

Understanding Policy: A New Political Climate

How does getting involved in policy make a difference? Why does your vote matter? Learn more about what Congress does, why advocacy matters, and how policy can work for you.

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Overview

- How does a bill become a law?
- Legislative and regulatory processes
- Key policymakers
- What to be aware of in a new political climate
- Current and key issues



Getting to Know You...

- Who is in DC for the first time?
- Who has seen the tulips and redbuds this week?
- Who is here at the Disability Policy Seminar for the first time?



Getting to Know You...

- How many of you have been to Capitol Hill?
- How many of you consider yourself an advocate?
- How many of you belong to a self-advocacy organization?



Pull a Chair Up to the Table!

- *“If you don’t have a seat at the table, you’re probably on the menu.”*
-Elizabeth Warren
- Most of the time we can’t be at the table, so we elect people to Congress.
- We want leaders who share our values and will represent us well-that’s why it’s important to vote!



Voting

- In the mail you will get a sample ballot that says who is running for election.
- Read about all the candidates and their policy ideas and past records.
- If need help voting, ask TRUSTED friends & family, but remember- it's YOUR decision. Don't feel pressured!
- For more information:
 - *What You Need to Know About Accessing the Right to Vote*: Tuesday at 9:30am
 - *What do the Polls Tell Us*: Tuesday at 11:15am



your **VOTE**
is your **VOICE**



What is Advocacy?

- Influencing public policy
- Not just new laws but also:
 - Seeking enough money to make programs run
- Making sure laws are applied, translated, and enforced correctly



Advocacy Steps

- 1) Know the Issue/Identify the Problem
- 2) Discuss the Problem/Issue and Possible Solutions with Other Advocates You Trust
- 3) Agree with your Group on a Problem and a Solution
- 4) Work in Coalitions
- 5) Be Willing to Compromise
- 6) Talk to Legislators
- 7) Know the Process



1) Know the Issue/Identify the Problem

- Before you identify the problem, first know the issue
- Make sure you understand what the problem really is before you take action



2) Discuss Possible Solutions

- Discuss the Problem/Issue and Possible Solutions with Other Advocates You Trust



3) Strategize Ahead of Time

- Agree with your Group on a Problem and a Solution



4) Work in Coalitions

- Work with different people who share your goal
- You can be more powerful if you are well coordinated



5) Compromise



- Be willing to compromise!
- Sometimes you have to agree to disagree

6) Talk to Legislators

- Communicate your message to lawmakers



7) Know the Process

- Be aware of how policymaking works!

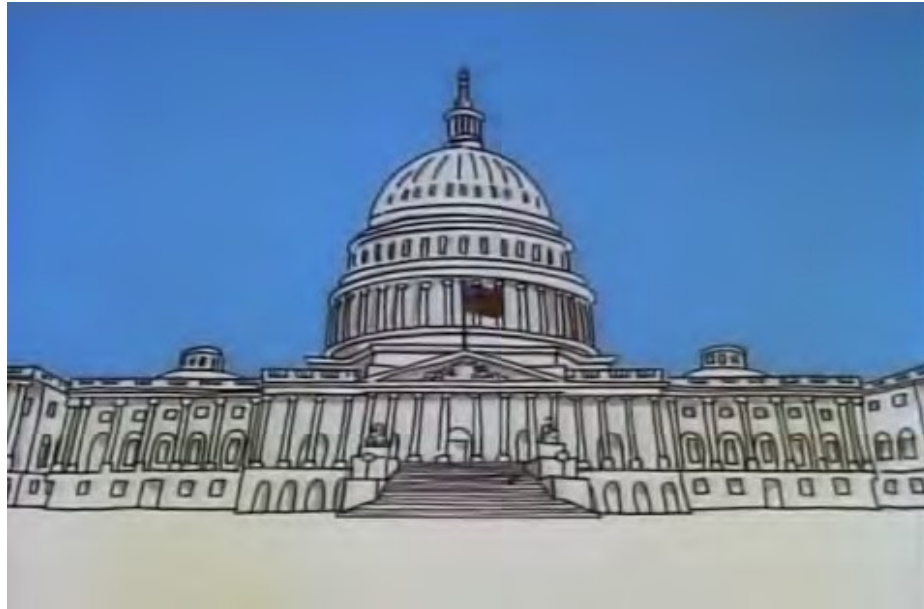


KEY POLICYMAKERS



TRIVIA QUESTION!!!

