

Civic engagement or participation is any activity addressing issues of public concern. This includes communities working together or individuals working alone to advocate for change. Individuals with disabilities and those who support them can help others understand the need for continuous improvement.

It is important for legislators to hear personal stories. Voices can create change. A strong history of disability advocacy has allowed laws to change in the United States. Below is a TEDx Talk with a champion for change in the disability world, as well as, a tribute to Iowa native Julie Beckett who inspired change through advocacy.

- [Our Fight for Disability Rights and Why We're Not Done Yet | Judith Heumann | TEDxMidAtlantic](#)
- [Julie Beckett and Family Voices History](#)

Why is it important for families of individuals with disabilities to understand the legislative process?

There are many systems that impact individuals with disabilities. These systems are driven by laws. Certain processes must be followed in order to create or change a state law or policy. Family voices are important for legislators to understand how individuals with disabilities will be impacted by proposed legislation.

What information is available to better understand the legislative process?

The resources below can be used to support individuals in their understanding of Iowa's legislative process:

- [How a Bill Becomes a Law | www.legis.iowa.gov](#)
- [Learn How an Idea Becomes a Law | iowa.gov](#)
- [Iowa Legislation: Current Actions: Background: The Legislative Process](#)

How can individuals learn more about the current legislative bills being proposed?

There are many bills that get introduced to state legislators. The following resources can be used to track current bills that are being proposed and stay up to date on current issues. It is important to understand that bill numbers may change frequently as bills go through the process and are amended.

- [Iowa Legislature - Bill Tracking Tools](#)
- [infoNET | Iowa DD Council](#)
- [Tracking Current Legislation - Iowa Legislation: Current Actions - LibGuides at Drake University Law Library](#)
- [Legislative Terminology | Legislative Services Agency](#)

How can individuals engage in the legislative process?

There are a variety of ways that individuals can become involved in the legislative process. The following resources can help individuals understand how to contact their state legislators to share their position on a proposed bill, find legislative session calendars, attend a subcommittee hearing and provide written comment for the subcommittee.

- [Participation in Making Iowa Laws | www.legis.iowa.gov](#)
- [Iowa Legislature - Find Your Legislator](#)
- [Iowa Legislature - Chamber Meetings](#)

Reference Key

SF = Senate File, bill originated in the Senate

HF = House File, bill originated in the House

SF123 = Numbers that follow indicate the bill number

(§) = Section symbol refers to specific sections of a legal code or law