mailto:ncpasally@mindspring.com) or call 919-872-1005.

**We need your voice or written word because you, the local constituents who know about mh/dd/sa, are the ones legislators need to hear from.**

**Your legislators look to YOU to educate them.**

**Flip the page to learn how to BE an ADVOCATE and HELP OTHERS →**

## Who are MY legislators?

Quick Lesson:

You have many legislators.

- Some work in Washington DC, they are Federal Legislators, sometimes called Congressmen/Congresswomen or Senators.
- Some work in North Carolina in the State Legislature. **These STATE LEGISLATORS, who serve in Raleigh at the General Assembly, make the decisions about your MHDDSA services and supports.**

You can find your state legislators and their contact information at: [www.cpdmi.org](http://www.cpdmi.org)

- Click on the **Capital Advantage** Tab, type in your residential address (no PO Boxes).
- This site will give you information about all your Federal and State elected officials.
- You need to contact your STATE Legislators for MHDDSA issues in North Carolina.
  - If you have questions, contact Elizabeth Cloud at [ncpaelizabeth@mindspring.com](mailto:ncpaelizabeth@mindspring.com) or Sally Cameron at [ncpasally@mindspring.com](mailto:ncpasally@mindspring.com) or call 919-872-1005.

The legislators' **Raleigh** offices are either in the Legislative Building or the Legislative Office Building. Three digit office numbers like "302" are in the Legislative Office Building. Four digit offices like "2206" are in the Legislative Building. (Your Legislators also have offices in your local area; go to [www.cpdmi.org](http://www.cpdmi.org) to find their local offices.) Following are the street addresses for these two buildings.

Legislative Building  
16 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601-1096

Legislative Office Building  
300 N. Salisbury Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601-1096

If you are writing to their Raleigh office, be sure to include the Legislator's office number in the address as well as their name, and the chamber: House members are addressed to "House of Representatives" and Senate member to "NC Senate."

For Example:

Senator Just A. Tarheel  
NC Senate  
Legislative Office Building, Suite 101  
300 N. Salisbury Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601-1096

Representative Ol D. Northstate  
House of Representatives  
Legislative Building, Suite 1515  
16 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601-1096

## The following are ideas of how you can be an **ADVOCATE**, chose what you **LIKE** and **RUN** with it!

### Writing your legislators

A personal letter will have a **BIG impact** on legislators. (Traditional Mail and Email are BOTH good!)

You can ask a family member or friend to help you write a letter, but make sure to use your words.

How to WRITE a LETTER (you only need 4 items):

1. Tell who you are and where you live
2. Tell the problem
3. Tell why you are concerned
4. Give your solution or Ask for help

**It is important to tell your personal story and why this is important to you.**

\*Keep your letter to one (1) page.

\*AND Keep your letter to one (1) topic/issue.

Because too many issues may overwhelm your Legislator. We want to EMPOWER our Legislators to make GOOD CHANGES, not get overwhelmed and give up because they feel it is too much for them to do.

Some additional tips for writing legislators:

Make sure your address, phone number and e-mail are in the letter, so your legislator can write a response or call you.

Tell your Legislator the town/city and county where you live.

Always tell the truth, no elaborations.

If you know the bill number and title, be sure to refer to it in your letter.

Always be nice; your Legislator may not agree with you on this topic...but they will continue to be your Legislator and will work on many other issues now and in the future.

Write a THANK YOU note, if your legislator does vote as you asked. Or write a thank you following a visit or a phone call to thank them for their time and attention to the issue.

Be sure to address the elected official properly.

- The Governor is addressed as The Honorable Governor Beverly Perdue
- Often letters to Legislators are addressed to "The Honorable *name of senator or representative.*" And then "Senator \_\_\_\_\_" or "Representative \_\_\_\_\_" is used in the greeting. Many people simply use "Senator \_\_\_\_" or "Representative \_\_\_\_" in the address and greeting. Either is ok. ***The important thing is to write!*** See the letter below for an example.

You can find your legislators and their contact information at [www.cpdmi.org](http://www.cpdmi.org)

- When the General Assembly is in session, send letter/emails to your legislator's Raleigh office.
- When the legislators are not in session, send letter/emails to their home office addresses.
- Don't know when legislators are in session or not? Email Elizabeth Cloud at [ncpaelizabeth@mindspring.com](mailto:ncpaelizabeth@mindspring.com) or Sally Cameron at [ncpasally@mindspring.com](mailto:ncpasally@mindspring.com) or call 919-872-1005.

