

# Legislative Advocacy 101: Prepare for California's Upcoming Legislative Session

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# Webinar Logistics

- All on mute. Use Questions function for substantive questions and for technical concerns.
- Problems with getting on to the webinar? Send an e-mail to [trainings@justiceinaging.org](mailto:trainings@justiceinaging.org).
- Find materials for this training and past trainings by searching the [Resource Library](https://justiceinaging.org/resource-library), [justiceinaging.org/resource-library](https://justiceinaging.org/resource-library). A recording will be posted to [Justice in Aging's Vimeo page](https://Justice%20in%20Aging's%20Vimeo%20page) at the conclusion of the presentation, [vimeo.com/justiceinaging](https://vimeo.com/justiceinaging).
- Enable closed captioning by selecting “CC” from the Zoom control panel.

# JUSTICE IN AGING

FIGHTING SENIOR POVERTY THROUGH LAW

Justice in Aging is a national organization that uses the power of law to fight senior poverty by securing access to affordable health care, economic security, and the courts for older adults with limited resources.

Since 1972 we've focused our efforts primarily on fighting for people who have been marginalized and excluded from justice, such as women, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people with limited English proficiency.

# About Legal Aid Association of California

The Legal Aid Association of California (LAAC) is the statewide membership organization of legal services nonprofits. Over 100 nonprofit organizations around the state are members of LAAC.

These nonprofit member organizations provide critical legal assistance to low-income Californians and ensure equal access to justice. LAAC serves and strengthens its members through advocacy, training, and support. LAAC does not directly provide legal services.

Want to receive Justice in Aging's or the Legal Aid Association of CA's trainings and materials?

## ***Join Our Network!***

Go to [justiceinaging.org](https://justiceinaging.org) and click **“Sign up”** or send an email to [info@justiceinaging.org](mailto:info@justiceinaging.org)

Go to [laaonline.org](https://laaonline.org) and click **“Get involved”**

# Poll 1

How would you describe your experience with legislative/budget advocacy?

## 1) Very experienced

- *(e.g. sponsored bills in the past, testified in Sacramento, relationships with legislative staff)*

## 2) Medium experience

- *(e.g. sent in a few letters of support, but never sponsored a bill)*

## 3) Little experience

- *(e.g. have not engaged in legislative advocacy)*

# Poll 2

Do you work at a Legal Services Corporation (LSC) funded program?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No



# Overview of Legislative Calendar

# 2026 California Legislative Calendar

- Two major tracks to follow during the year: **Budget** and **Policy** Bills
- CA has a very prescriptive budget and legislative calendar: laid out in the state constitution
- Policy bills go through policy and appropriations committees
- Budget items go through budget subcommittees

# Key Deadlines/Timeline for Budget

**January 10<sup>th</sup>: Governor Releases  
Proposed Budget**



**February – April: Legislative Budget  
Hearings**



**May 14<sup>th</sup>: Governor Releases  
Budget Revision**



**May – June: Final Budget Hearings  
and Negotiations**



**June 15<sup>th</sup>: Legislature Votes on  
Budget**

**New fiscal year begins July 1<sup>st</sup>**

# 2026 California Legislative Calendar (1 of 2)

- Key deadlines for **policy bills**:
  - January 16<sup>th</sup>: Deadline for 2-year bills to have first policy committee hearing
  - January 23<sup>rd</sup>: Deadline to send language to legislative counsel
  - January 31<sup>st</sup>: Deadline for 2-year bills to pass in first house
  - February 20<sup>th</sup>: Bill introduction deadline
  - March – April: Policy bill hearings in first house

# 2026 California Legislative Calendar (2 of 2)

- Key deadlines for **policy bills**:
  - May: Appropriations hearings
  - May 29<sup>th</sup>: Deadline for bills to pass in first house
  - June: Policy bill hearings in second house
  - July: Legislative summer recess
  - August: Appropriations hearings
  - August 31<sup>st</sup>: Deadline to pass bills onto the Governor
  - September 30<sup>th</sup>: Deadline for Governor to sign/veto bills



