

Legislation Committee

Area Workshop Guide

Legislative Purposes:

To initiate, endorse, and support desirable legislation or other suitable endeavors in the interest of education and women educators

To inform the members of current economic, social, political, and educational issues so that they may participate effectively in a world society

Engaging in legislative activity is one means of implementing some of the purposes of Delta Kappa Gamma. The legislative program must be developed within the framework of the guidelines determined by the International organization:

Delta Kappa Gamma Society, International Professional Affairs Committee: Legislative Activities

Legislative activities are the responsibility of the Professional Affairs Committee. One or more of its members is designated to assume the responsibility for heading the legislative program at the international, state organization and chapter levels. A committee on legislation is optional for state organizations and chapters.

- All levels of the Society shall cooperate with other organizations when their legislative activities help to promote the state Purposes of the Society.
- An individual may represent the organization on legislative issues only after receiving authorization from the president, executive board, or membership of the particular level of the Society that she is representing.
- Legislative action shall be based on a thorough understanding of the basic issues involved.
- Legislative activity shall be concerned with education issues, not with candidates or political parties.
- Expenditures for legislative activities shall not exceed a nominal portion of the Society's income at any level.
- The Society cannot endorse a candidate or spend money for a candidate's campaign.
- The Society can initiate, endorse or support legislation relating to the improvement of education or the status of educators.

When planning programs to share with your chapter, work with:

- Program Committee to plan
 - When to present information
 - Where to hold the program
 - Who will be the speaker
 - What the topic will be
- Music committee to plan
 - Appropriate music to play
 - Appropriate songs to learn and sing
 - Appropriate musician, soloist or group to show case
- Personal Growth and Services Committee to
 - Encourage members to participate in appropriate programs of actions
 - Organize activities to participate in programs and events

- Keep members informed of economic, social, political, and educational issues
- Become involved in community affairs related to city, county, state, and federal government
- Professional Affairs committee to
 - Promote desirable legislation for education or the status of women
 - Encourage contact with legislators
- Research Committee to
 - Research current and proposed legislation
 - Research contact information for legislators
 - Research upcoming events to attend
- Yearbook Committee to
 - Publish committee members names and contact information
 - Publish contact information for local, state, and federal government officials and legislators

Keep in mind:

- The society cannot endorse a candidate or spend money for a candidate's campaign.
- The society cannot initiate, endorse, or support legislation unless it relates to the improvement of education or the status of educators.

Participate in political forums and rallies:

- DKG Chapter and Area meetings
- DKG State Conventions
- Texas Political Forum
- National Political Forum

Online Legislative Alerts and Updates

Usforuminfo@usm.edu

Dr. Angela O. Bedenbaugh
 The University of Southern Mississippi
 118 College Drive # 8466
 Hattiesburg, MS 39046-0001
 Office: (601)266-5718, (800) 814-4673
 Fax: (601) 266-5718
 Answering Machine: (601) 266-4712

Texas Legislative Online
www.capitol.state.tx.us

Texas Education Agency
 William B. Travis Building
 1701 N. Congress Ave.
 Austin, TX 78701
 512-463-9737
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/>

The Education Advocate Online

NEA (National Education Association)
<http://www.nea.org/lac/>

Children's Defense Fund Update List
<http://www.childrensdefense.org>

House Education and the Workforce Committee
<http://www.house.gov/eco>

Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
<http://www.senate.gov/labor>

editor@politicsol.com
(PoliticsOL.com Editor)

American Society for Curriculum and Development
ascd@smartbrief.com (ASCD SmartBrief)

Features daily brief with news about education under each of the following categories:

- Eyes on Curriculum
- Professional Leadership
- Technology Solutions
- Policy Watch
- Association News
- In The Field

Collaborate with other professional organizations (these organizations also provide legislative alerts):

- TCTA (Texas Classroom Teachers Association)
P.O. Box 1489
Austin, TX 78767
888-879-8282
<http://tcta.org>
- TEPSA (Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association)
501 East 10th St.
Austin, TX 78701
512-478-5268
Fax: 512-478-1502
www.tepsa.org
- ATPE (Association of Texas Professional Educators)
Douglas Rogers, Executive Director
305 E. Huntland Dr. Suite 300
Austin, TX 78752-3792

- TSTA (Texas State Teachers Association)
<http://tsta.org>
877-275-8782
- Texas Retired Teachers Association
313 E. 12th St. # 200
Austin, TX 78701
512-476-1622
<http://trta.org>
- Contact college and university political science departments

Contact and visit Legislators:

- Write legislators (form letters are discouraged)
 - Text legislators
 - E-mail legislators
 - Telephone legislators
 - Visit legislators
 - Fax legislators
- Electronic contact:
- Websites:
- White House
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>
 - Senators
http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm
 - Representatives
<http://www.house.gov/>
 - Governor
<http://www.governor.state.tx.us/contact/>
 - Congress
<http://www.congress.org>
 - Elected officials
<http://www.USA.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml>
 - Tweet a message to your representative
<http://2gov.org/>
<http://twitter.com/USAgov>
 - Blog
<http://blog.usa.gov/roller/>
 - Facebook of legislators
www.facebook.com/USAgov
 - Youtube
<http://www.youtube.com/USGovernment>
- To Locate Mobile numbers of legislators:
- WWW.USA.gov