## Sample letter/email to a legislator

Following is a sample letter that you can send to your legislators.

Your street address

City, state, zip code

Phone number

date

The Honorable name

Address

Dear Representative (Senator) last name:

I am a resident of city in county name County, and I have a child with a developmental disability or list the name of the condition (for example, autism). On behalf of my child, my family and others with developmental disabilities, I am writing to ask you to not cut funding for developmental disability, mental health and addictive disease services in the NC Department of Health and Human Services including the Division of MHDDSA and in Medicaid.

These services are critical to my family and to many others in North Carolina with disabilities and disabling illnesses. Give a brief description of the types of services that you have and what it would mean to your family if you lost those services.

I realize that you are faced with many tough decisions as you prepare the state's budget. But not providing services to people who desperately need them is not the way to balance the budget. Have the courage to do the right thing and invest in **all** our people. Please let me know your position on keeping funding in the state's budget for mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services.

Sincerely,

Your name

***[Make sure you tell your story, it's important for your message to have a BIG IMPACT, but stay brief and to the point. Try to keep the letter to one page. You can use the letter text in an e-mail.]***

## Calling your legislators

Calling your legislators is another good way to communicate your concerns about the budget cuts to MH/DD/SA services. Here are some tips on calling legislators.

### Before You Call:

Write down the main points that you want to include in your conversation.

1. Tell who you are and where you live
2. Tell the problem
3. Tell why you are concerned (personal story)
4. Give your solution or Ask for help

Practice what you are going to say. Keep it short, no more than 5 minutes.

Be prepared to answer questions and provide additional information

(It is OKAY to say you DON'T KNOW the answer to a legislator's question. It gives you an opportunity to get the correct information and to have another reason to contact them again. Tell them you will get an answer and get the information to them. Be sure to follow up.)

### During Call:

Ask to speak directly to the legislator. But if the legislator is not available, leave a brief message with his/her office and ask that they call you back.

Identify yourself and where you are from (city, county).

Be brief and short. State the reason for your call.

Always tell the truth, no elaborations.

Express your appreciation, if the legislator is **in favor of not cutting funds** to the MH/DD/SA system.

(If the legislator is undecided, offer to provide more information, you can contact Elizabeth Cloud at [ncpaelizabeth@mindspring.com](mailto:ncpaelizabeth@mindspring.com) or Sally Cameron at [npcasally@mindspring.com](mailto:npcasally@mindspring.com).)

If you know the bill number and title, be sure to refer to it in your conversation.

Remember to be nice, even if s/he doesn't agree with you

Thank the legislator for his/her time

### Get Voicemail?

Leave a phone number where you can be reached

Ask to speak to the legislative assistant and tell them the same things you would tell the legislator.

### After the Call:

- Send a follow-up letter:
  - Restate the reason for the call
  - What you think the legislator's opinion is on the issue
  - State your appreciation if s/he is in favor of no cuts OR State your hope that the legislator will choose to vote in favor of not cutting funds (if s/he is against or undecided)
  - Thank the legislator for his/her time
  -

***(Make sure you tell your story it's important for your message to have a BIG **IMPACT** but stay brief and to the point.)***

## **Sample call to a legislator**

The following is a sample phone call script that you can use as a guide for calling legislators.

“Senator/Representative last name, my name is your name and I am a resident of city in county. I am calling today to ask your support for making sure we keep funds in the state’s budget for mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services.

I have been receiving mental health services for length of time. With these services, I... provide some explanation of what these services have enabled you to do and what might have happened if you hadn’t received services. Keep your points brief.

There are hundreds of thousands more like me who are either receiving services or waiting for services. These services are critically important to us, and we can’t afford to lose them. I realize that you are faced with many tough decisions as you prepare the state’s budget. But not providing services to people who desperately need them is not the way to balance the budget.

What is your position on continuing fund the state’s budget for mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services? What is your position on providing funds to develop the services and supports people need?”