How many branches of government are there?



TRIVIA QUESTION!!!

What are the branches of government?

3 Branches of Government



Executive Branch
President
& White House
Administration



Legislative Branch
Congress:
Senate &
House of
Representatives



Judicial Branch
Courts

President & Administration

- Comes up with ideas for new laws
- Writes the rules that make the laws work
- (regulations)
- Enforces laws
- Signs or vetoes bills
- Has access to the media



TRIVIA QUESTION!!!

Who is the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS)?



TRIVIA QUESTION!!!

Who is the Secretary of Education?

Executive Cabinet: HHS & Education



Secretary of
Health & Human
Services

Sylvia Mathews
Burwell



Secretary of
Education

John B. King Jr.

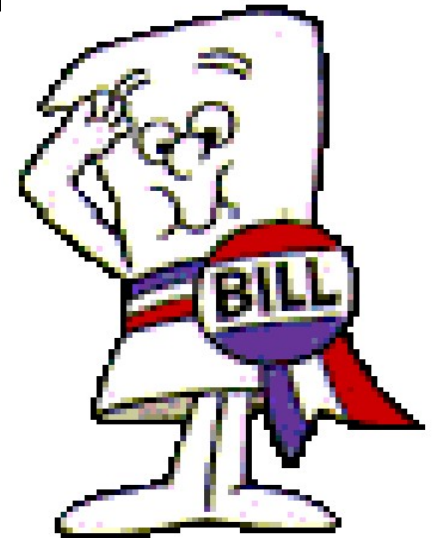


Who knows how a bill becomes a law?



How A Bill Becomes A Law

- Introduced by Member of Congress
- Sent to Committee/Subcommittee
- Hearings and markups held
- House or Senate debates
- Conference Committee meets
- House and Senate approve compromise
- President signs the bill into law



TRIVIA QUESTION!!!

How many members of the House of Representatives are there?



TRIVIA QUESTION!!!

How long is a Representative's term?

House of Representatives

- 435 members
- The number of members each state gets depends on how large its population is
- Serve 2-year terms
- House has more internal rules than the Senate
- More focused on regional issues



Key House Committees

- **Appropriations**

- Harold Rogers (R-KY)
- Nita Lowey (D-NY)
- **Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee**
 - Tom Cole (R-OK)
 - Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)

- **Budget**

- Tom Price (R-GA)
- Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)

- **Health, Education & Workforce**

- John Kline (R-MN)
- Bobby Scott (D-VA)

- **Energy & Commerce**

- Fred Upton (R-MI)
- Frank Pallone (D-NJ)

- **Ways and Means**

- Kevin Brady (R-TX)
- Sander Levin (D-MI)



TRIVIA QUESTION!!!

How many members of the Senate are there?



TRIVIA QUESTION!!!

How long is a Senator's term?

Senate

- 100 members
- Fewer internal rules
- Members have more individual power
 - Filibuster-use of parliamentary procedures to delay or kill bills



Key Senate Committees

- **Appropriations**

- Thad Cochran (R-MS)
- Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)
- Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee
 - Jerry Moran (R-KS)
 - Dick Durbin (D-IL)

- **Budget**

- Mike Enzi (R-WY)
- Bernie Sanders (D-VT)

- **Finance**

- Orrin Hatch (R-UT)
- Bobby Scott (D-OR)