➤ Capital Guides

League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund
1212 Guadalupe St. # 107
Austin, TX 78701
512-472-1100
lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org
www.lwvtexas.org

Dates of Interest:

Sept. 3	First Day to Apply for Ballot by Mail
Oct. 4	Last Day to Register to Vote
Oct. 18	First Day of Early Voting
Oct. 26	Last Day to Apply for Ballot by mail (Received, not postmarked)
Oct. 29	Last Day of Early Voting
Nov. 2	Election Day
Jan. 11, 2011	82 nd Legislature Convenes at noon
May 30	Last Day of 82 nd Legislature regular session

Nov. 10, 2010 Texas Conference for Women
Houston, TX
<http://www.txconferenceforwomen.org>

Nov. 17-20, 2010 State Board of Education Meeting

Communicating with Policy Makers

WORKING WITH YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS:

MEETINGS

Do

- Request a personal meeting in your representative's district office
- Have DKG members who live in other Congressional districts request meetings with their representatives
- Request a meeting in your representative's state or national office when you are visiting those cities – and encourage other DKG members to do the same
- Call the district office to find out where your representative plans to be when she/he is in the district and speak to her/him there.

Don't

- Request a meeting and not show up
- Announce your political affiliation or the amount of your contributions to his/her campaign
- Picket a representative's office because you don't understand his/her position on an issue
- Call a representative at home at inappropriate times

LETTERS

Do

- Send a personal letter on your own stationery in your own words. Avoid form letters. Be sure to spell the representative's name correctly.
- Include your full name and address – legible- on the letter as well as on the envelope.
- Make your position clear ("I'm writing to oppose...") and use the bill name and number if possible. Stay on the topic; use personal experiences only if they are concrete examples.
- Keep it short. Be polite and timely.
- Thank representatives when they take action you support.

Don't

- Use inappropriate language or resort to name calling
- Use heavily scented or gaudily decorated paper
- Gather signatures on a petition and send to your representative

PHONE CALLS

Do

- Identify yourself by name and town
- Make sure the person who answers the phone knows that you live or work in the representative's district.
- If the representative is not available to speak with you, ask to speak with the appropriate staff member.
- Plan what you want to say – but don't make it sound like you are reading from a script
- Offer to send background material or additional information, if appropriate

Don't

- Waste your time and money by calling other representatives other than your own – they have their own constituents.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Do

- Keep the door open for working together with your representative on other issues of interest.
- Write to your local newspaper touting your representative's support.
- Let your representative see you in other identities- not just as an educator or DKG member – but as a parent, church goer, shopper, community volunteer, sports fan, civic association member, alumnus of the local college or university... THIS INCREASES YOUR CLOUT!
- Offer support in your representative's re-election campaign, if you have come to like or admire this person. It does not have to be a contribution; a few hours of volunteered time is a perfect gift.
- Always remember to VOTE!

Don't

- Underestimate your power. If you are a voter in the district – YOU HAVE POWER! You have your vote, and you can influence the votes of your family, friends, neighbors, business associates, etc.
- Waste all this effort by **not** registering to vote.

VISITING YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Preparing for the Visit

- Make an appointment to visit your representative when they are home on long weekends or during legislative recesses.
- Make clear which issue(s) you want to discuss (no more than 3)
- Gather information. Learn about your legislator's records on education or women's issues. Become familiar with the opposition's views and arguments on the issues to help answer questions.
- Prepare materials to leave with the legislator or staff: copies of relevant DKG position papers and a memo or fact sheet summarizing your main concerns.

- Confirm the appointment the morning of or day before the meeting. Arrive on time.

During the Visit

- Identify yourself as a DKG member with a DKG pin or name tag.
- Introduce yourself and start on a positive note. If he or she recently voted in support of an education issue, thank him or her.
- Clearly state the position of DKG and prioritize your points.
- Explain your position with facts, but also use personal stories when possible. Let the legislator understand the personal ramifications or benefits resulting from their actions
- If you do not understand something, ask for an explanation.
- Ask the legislator or staff to clarify what his or her position is on the issue.
- Ask the legislator to take some specific actions such as sponsoring a bill, voting for or against a pending measure, or meeting with your chapter.
- Thank the legislator and staff as you leave.
- Take and leave a gift representative of your area or organization.

After the Visit

- Write, call, or e-mail the legislators and staff to thank them for their time. Remind them of anything they may have agreed to do and send additional information.
- Share the results of your meeting with your chapter. Share insights you have gained about your legislator's concerns.
- Find out when the legislators will be in your home district attending town hall meetings or forums, and organize a group to attend.
- Maintain communication with legislators and their staff through letters, calls, visits, email, etc.

QUESTIONS FOR EACH ACTION WE SUPPORT OR DO NOT SUPPORT

- Will it hinder involvement in education and the ability to become upwardly mobile, assist or have no impact on future legislation or women educators?
- Will it create a negatively professional attitude and atmosphere or increase the professional image in the educator and the public eye?
- What are other legislation and professional affairs issues that affect women educators?

QUESTIONS FOR EXPLORATION

- How do we make one another more aware of the proposed current legislation?
- How do we choose which legislation and issues to support?
- How do we actively support?
- What is the process of reaching a support or not support agreement?
- How can state organizations, chapters, and individual members be active by initiating, endorsing (or not), supporting (or not) desirable legislation?
- How can we support women in obtaining positions of professional interest and in legislative bodies?