**Give the legislator an opportunity to express his/her opinion without interruption.**

- If the legislator indicates that he/she will **fight budget cuts** to MH/DD/SA services, **thank him/her**.
- If the legislator indicates that he/she is **undecided** or that he/she is **in favor of these cuts**, **politely ask them to reconsider and state again how important it is for people like yourself to receive these services**.
- Offer to meet with the legislator and/or provide additional information about the impact of reduced funds for MH/DD/SA services. (if you feel comfortable and have ability to do so)
- For questions you can’t answer, offer to find the answers for him/her.
- Offer the legislator your name and phone number in case he/she has additional questions at a later time. (if you feel comfortable)
- Thank the legislator for his/her time.

***[Remember to follow up your phone call with a thank-you letter.]***

## Visiting your legislators

A face-to-face meeting with your legislators is an excellent opportunity to discuss the budget cuts and their impact on you and your family. The following guidelines may be helpful as you begin visiting your legislators.

How to make an appointment:

- Locate their contact information from the CPDMI website, [www.cpdmi.org](http://www.cpdmi.org)
  - Click on the **Capital Advantage** Tab, input your residential address (no PO Boxes)
- Call the office to make an appointment.
  - When the General Assembly is in session, call your legislator's Raleigh office.
  - When the legislators are not in session, call their home office addresses.
  - Don't know when legislators are in session or not? Try both phone numbers.

**Yes, it is best to make an appointment.** Legislators are very busy so it is best you call ahead to make sure s/he will have time to speak with you and listen to you.

Before Your Visit:

Write down the main points that you want to include in your conversation.

1. Tell who you are and where you live
2. Tell the problem
3. Tell why you are concerned (personal story)
4. Give your solution or Ask for help

Practice what you are going to say. Try to keep it short, no more than 5 minutes.

Be prepared to answer questions and provide additional information

(It is OKAY to say you DON'T KNOW the answer to a legislator's question. It gives you an opportunity to get the correct information and to have another reason to contact them again. Tell them you will get an answer and get the information to them. Be sure to follow up.)

Know where your legislator's office is located.

- If you are meeting your legislator at the local office, you are in luck! It is probably the easiest and best place to meet him/her.
- If you are meeting your legislator in Raleigh, there are two buildings that have legislators' offices- The General Assembly Building and the Legislative Office Building.
  - If the room number has four digits, like 4444, then it is located in the General Assembly Building.
  - If the room number has three digits, like 333, then it is located in the Legislative Office Building.
- Arrive early so you can find your legislator's office, it can be a little difficult at first.
- Don't be late to your appointment. You want as much time as possible to get to know your legislator.

Be neatly dressed

If your child is the one receiving services, take your child, if appropriate, to the meeting or take pictures of your child and family so the legislator can put a face to the issue.

## Visiting your legislators, cont'd

### During Visit:

Identify yourself and where you are from (city, county).

Be brief and short. (See the sample Phone Call or Letter for how to organize your thoughts)

Always tell the truth, no elaborations.

Express your appreciation, if the legislator is **in favor keeping funds** in the MH/DD/SA system.  
(If the legislator is undecided, offer to provide more information, you can contact Elizabeth Cloud at [ncpaelizabeth@mindspring.com](mailto:ncpaelizabeth@mindspring.com) or Sally Cameron at [ncpasally@mindspring.com](mailto:ncpasally@mindspring.com).)

If you know the bill number and title, be sure to refer to it in your conversation

Leave information for the legislator to review after your meeting

Leave your contact information

Remember to be nice, even if s/he doesn't agree with you

Thank the legislator for his/her time

### After the Visit:

Send a follow-up letter:

- Restate the reason for your visit
- Restate what you think the legislator's opinion is on the issue
- State your appreciation if s/he is in favor of returning the money OR State your hope that the legislator will choose to vote in favor of returning the money (if s/he is against or undecided)
- Thank the legislator for his/her time

***(Make sure you tell your story it's important for your message to have a BIG **IMPACT** but stay brief and to the point.)***

