POWERPRISM

Questions to Help You Understand the Policy-Making Process in Your Area

Once you have decided you want to take action, you'll need to determine the best process for changing policy and whether your efforts should be focused on local, county, or state policy change or regulation. Most cities, towns, counties, and states have an official clerk's office and some staff that can respond to your inquiry. Here are some talking points and questions to ask when you contact their office.

● Hello. My name is [*your full name*] and I live on [*street address/town*].

● If you are a student, or teacher, mention the name of your school.

● I am very concerned about _____ and would like to do something here in [*town, city, county, or state*] to [*goal of policy*].

● I was hoping someone could explain the process for passing such a policy here in [*town, city, county, or state*] and if that is even possible.

● Do I need an elected official to sponsor this proposal or are citizens allowed to bring these issues forward for consideration by themselves? What is the most successful method?

● Are co-sponsors allowed? Are they limited in number? What is the process for adding a co-sponsor to the bill?

● Is there a specific committee that would typically review an issue like this? If so, might you recommend someone I could speak with on that committee?

● I have model policy language that has been used elsewhere. Might there be someone who could look at it to let me know how it would need to be customized to work here in [*town, city, county, or state*]?

● Is there a specific timeline for filing legislation? I would like to get any information I can about the official timeline, key dates, and process for consideration – including any committee review, public hearings, or votes.

● Last question – can you give me any examples of laws that have passed in the last few years that might be similar in their intention to protect public health? (You could learn a lot from talking to other advocates that have achieved policy change in your community, so you will want to follow up with them for some tips!)