- **Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP)**

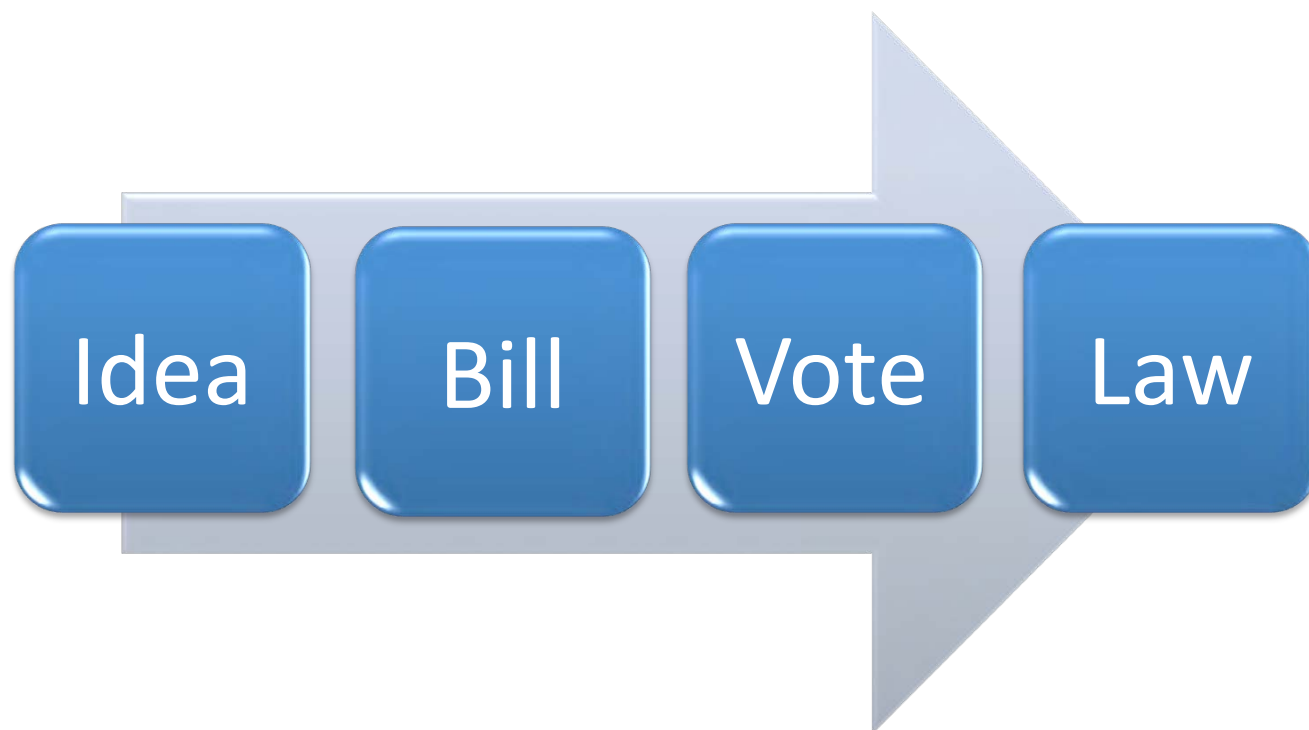
- Lamar Alexander (R-TN)
- Patty Murray (D-WA)

- **Foreign Relations**

- Bob Corker (R-TN)
- Ben Cardin (D-MD)