# Advocacy Strategies

# Budget Advocacy

- Start early!
- Engage with the administration to inform their proposed budget
- Stakeholder proposals can be introduced via legislative process
  - Requires a legislator to act as a budget champion
- An opaque process that can be hard to track
- Overall budget committee and budget subcommittees focused on specific issue areas
- Any policy bill that has a large fiscal impact should have a corresponding budget ask
  - Policy bills with large costs that are not funded in budget are often vetoed

# Legislative Advocacy

- Two main categories of engagement: sponsorship or taking a position
- Sponsor legislation: draft the bill language, finding a legislative author, and leading the advocacy
  - Working with legislative counsel on language
  - Coalition building around legislation
  - Submitting letters
  - Lobbying
  - Testifying in committee (formal or “me too”)
  - Meeting with stakeholders
- Take positions on legislation (support, oppose, support if amended, etc..)
  - Submitting letters
  - Some meetings
  - “Me too” in committee

# How Do I Run a Bill?

- Start early!
- Identify a policy solution to a problem
- Draft legislative language
- Draft a fact sheet explaining the bill idea in simple terms
- Identify if there are other organizations you want to be working closely with as co-sponsors
- Reach out to legislative offices, and ask to ‘pitch’ them your idea
  - Try to reach out to an office that you may have a previous relationship with, or has worked on this issue in the past
  - You can call any legislative office and ask for the name of the staffer for different areas (e.g. judiciary, housing, aging, etc..)

# How do I submit a letter?

- You need to use the [advocate portal](#).

*California Legislature*  
Position Letter Portal

WELCOME!


Welcome to the updated Position Letter Portal

This site was designed to facilitate the submission of position letters to committees as bills move through California's legislative process. The site is still a work in progress and we are striving to provide you and committees with features that streamline the overall position letter process.

Who should use this site? Anyone wishing to submit a position on a California Legislative bill can use this site. Please note we have three categories of registrants:

1. Registered Lobbyists with the Secretary of State
2. Organizations – an individual affiliated with an organization
3. Individuals

How Do I Get Started?



Sign in

Email

Password

# Advocate Portal Example

*California Legislature*  
Position Letter Portal


Activity

[Submit a Letter](#) [Inbox](#) [Manage my account](#)

Recent Document Submissions

No  
Image  
on  
Record

Yasmin Peled



[Justice in Aging AB 499 Opposition Letter 8.9.22.pdf](#) - Justice in Aging - AB 499 - Oppose as proposed to be amended 2022/08/09 12:58:39 PM PDT

**Stance :** Oppose for AB 499 *Referral source for residential care facilities for the elderly: duties.(ver. 97)*

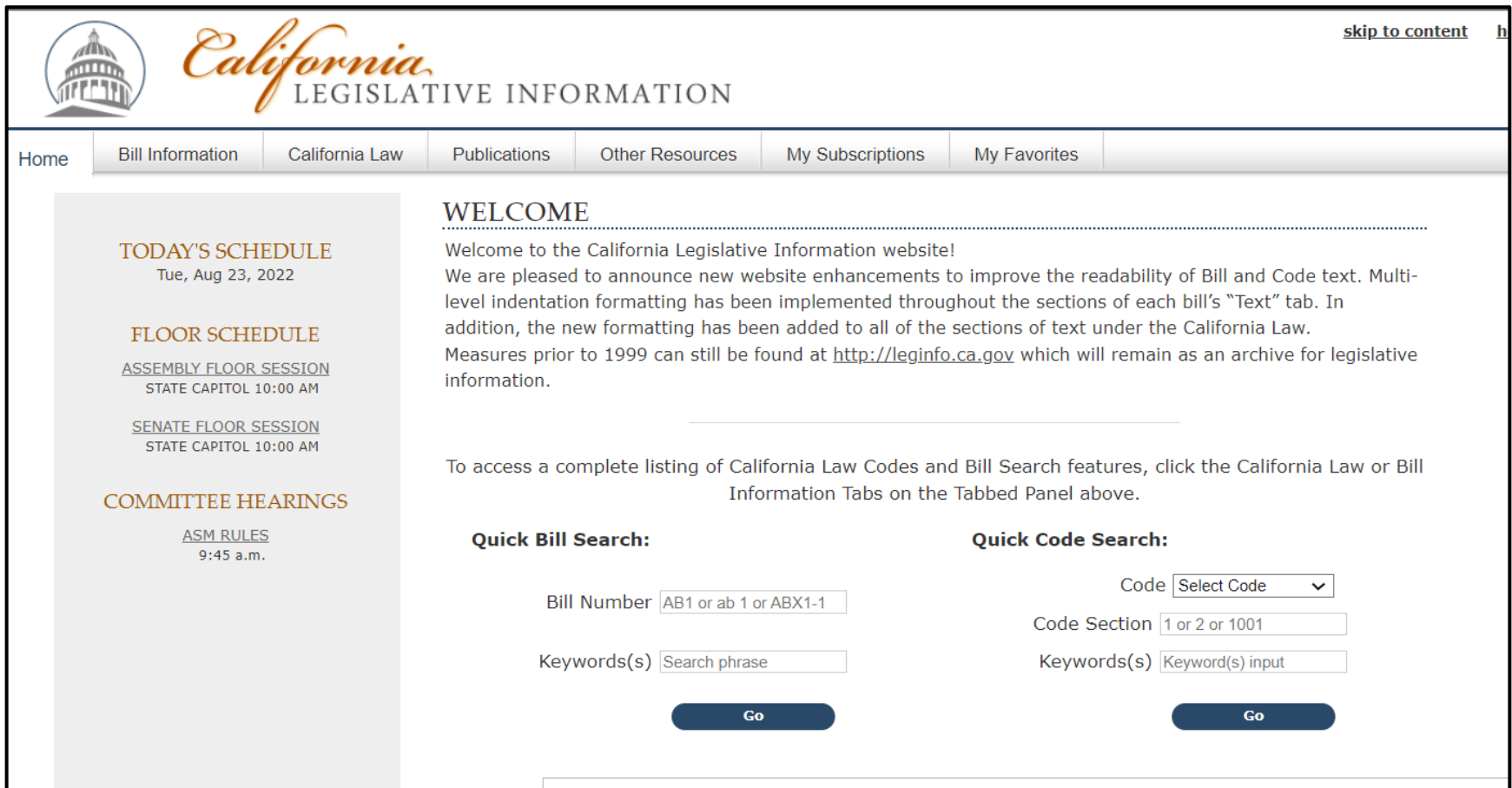
**Organization :** JUSTICE IN AGING

**Received by :**


- Senate Human Services Committee
- Sarah Rizvi (Author Staff - Blanca Rubio)

# How do I look up a bill?

- Go to the [California Legislative Information website](#).



The screenshot shows the homepage of the California Legislative Information website. At the top left is the California State Capitol dome logo, followed by the text "California LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION". A "skip to content" link is in the top right. Below the header is a navigation menu with tabs: Home, Bill Information, California Law, Publications, Other Resources, My Subscriptions, and My Favorites. The main content area is divided into a left sidebar and a main right section. The sidebar contains links for "TODAY'S SCHEDULE" (Tue, Aug 23, 2022), "FLOOR SCHEDULE", "ASSEMBLY FLOOR SESSION" (STATE CAPITOL 10:00 AM), "SENATE FLOOR SESSION" (STATE CAPITOL 10:00 AM), and "COMMITTEE HEARINGS" (ASM RULES 9:45 a.m.). The main section has a "WELCOME" heading, a paragraph of text about website enhancements, and a "Quick Bill Search" and "Quick Code Search" section with input fields and "Go" buttons.

 **California**  
LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION

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Home | Bill Information | California Law | Publications | Other Resources | My Subscriptions | My Favorites

**TODAY'S SCHEDULE**  
Tue, Aug 23, 2022

**FLOOR SCHEDULE**

[ASSEMBLY FLOOR SESSION](#)  
STATE CAPITOL 10:00 AM

[SENATE FLOOR SESSION](#)  
STATE CAPITOL 10:00 AM

**COMMITTEE HEARINGS**

[ASM RULES](#)  
9:45 a.m.

**WELCOME**

Welcome to the California Legislative Information website!  
We are pleased to announce new website enhancements to improve the readability of Bill and Code text. Multi-level indentation formatting has been implemented throughout the sections of each bill's "Text" tab. In addition, the new formatting has been added to all of the sections of text under the California Law. Measures prior to 1999 can still be found at <http://leginfo.ca.gov> which will remain as an archive for legislative information.

To access a complete listing of California Law Codes and Bill Search features, click the California Law or Bill Information Tabs on the Tabbed Panel above.

**Quick Bill Search:**

Bill Number

Keywords(s)

**Go**

**Quick Code Search:**

Code

Code Section

Keywords(s)

**Go**

# Examples

- 1) Legal services funding (Budget ask only)
- 2) Older adult rental assistance (Budget ask and policy bill)
- 3) Alternative service of elder abuse restraining orders (policy bill only)



# Specific Considerations for LSC Organizations

# Overview of Rules for Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Funded Organizations

- LSC organizations have restrictions on how they can influence state legislative policy and budget.
  - LSC organizations are not allowed to “lobby.”
  - In order to discuss any legislation, an LSC org must have an “Invitation to Comment Letter.”
- BUT, that doesn’t mean there’s nothing LSC organizations can do.
  - If you aren’t making an ask, it’s not lobbying. You can educate legislators on important issues. Important exception: LSC orgs CAN lobby on their own funding.
  - If you have an invitation to comment letter, you can lobby.
  - If the topic is your own funding, you can lobby.
- MOST IMPORTANT: Each LSC org interprets the restrictions in their own way – don’t take any action without discussing it with your Executive Director.

*The rules against attempts-to-influence in the LSC restrictions prohibit recipients from any “attempt to influence the passage or defeat of any legislation or constitutional amendment”; 45 C.F.R. § 1612.3, et seq. See also, LSC Program Letter 13-5.*



# Resources on Lobbying Rules

# Resources on CA Lobbying Rules

- Alliance for Justice Bolder Advocacy:
  - [Practical Guidance: What Nonprofits Need to Know About Lobbying in California](#)
  - [Understanding California Lobbying Disclosure Rules](#)
- LSC Lobbying Rules:
  - [45 C.F.R. § 1612 et seq](#)
  - [LSC Program Letter 13-5](#)



# A Snapshot of 2026 Priorities

# 2026 Priorities for LAAC (1 of 2)

- *Perennial LAAC Priority*: Protect and/or increase legal services funding.
  - **2026 specific priority =**
    - Advocate for new funding strategically in light of difficult state budget situation.
    - Potential focus on healthcare access & bringing back homelessness prevention funding.
- *Perennial LAAC Priority* : Protect/improve access to courts and to legal services.
  - **2026 specific priority =**
    - Court access in light of ICE presence.
    - Ongoing work regarding access to a verbatim court record.

# 2026 Priorities for LAAC ( 2 of 2)

- *Perennial LAAC Priority:* Support legislative efforts of legal aid organizations.
  - Tell us what you are working on. We are here to amplify your voice and support you!
- *Perennial LAAC Priority:* Coordinate legal aid community voice and facilitate involvement in our legislative advocacy.
  - **Ways to get involved:**
    - Join LAAC's Policy Advocates listserv, attend monthly Policy Advocates meetings or our next Policy Retreat
    - Attend expanded Legal Aid Day(s) in Sacramento in the Spring
    - Contribute to new legal aid policy advocacy codex
    - Join LAAC's community-wide communications effort
    - Seek LAAC's technical assistance

# 2026 Priorities for Justice in Aging

*(partial list)*

- H.R. 1 Implementation
  - With the passage of H.R. 1, the state now must grapple with implementing this harmful federal law. Our work this year focuses on mitigating the harm as much as possible and educating our network on new changes.
- Revenues
  - In order to maintain and improve key social safety net programs in California, we must work to build up the revenues to support our critical systems.
- Older adult homelessness prevention
  - Ways to get involved:
    - Share stories
    - Attend budget hearings
    - Support bills



# Questions?

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