Accessible Version of DC Council Advocacy Flow Chart

**DC Legislative Steps**

Step 1: DC Council things about idea for changes in law.

Step 2: A bill (proposed law) is introduced by Councilmembers or at the Request of the Mayor.

Step 3: The bill is assigned to a Committee (a smaller group of Councilmembers), based on the subject.

Step 4: The Committee decides if it will review the bill. If not, then the bill dies and the Council returns to step 1. If yes, then the bill goes to the next step.

Step 5: The Committee holds a hearing to get comments from the public and others.

Step 6: The Committee can: Not act and let the bill die, in which case the Council returns to step 1; Mark up or change the bill, in which case the Council returns to step 4; Vote the bill out, recommending yes or no, in which case the Council proceeds to the next step.

Step 7: If a bill gets out of Committee, it goes to the Committee of the Whole (COW), who can put it on the legislative agenda.

Step 8: First Reading: The Council debates and can make changes to the bill. The majority can vote to: Return the bill to the Committee (return to step 4); Say no and the bill dies (return to step 1); or Say yes and the bill is scheduled for the next step.

Step 9: Second Reading: The Council takes a second vote. The majority can vote to: Return the bill to the Committee (step 4); Say no, then the bill dies (return to step 1); or say yes, then the bill passes and moves onto the next step.

Step 10: The Mayor can: Veto (say no) and return the bill to the Council, which can overrule the veto within 30 days with a 2/3 majority vote; or Sign the bill within 10 days, or allow it to become an Act without signing.

Step 11: The Act goes to the U.S. Congress (House and Senate), where it can: Say no, within 30 days and with the U.S. President's agreement, in which case the Council returns to step 1; or take no action and the Act becomes a law.

**What You Can Do**

1. Know your issue well! Know your Ward Councilmember & share ideas. Find a champion for your cause.
2. Get other people's support! Reach out to advocacy organizations that care. Create a petition on why the law should change.
3. Find out the wards of the Committee's Councilmembers and find people they represent to support your cause. Call, write, or email Committee members to get them interested in the bill.
4. Look for the hearing notice on the Council website. Sign up to testify at the hearing. Get other supporters to come to the hearing.
5. Set up meetings, write letters and emails, and call Committee members — and get others to join you!
6. Contact your Ward representative to let them know you want the bill on the agenda.
7. Email or call your Councilmembers before the First Reading and before the Second Reading to let them know that you support the bill and why it is important. Come to see the DC Council vote. Make sure to bring your allies with you! Send your petition to the DC Council. Call local newstations and newspapers to tell them about the hearing.
8. Call, write, or email the Mayor's office to tell them that you want the bill signed.
9. Contact U.S. Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton and ask for her help.