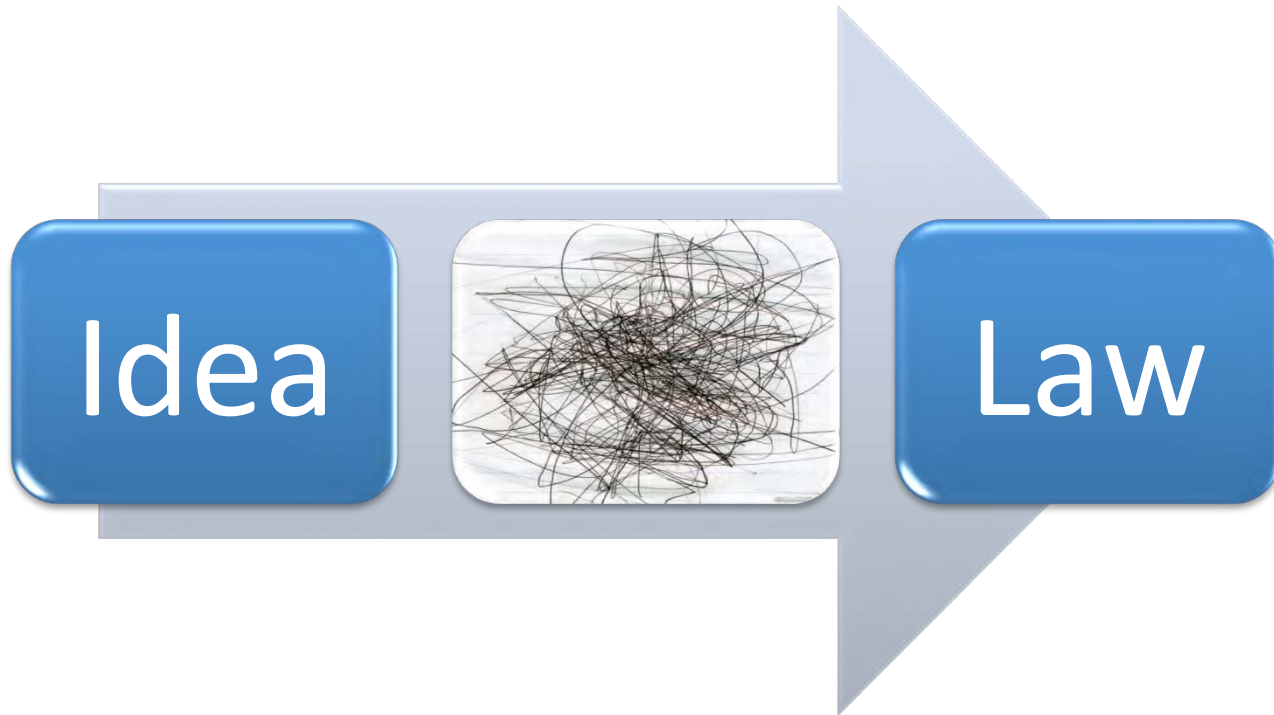


What We Are Taught...