## Your legislator's viewpoint

### Your Legislator....

- A. **MAY KNOW NOTHING ABOUT PERSONS SERVED BY THE DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH/DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES/SUBSTANCE ABUSE:** Unless your representative is a member of the Legislative Oversight Committee for MHDDSA, Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee, The House HHS Committee, or the Senate Youth and Mental Health Committee, your representative probably knows little or nothing about your concerns. Share your knowledge.
- B. **KNOWS THAT "ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL."** This quote from former US House Speaker Tip O'Neil means that legislators' most important interest is their home district and their constituents. That is who they listen to most and that is why local contacts from home are most effective.
- C. **WANTS TO DO THE RIGHT THING:** Each of us wants to do a good job, that includes legislators.
- D. **OFTEN WANTS TO GET REELECTED:** Most public officials want to continue their work to serve their constituents and to do that they need to stay in office.
- E. **WANTS TO BE RESPONSIVE:** S/He's in the business of pleasing people and wants to accommodate you—but not at any cost. Other considerations may prevent him/her from doing so.
- F. **EXPERIENCES CONFLICTING PRESSURES:** It is difficult for legislators to know what to do, everyone feels their issue is top priority.
- G. **WANTS TO KNOW HOW LEGISLATION AFFECTS THE LOCAL DISTRICT:** This is where YOU ARE IMPORTANT. You can show how a bill impacts the people back home. Be specific and use real-life examples.
- H. **FINDS IT HARD TO VOTE AGAINST A FRIEND BUT EASY TO VOTE AGAINST SOMEONE THEY DON'T KNOW:** Votes in the legislature may take money from one program to give to another. Unless your representative knows the impact that cuts have on programs in their/YOUR district, it's easy to accept the argument that those programs can afford the cut or don't need money.

## **So That is Being an ADVOCATE**

And that is all it takes to start your journey in advocacy.

Pick and chose the methods you like.

Begin with small goals, such as writing a letter or making a call.

Then work towards developing a relationship with your legislators, by sending birthday cards, holiday cards, send a thank you notes when you see your legislator's good work in the newspapers, meeting, calling, etc...

Over time you will find your legislator will start calling/emailing you for information about potential bills and legislative actions.

Best of Luck!

And THANK YOU!

\*\*\*There is always more to learn in advocacy, if you would like more information or to receive an advocacy training session in your area, contact Elizabeth Cloud at [ncpaelizabeth@mindspring.com](mailto:ncpaelizabeth@mindspring.com) or Sally Cameron at [ncpasally@mindspring.com](mailto:ncpasally@mindspring.com) or call 919-872-1005.

## **Helpful terms**

### **Amendment**

A proposed change to the language in a bill by adding, substituting, or omitting a portion of the legislation before final passage.

### **Appropriation**

Legislation that funds an agency or program by directing the expenditure of money from the Budget Office.

### **Authorization**

Legislation that authorizes, or permits the expenditure of funds for an agency or program, with the actual spending to be approved by the appropriations committees.

### **Bill**

Legislation introduced in either the House or the Senate. House bills are designated by the prefix "H.B.," Senate bills by "S.B.," and then followed by the bill number. Bill numbers are determined by the order in which bills are introduced.

### **Caucus**

A meeting of members of the same political party to determine the party's position on legislative issues.

### **Committee**

A subdivision of the House and Senate that prepares legislation for action by the parent chamber. Each committee has jurisdiction over certain subject matters and considers legislation pertaining to their jurisdiction. Most committees are further subdivided into subcommittees. There are two types of committees:

1. Standing committees are permanent committees with a particular legislative jurisdiction.
2. Joint Committees have members from both the House and the Senate.

### **Committee Process**

Once bills are introduced they are referred to one of the committees where hearings are held, where amendments are considered, and the committee reports its recommendations to the legislative body.

### **Conference Committee**

A committee made up of members from both chambers. Its purpose is to resolve the differences between the House and Senate version of a bill.

### **Constituent**

Any citizen residing in a district or state represented by a House Representative or a Senator.

### **Continuing Appropriation**

When a fiscal year begins and the legislature has not yet enacted all regular appropriation bills for that year, it passed a joint resolution "continuing appropriation" for government agencies at rate generally based on the previous year's appropriations.

## **Helpful terms, cont'd**

### **Co-sponsor**

One who joins in sponsoring legislation. Co-sponsorship is a public demonstration of support for a measure.

### **Executive Session**

A meeting of a Senate or House committee (or occasionally of either Chamber) that only its members may attend.

### **Expenditures**

The actual spending of money, as distinguished from the appropriation of it.

### **Filibuster**

A time-delaying tactic used by a minority in an effort to prevent a vote on a bill that probably would pass if brought to a vote.

