



“How to Change a Law Through the Democratic Process” - Individual Advocacy shared by RIHD

To change a law, start by doing some research, finding the right level of government to approach, and looking into pending legislation. You might be able to write a draft of the law yourself, or you might need the support of your state or national legislator. It's a lot easier to change local or state law than on the federal level, but there are possibilities for taking action at any level.

1. Discover an issue that you are passionate about. It can be small -- trying to get people to clean up after their animals, for example -- or large -- trying to eliminate the sales tax on groceries in your state. Keep in mind that the smaller the issue, the better chance you have at making a difference. Local government necessarily includes fewer people, and because you are one of those people, your voice can make a difference in a way that it can't among the millions on a state or national level.
2. Know what level of government is responsible for the law. Is it a national law? Then you might want to enlist the help of a Senator or Congressman. Is it a state law? Then your state house representative or a state senator is the person to see. Finally, if the law is a county or town ordinance seek out the local councillor, supervisor, mayor, or county executive.
3. Go to community meetings if you can't file a referendum. This is a way for you to bring up your issue to local lawmakers. Check your city to see when there are meetings for constituents to bring up issues. You usually have a limited time to speak, so be prepared and be professional. You might have to go to many meetings before people begin to take you seriously, but this is an important step.
4. Research the mayor and council members. Look at their websites. See what kinds of laws they have promoted in the past, and if yours might fit in. If you are going to change a local law, you need support from someone in the city government. If you don't want to approach the mayor directly, choose the council member from your district or one you think will be sympathetic to your cause.
5. Meet with your chosen lawmaker. Tell them about your pattern of attending community meetings. Lay out your ideas for a law change. Bring copies of your proposed changes to share with the lawmaker. Ask their opinion on the feasibility of your goals. Listen to their suggestions. If they say that they need a petition with signatures from citizens showing support for your idea (probably at least 500 signatures), that's your next step. Or they might

like it just as it is and say that they will take it to the rest of the council.

6. Wait for the lawmakers to take action. Once you have presented the law and anything else they have asked for (like a petition), you have to wait and see what happens. The city council might choose to vote on your idea soon, or it might have to wait behind other outstanding business.

7. Keep in mind that changing a law can take a long time. It also might be that your law comes up for a vote but fails. In that case, you will need to do more work in talking to the city council and mayor, trying to get it heard and voted on again, this time with adequate support.

8. Try again. If your law doesn't go anywhere the first time, talk to more constituents, make allies, and do the process again. This time, think about getting the media involved, having meetings specifically about the issue, and put up signs to help raise consciousness about the idea.

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/m.wikihow.com/Change-a-Law-Through-the-Democratic-Process%3famp=1>

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