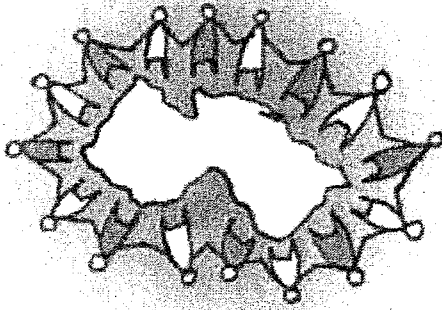


UNDERSTANDING NEW JERSEY'S LEGISLATURE

- ◆ New Jersey has 40 voting districts
- ◆ Each district contains approximately the same number of people
- ◆ The legislature has two "Houses" - the Senate and the General Assembly
- ◆ Every district is represented by 1 Senator and 2 Assemblypersons
- ◆ Senators serve 4-year terms, while members of the Assembly serve 2-year terms
- ◆ Elections are held in November of every odd-numbered year
- ◆ Each House elects a presiding officer from among its members - the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the General Assembly
- ◆ The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the Assembly determine the meeting schedules and decide which bills will be considered
- ◆ There are two "parties" (Democrats and Republicans) currently in office
- ◆ The party with the most legislators in office is called the majority, and the other party is the minority (currently the democrats are the majority party in both houses)
- ◆ Each party in each House chooses party leaders (the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader) who help develop that party's policy on the issue being considered by the Legislature
- ◆ Each House establishes committees (for example, the Assembly Human Services Committee, the Senate Education Committee, etc.)
- ◆ The Senate President appoints committee members and chairs in the Senate and the Speaker appoints committee members and chairs in the Assembly
- ◆ Bills are sent to the appropriate committee (determined by the topic) for review
- ◆ Most of the discussion about the merit of a bill takes place during committee meetings, which are usually open for public comment
- ◆ Bills must be voted out of committee and sent to the floor of each house for a full vote

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