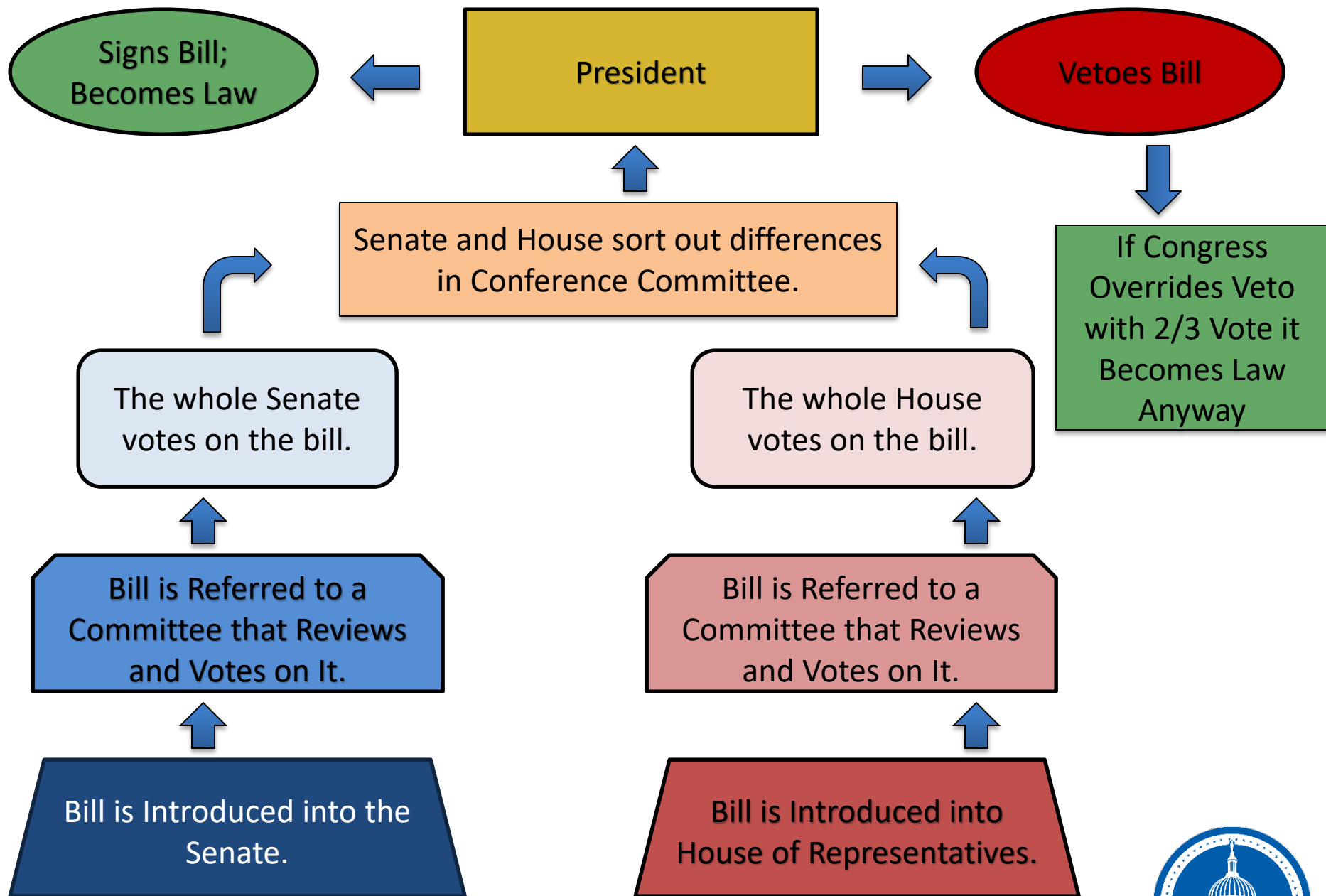


- There is a straightforward official process for passing a law, but...

In Reality...



- In reality, the actual process is much more complicated.



Example...

President signs Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

ESSA Became a Law in 2015

Senate and House sort out differences between S.1177 and H.R.5 in Conference Committee.

Once the committee has approved S.1177, the whole Senate votes on the bill. It passes.

Once the committee has approved H.R.5, the whole House votes on the bill. It passes.

Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee debates and approves S.1177.

House Health, Education and the Workforce Committee debates and approves H.R.5.

The Senate version of education reform legislation (S.1177) is introduced and sent to committee.

The House version of education reform legislation (H.R.5) is introduced and sent to committee.



How can we advocate when we are not in Washington D.C.?

- Support local and national advocacy organizations
 - Join a local self-advocacy organization
 - Friend organizations on Facebook or follow them on Twitter
 - Use social media to get the message out
- Follow Action Alerts
- Write letters and emails
- Make phone calls



How can we advocate when we are not in Washington D.C.?

- Make phone calls
- Join a board or legislative advisory body
- Participate in rallies
- Talk to your peers
- Host a letter writing party
- Attend a hearing
- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper



How can we advocate when we are not in Washington D.C.?

- Stay engaged with the people who represent you in politics
- Get to know your Congressional representatives
- Visit your state and local legislators
 - www.house.gov
 - www.senate.gov



How can we advocate when we are not in Washington D.C.?

- Share information with legislators
 - Tell them your story!
- Tell them why an issue is important to you and how it affects your daily life
- Be a resource to legislators-share your knowledge and experiences
- Be your own expert



How can allies support advocates?

- Allies need to listen, make time, and not be in a hurry.
- Allies need to know how to talk with advocates about the movement.
- Support advocates-don't put opinions in their heads before they get their thoughts out
- Remember the “self” in self-advocate



Recap

- What are the two houses of Congress?
- How many Senators are there?
- How many Members of the House are there?



Recap

- What has to happen for Congress to override the President's veto of a bill?
- What does the "HELP" in Senate HELP Committee stand for?
- What does a conference committee in Congress do with bills?