### **Fiscal Year**

The states annual accounting period, which begins July 1 and ends the following June 30. The fiscal year is designated by the year in which it ends.

### **H.B.**

The initials "H.B." before the number designate a bill originating in the House.

### **Hearings**

A session of a legislative committee at which supporters and opponents express their views. The committee announces hearings from one day to many weeks in advance and may invite certain persons to testify. Persons who request to testify may be turned down by the committee, but they are often allowed to either appear in person or submit a written statement for the record.

### **Introduction**

The original presentation of a bill.

### **Joint Committee**

A committee made up of members of both the House and Senate.

### **Joint Resolution**

Just like a bill, a joint resolution requires the approval of both houses and has the force of law if approved. Joint resolutions are generally used in dealing with limited matters, such as a single appropriation for a specific purpose.

### **Marking Up A Bill**

Going through a measure, usually in subcommittee and committee, taking it section by section, revising language, and penciling in new phrases. If the bill is extensively revised, the new version may be introduced as a separate or "clean bill" with a new number.

### **Majority Leader**

Floor leader, spokesperson, and strategist for the majority party.

## **Helpful terms, cont'd**

### **Minority Leader**

Floor leader for the minority party.

### **Ranking Member**

The most senior member of a committee from a particular party. Most often used to refer to the most senior member of the minority party.

### **Recommittal**

Sending a bill back to the committee that reported it for consideration.

### **Report**

Both a verb and a noun. A committee that has examined a bill refers it to the parent chamber by "reporting" its views and recommendations regarding the measure. A "report" describes the purpose and scope of a bill, along with supporting reasons. Opposing views as well as supplemental views of other members of the committee may be included.

### **Resolution**

A resolution deals with matters entirely within the prerogatives of one chamber. It does not require passage by the other chamber and does not carry the force of law. Most resolutions deal with the rules of a chamber or are used to express the sentiments of a single house.

### **Rule**

- A. House or Senate rules governing the conduct of business.
- B. A "Rule" issued by the House Rules Committee on procedure for handling House bills.

### **S.B.**

The initials "S.B." before the number designate a bill originating in the Senate.

### **Sessions**

Normally, the legislature consists of two sessions, with the long session beginning in January and ending when the legislature adjourns (odd years) and a short session (even years) that begins in May and goes until the legislature adjourns.

### **Sponsor**

The member of the legislature who introduces legislation.

### **Standing Committee**

A committee that studies measures introduced within its jurisdiction and makes recommendations to its respective chamber concerning appropriate action.

### **Subcommittee**

A subdivision of committee organized by subject matter.

### **Substitute**

A motion, amendment, or entire bill that is introduced in place of pending legislation. Passage of a substitute kills the original measure.

## Helpful terms, cont'd

### Suspend the Rules

A motion to expedite passage of legislation whereby any member recognized by the Speaker may "move to suspend the rules and pass the bill." This requires a two-thirds vote in the House and a majority in the Senate.

## Terms of Address for Selected Federal and State Officials

<b>Government Official:</b>	<b>Address:</b>	<b>Salutation:</b>
President of the U.S.:	The President, The President and Mrs. _____ or The President and Mr. _____	Dear Sir or Madam; Mr. President or Madam President; Dear Mr. President or Dear Madam President
U.S. Vice President:	The Vice President, The Vice President and Mrs. _____ or The Vice President and Mr. _____	Dear Sir or Madam; Mr. Vice President or Madam Vice President; Dear Mr. Vice President or Dear Madam Vice President
Attorney General:	The Hon. <i>First name Surname,</i>	Dear Sir or Madam; Dear Mr. or Ms. Attorney General
Senator:	The Hon. or Sen. <i>First name Surname,</i>	Dear Mr. or Madam Senator; or Dear Mr. or Ms. <i>Surname</i>
Representative:	The Hon. or Rep. <i>First name Surname,</i>	Dear Mr. or Madam <i>Surname</i>
Speaker of the House:	The Hon. Speaker of the House of Representatives, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515	Dear Mr. or Madam Speaker
Governor:	The Hon. <i>First name Surname, of State</i>	Sir or Madam; Dear Governor <i>Surname</i>
Mayor:	The Hon. <i>First name Surname, Mayor of City</i>	Sir or Madam; Dear Mayor <i>Surname</i>

# Civics 101: Your national, state, and local elected officials.

## 1. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

- The Constitution is the Supreme law.
- All laws and people must follow the Constitution.
- It is the Constitution that establishes the roles of our nationally elected officials.
- Some of your NATIONAL representatives are:
  - The President and Vice-President of the United State
    - A part of the Executive branch
    - Enforce the laws made by the U.S. Congress.
    - Both can serve for two terms, each term is 4 years.
    - Both work in Washington DC
  - Congress
    - Each Congressional period lasts for two years.
    - We are currently in the 111th Congress.
    - Congress is in session from Jan. 3rd till July 31st, but it can run longer.
    - Congress meets at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C
    - Consists of two houses:
      - U.S House of Representatives (also called a *Member of Congress*)
        - ❖ U.S House of Representatives are elected every 2 years, which is called a term, and there are no term limits.
        - ❖ Primary duty of the U.S. House of Representatives is to make laws that affect all Americans
        - ❖ Each state gets a certain number of U.S. House Reps based on population
        - ❖ NC currently has 13 House Reps. in DC
      - U.S Senators (also called a *Member of Congress*)
        - ❖ U.S. Senators are elected every 6 years, which is called a term, and there are no term limits.
        - ❖ Primary duty of the U.S. Senate is to make laws that affect all Americans
        - ❖ Each state gets 2 Senators.
        - ❖ There are only 100 Senators in the U.S. Senate
        - ❖ NC has 2 Senators
  - Types of laws made
    - ❖ Any laws that affects *ALL* Americans.
      - Healthcare Reform
      - International Affairs/ war and peace
      - Trade between states and between the US and other countries
      - National taxes and borrowing money
      - Approves the making of money
  - Types of laws NOT made by Congress
    - ❖ Laws that only affect people in NC or locally
      - The State's Medicaid plan: who is covered and how
      - State budget
      - State taxes
      - Mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse funding and priorities
      - Local or neighborhood ordinances

## 2. STATE GOVERNMENT

- Each state has its own constitution based on its unique history, needs, philosophy, and geography.
- A state's constitution is similar to that of the national Constitution; however, the laws made in individual states cannot conflict with the national Constitution or national laws.

- Just like that of the national government, each state's constitution separates power between three branches -- legislative, judicial, and executive.
- Some of your STATE representatives are:
  - Governor Perdue and Lieutenant Governor Dalton of North Carolina
    - A part of the Executive Branch
    - Enforce the laws made by the Legislature
    - Serve 4 year terms with a 2 term limit.
    - Work in Raleigh
  - Department of Health and Human Services
    - A part of the Executive Branch
    - Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse
      - Administrative body of DHHS that oversees mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services.
      - Implements state plan for MH/DD/SAS
      - Creates some of the rules and regulations to run the MHDDSA system
        - Sometimes these rules and regulations are a result of laws created by the General Assembly
      - Organized by function, not disability area.
      - Not responsible for Medicaid, works with the Dept. of Medical Assistance on Medicaid MH/DD/SA policy
    - Commission for MHDDSA
      - Commission is rulemaking body, but Secretary of DHHS also makes rules through the Div.
      - Appointments made by Governor, House and Senate Leadership
      - Required representation based on geography, profession, consumer, family
      - Full Commission: 2 Committees: Rules and Advisory
      - Comm and Sec follow very specific administrative rulemaking process, time lines, public input
      - Temporary and Permanent rules
      - Final rules may be overridden by Rules Review Commission or Legislative changes.
  - General Assembly
    - A part of the Legislative Branch
    - The General Assembly (GA) meets biennially (every 2 years).
      - During odd years (2007, 2009, 2011) the GA meets for a long session, from January till July 1<sup>st</sup>, but the session can run longer.
      - The primary goals of the long session are to create a 2-year budget and
      - Consider numerous other policy related bills.
      - During the even years (2008, 2010, 2012) the GA meets for a short session from May till July 1<sup>st</sup>, but the session can run longer.
        - ❖ The primary goal of the short session is to re-evaluate the budget which had been set the prior year.
        - ❖ Some other bills may also be considered, but only if they involve money or were recommended by a legislative committee.
    - The General Assembly members meet in Raleigh, NC at 16 Jones Street.
    - Consists of two Chambers/Houses:
      - House of Representatives
        - ❖ NC is broken up into districts and each district has a certain number of House Reps based on the district's population
        - ❖ There are 120 NC House Representatives in the General Assembly
        - ❖ The Speaker of the House is elected by the members and oversees the House's work.
          - The Speaker is elected by the members from their membership for a two-year term.

- The Speaker’s duties include maintaining order in the House and appointing members to the House standing committees.
  - Senate
    - ❖ Each district has 1 Senator (this is not based on population)
    - ❖ There are 50 NC Senators in the General Assembly
    - ❖ The Lieutenant Governor is President of the Senate
      - Oversees the daily Senate Legislative Session.
      - He/she has no vote in the Senate except to break a tie.
    - ❖ President Pro Tempore is the leader of the Senate
      - He/She is elected by the membership of the Senate
      - He/She also appoints Senators to the Senate Standing Committees
  - Laws made by the GA
    - Any law that affects ALL North Carolinians.
      - ❖ State’s Medicaid plan: who is covered and how
      - ❖ Public health programs
      - ❖ State budget
      - ❖ State roads
      - ❖ Schools and educational implementation
  - Laws NOT made by the GA
    - Laws that only affect people in their local community or that affect all Americans.
      - ❖ Local or neighborhood ordinances
      - ❖ National Healthcare Reform
      - ❖ National Medicaid and Medicare guidelines
      - ❖ National Mental Health Parity
- How a Bill Becomes a Law
  - Bills introduced (“First Reading”) in either the House of Reps. or Senate Chamber
  - Assigned to committee
  - Heard in committee
    - Debated
    - Amended,
    - Reported out (Y or N) –
      - ❖ might go to sub-committee (committee process repeats till sent to Chamber floor)
      - ❖ or to the Chamber floor
  - Second reading on Chamber floor,
    - Debated,
    - Amended,
    - Voted
      - ❖ If yes vote, then it goes to the Third Reading
      - ❖ If no vote, then goes to another committee or fails
  - Third reading
    - Vote
      - ❖ If yes, then goes to the second chamber
        - In the second chamber the whole process will repeat
        - If yes, in second chamber – then to Governor for signing
      - ❖ If no, then goes to another committee or fails
- Legislative Committees
  - Our part-time legislators need to be “experts” in many different topics. This is impossible and so committees, on specific topics, are formed to review new bills as they are introduced and to study areas of concern or interest.
  - There are 3 types of committees:
    - **Standing committees,**

- ❖ Permanent committees that meet when the legislature is in session
- ❖ Review the new bills as they are introduced
- ❖ The House and Senate each have their own sep. committees for reviewing bills introduced during session
- **Interim committees,**
  - ❖ Temporary committees that meet when the legislature is not in session
  - ❖ Often study committees, that study specific topics
  - ❖ Prepare bill recommendations for the next legislative session.
  - ❖ The House and Senate have their own sep. committees but there can also be joint committees
- **Joint committees**
  - ❖ committees where members from both the House of Reps and the Senate work together
- Legislative Committee meetings are open to the public! YAH!
  - Lists of all the committees: House standing, Senate Standing, Interim and Joint
    - ❖ <http://www.ncleg.net/gascritps/Committees/Committees.asp>
- The General Assembly website hosts a legislative calendar of committee meetings with dates, times and locations of meetings (most in Raleigh).
  - ❖ <http://www.ncleg.net/LegislativeCalendar/>

### 3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- National government and state government are two types of government, but there are also local governments.
- Local government is divided into five categories
  - Local governments are all run very differently, to learn about your locally elected officials and government go to your local government websites.
    - County
      - With regards to MHDDSA, counties:
        - Provide services via the LME
        - Determine type of LME/Program
        - Appoint County Commissioners to LME Board
        - Board appoints members based on law, and own rules, LME director answers to Board
        - May appropriate funds, maintenance of effort required for recurring funds
    - Special Districts
      - Local Management Entities, which:
        - Manage MH/DD/SAS services
        - Develop business plan for local services
        - Provider endorsement, monitoring, TA, capacity development and quality control
        - Authorize state funded services (UR/UM, PCP authorization)
        - Authorize state hospital usage
        - Provide screening, triage and referral (STR)
        - Care coordination
        - Community collaboration
        - Fiscal management of state and local funds
    - Town and Township
    - Municipality
    - School District