Recap

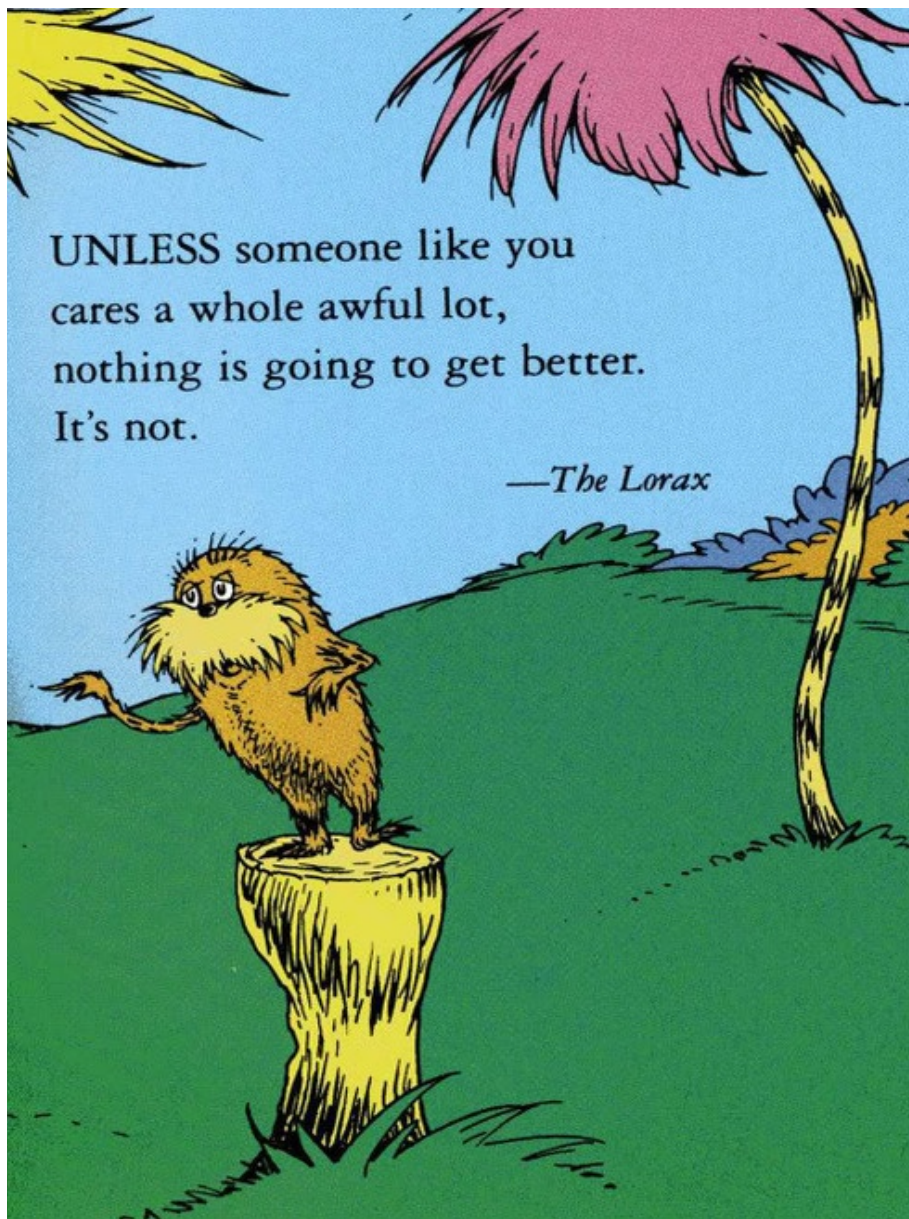
- Who is the Secretary of Health and Human Services?
- Who is the Secretary of Education?



Resources

- SABEUSA.org
- AUCD.org
 - [Tuesdays with Liz: Disability Policy for All](#)
- TheArc.org
- AlliesInAdvocacy.com
- [Disability Policy Seminar](#)
- Congress.gov
- Self Advocacy Rules and Tips





Thank You!

Any questions?

Tomorrow at 8:00 AM

Networking Breakfast	Grand Ballroom North & Central
Siblings Meet & Greet	Congressional Ballroom C
Self Advocates Meet & Greet	Congressional Ballroom AB
President & state chapter Executive Directors of the Arc	Meeting Room 2

- Roundtable on State Constitutional Conventions
 - Grand Ballroom South
- Target States:
 - Arizona, Delaware, Idaho, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Montana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming

