



TAKE ACTION!

This year, your legislators will consider:

- Whether to fund day services for Special School graduates
- Whether to cut funding for existing services and clients
- Whether to mandate insurance coverage for autism treatment

TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS, THEY NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU.

In this packet you'll find:

- Talking points: Budget issues
Insurance coverage
- Action Steps: Sample letters to your legislators and media
Meeting with your legislators
- Legislative info: General Assembly schedule
The legislative and budget processes
Legislative contact information

Funding for New Graduates: Call to Action




Who is Affected

Delaware provides special school programs for children with certain disabilities, such as autism. In fiscal year 2011, there will be 77 students who will graduate from these programs and will be in need of adult services.

The number of children with an educational diagnosis of autism in DE public schools was 864 as of 2008. In 2010, the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services is serving at least 200 adults with autism.

The Issues

The State is facing a \$300 million budget deficit, which puts services for people with disabilities at risk.

-  **Funding for existing services may be reduced.**
-  **100 special school grads who graduated in FY2010 received 9 months of funding. This year they will need 12 months of funding to continue in adult services.**
-  **We believe that there will be NO FUNDING for the 77 FY2011 special school graduates and they will not have adult services after they graduate if funding is not found.**

What does this Mean?

Impact on Individuals and their Families...

Imagine the impact this will have on already stressed families. They will struggle to find safe, caring situations for their loved ones and may be forced to quit their jobs in order to stay home and care for their adult son or daughter with a disability.

More challenging behaviors and living situations will result if individuals with disabilities have to stay home and are not getting the supports that they need. They will likely lose the skills developed after years of intensive, dedicated education and the development of life skills, at taxpayer expense.

Impact on the State...

The cost to serve new special school graduates in community based programs is \$19,600 per person. It costs \$331,000 per person per year to be served in a residential program at Stockley Center. Community based programs are clearly the most cost efficient service option.

Without funding for community based programming, individuals with disabilities and their families will enter into a situation of even greater reliance on state resources in a time of economic crisis.

If individuals can't get day services, stressed families may find they need to ask for the supports of residential or foster care systems or turn to public assistance programs because they can no longer work because of the supervision adult child needs.

The State must consider the long term impact vs. the short term savings. When people with disabilities are not served, they lose skills and develop more challenging behaviors, which eventually result in the need for residential placements or community supports at a higher rate of funding.

Continued erosion of the support networks that citizens with disabilities depend upon to participate in the community puts the State in a situation of facing increased reliance on services that will only *increase costs*.

SB204: Insurance Coverage for Autism Treatments

Bill Summary: SB204 will correct the inequity in health insurance that excludes most children with an autism diagnosis from coverage for their therapies. It will require coverage of medically necessary speech, occupational, physical, psychological and psychiatric therapies, medications, as well as habilitative care which includes applied behavioral analysis (ABA), the most proven form of autism treatment. Coverage for ABA would be capped at \$50,000 a year, but all other therapies would be subject to the same limits and cost-sharing mechanisms as treatment for other covered conditions. DHSS would be charged with certifying providers and the Secretary would be authorized to review research in autism treatments to determine if additional treatment modalities should be covered.

The text in bold is quoted from Autism Speaks' "Arguments in Support of Private Insurance Coverage of Autism-Related Services.

- 1. Mandated private health insurance coverage will provide services that are desperately needed by children with autism, who have greater health care needs than children without autism.** Proven treatments for autism are rarely covered because it has been treated as a school problem rather than medical. SB204 mandates coverage of habilitative care including applied behavioral analysis (ABA), speech, occupational, and physical therapies, psychiatric and psychological care, and medications.
- 2. Treatments for autism are difficult to access, often inadequate, and frequently delayed. Denied coverage by private group health insurance companies, parents are often forced either to pay out-of-pocket or forego the treatments their children need.** ABA alone can cost up to \$50,000 a year, depending on the child. This is impossible for most families to pay. Public schools are overwhelmed with the need for other therapies. SB204 would improve or introduce cost-sharing for treatment among families, the State, and the private sector.
- 3. Mandated private insurance coverage will bring effective autism services within the reach of children who need them. The efficacy of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), the centerpiece of this legislative mandate's benefits, has been established repeatedly.**
- 4. Government and scientific organizations have endorsed Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and other structured behavioral therapies.** ABA is the most proven treatment for autism, according to a 1999 Surgeon General report.
- 5. To combat the difficulty many families face in accessing Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and other structured behavioral treatments through public insurance, fifteen states have passed autism insurance mandates that specifically require private insurance companies to provide coverage of these therapies, thus creating a public-private partnership for the provision of care.** These include New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Such legislation has been introduced in twenty-four other states, including Maryland and Virginia. The degree to which therapies are covered varies by state.
- 6. The costs of this insurance reform are small and will have very little impact on the cost of health insurance premiums for the individual consumer.** In Tennessee, a mandate which required that ABA be subject to the same limits as any other therapy was found to raise costs less than one percent. A Department of Defense report projected that covering such services under the military insurance program TriCare would raise premiums by about 1%.
- 7. By improving outcomes for children with autism, mandated private insurance coverage will decrease the lifetime costs of treating and providing services and will actually result in an overall cost savings in the long-run.** We already know from experience with early intervention services that these therapies yield cost-savings. A study using Pennsylvania data found that early behavioral interventions saved \$187,000 to \$203,000 in the cost of services between ages 3 and 22, and \$656,000 to \$1,082,000 from ages 3 to 55. ** While public schools would not have reduced obligations to provide services under SB204, it is reasonable to expect that children receiving supplemental treatments and therapies would require less intensive services in the schools.
- 8. Without passage of legislation requiring private health insurance coverage for autism, the costs associated with autism will continue not only to affect families, but will have far reaching social effects as well.**

***Autism Spectrum Disorders Mandated Benefits Review Panel Report: Evidence Submitted Concerning Pennsylvania HB 1150. Durham, NC: Abt Associates, Inc., June 18, 2008.*

Sample Letters to Legislators and the Media

The talking points are only good if you- talk! Writing to your legislators is an easy way to make sure they hear your message, and as a constituent, your words carry a lot of weight. Here is an easy outline to follow and a sample letter using it.

- ❖ Paragraph 1: Tell them what you are writing about in the first or second sentence. Introduce yourself and your family. Tell your legislator that your child (or you) has autism (and/or other disability/ies) and explain what that means and the effects. Tell them about the future your child (or you) hope to have.
- ❖ Paragraph 2: Tell them what issue you are writing about, and how you and/or your family will be affected. If there is no funding for new grads, will a parent have to quit their job or go on public assistance? If there were insurance coverage for autism treatments, what do you believe it would accomplish for your child or family? Would you be able to get out of debt, save for college for other children, avoid bankruptcy, etc.? Be honest and clear.
- ❖ Paragraph 3: Close by repeating your request for their support of your position.
- ❖ In any of the above paragraphs, use numbers and dollar figures wherever appropriate, and put your main points in **bold**.

SAMPLE

Dear Representative XYZ,

I am writing to ask you to support funding for adult day services for new special school graduates with disabilities. *My wife and I have raised two wonderful children in <<neighborhood>>, Jane and Bob. Bob is 20 and has autism, a neurological disorder that affects his ability to communicate and interact with others. He cannot speak and finds it very difficult to be around crowds, but the services of the Delaware Autism Program (a public school) and the staff at <<provider>> have helped him to develop work skills like filing, shredding, and sorting to prepare him for a job in a local doctor's office when he turns 21 and is no longer eligible for school.*

*Bob works very well with some supports, and we believed he would follow the path students always have of entering adult services through the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services and working under a day service provider. **But we have learned that the proposed budget has allocated no money for new graduates of special schools, leaving them with no alternative but to sit home after they leave school.** We have always counted on having two incomes in order to meet our bills, but if Bob has no services, one of us will have to quit in order to stay home with him. I don't know how we will be able to afford it. And without services, Bob will lose the skills he and his teachers worked so hard for over 15 years, and if he is ever able to secure services again, it will take so much more to regain those skills.*

My wife and I know that the State is facing large budget deficits but the answer should not be to simply drop some of our most vulnerable citizens. We will care for Bob as long as we are able, and serving him and adults with disabilities in the community is certainly the least expensive option- an average of \$19,600 per person compared to \$331,000 if that person was institutionalized. Please help us and the many families like us keep our son at home, and fund services for new graduates in FY2011.

*Sincerely,
Pat Smith*

Writing letters to the editor is a little different. Not only do you have far fewer words available, but they can edit it even further. It's important to focus on your message, and get just one to three points across as concisely as possible. Again, be clear and honest.

A good letter will catch the attention of legislators and members of the public who might not have known about the issue you're raising- maybe you'll inspire others to write too!

These samples are provided to give you ideas, but **please do not copy them for your own**; if papers get the same story from multiple people, chances are they won't print them- and the best story to tell is always your own!

I have autism and when I graduate, I want to go to work like other people my age. But next year's budget has no money for graduates to get day services. I was in the Delaware Autism Program for 15 years, and I learned a lot; without day services, I can't use all I learned in a job. And unless the legislature fixes this, I'll have nowhere to go all day, so my mom is worried she'll have to quit her job to stay home with me. Please call your legislators and tell them that people with disabilities and their families are the wrong targets for budget cuts. They should fund services for me and the 76 other graduates of special schools in Delaware.

My daughter has autism, and my family has gone deep into debt to pay for Applied Behavioral Analysis, the most proven treatment for autism. At over \$25,000 a year, we can't keep it up as long as she'll need it, and our insurance company doesn't cover ABA. Fifteen other states require insurance coverage of autism and Delaware should be one of them. Call your legislators and ask them to vote for SB204. Help families help their kids.

My son has autism and he has a better life than I ever hoped for; with the support of a state-funded job coach, he has a job he likes sorting and delivering mail for a local corporation. But his provider cannot provide the kind of support he needs if their state contract is decreased; they haven't had an increase in years, even as gas and other costs went up. My son's job benefits the whole family; he is happy, and my wife and I can work to set aside money for when we're no longer here for him. We'll take care of him as long as we can so the state doesn't have to, but the state needs to do its part too. Call your legislators and tell them not to cut day services for people with disabilities!

Below are email addresses to which you can send your letter(s) to the editor.*

Brandywine, Greenville, Hockessin, and Mill Creek Community News, and Your Better Years	editor@communitypub.com	Milford Beacon	melissa@milfordbeacon.com
The Cape Gazette	newsroom@capegazette.com	Milford Chronicle	mc@newszap.com
Coastal Point	darin.mccann@coastalpoint.com	Newark Post	sgoss@chespub.com
Delaware Coast Press	dcp@dmg.gannett.com	The News Journal	letters@delawareonline.com
Delaware State News	newsroom@newszap.com	Out & About Magazine	contact@out-and-about.com
Dover Post	jeff.brown@doverpost.com	The Review	theudreview@gmail.com
El Tiempo Hispano	info@eltiempohispano.com	Seaford Leader & State Register	leader@newszap.com
Harrington Journal	landerson@newszap.com	Seaford Star	publisher@seafordstar.com
Hoy en Delaware	jsomalo@mchsi.com	Smyrna/Clayton Sun-Times	ben.mace@doverpost.com
The Laurel Star	morningstarpub@ddmq.net	Sussex Countian	patrick@sussexcountian.com
Long Neck News	longnecknews@aol.com	Sussex County Online	webmaster@sussexcountyonline.com
Middletown Transcript	shauna@middletowntranscript.com	The Sussex County Post	sussexpost@newszap.com
		The Wave:	wave@dmg.gannett.com

*Thanks to Douglas Marshall-Steele at www.towardequality.org for collecting these addresses and permitting their use here.

Hosting A Legislative Visit to Your Home

This is a great way to bring the message about how your family will be affected home to your legislators. By hosting them for a coffee or cocktail hour in your home, you'll give them a firsthand look at why the budget and/or insurance legislation is so critical.

Inviting Your Legislator

Personally invite the legislator and their family to your home to meet your family and others from their district. This is fine to do by email, phone, or mail to their home. Let them know that you'd like to talk to them about how your family will be affected by the proposed budget and/or insurance coverage for autism therapies.

We suggest you invite their family for two reasons. For many legislators their public service is a second job, and time with their family can be limited. Also, if they are not themselves affected by disability, the comparison of your family to theirs is more immediate. But if you cannot accommodate children, there's no harm in inviting them and their spouse or significant other if they would like to come. Spouses are listed on each legislator's individual webpage.

The best times for these visits in most cases are when the General Assembly is out of session: February 1 through March 12, April 2 through April 16, and May 14 through May 28. Offer them a choice of a few different dates if you can to be flexible.

Inviting Other Families

Optional, but **STRONGLY** encouraged as an efficient way to get more voices to legislators and show that this is not just one constituent who is affected. LDAF or Autism Delaware will be happy to either put you in touch with two or three other families in your districts or contact them for you once a date has been set.

During The Meeting:

As host, take the lead in explaining why you invited them. Talking points on each policy have been provided; make as many copies as you need. Families should take turns telling how the proposed policies would affect them, though it would be best to keep each story to five minutes or less, and then open it up to questions from the legislator.

When politics gets down to such a personal level, it can be easy for the dialogue to go in a direction that makes attendees or the legislators feel angry or defensive. These meetings are intended to educate the legislator and secure their support, and sometimes the latter can take more than one evening. Please help to keep the discussion stay positive and constructive. And of course at the end, thank them for taking the time to meet with you.

After The Meeting

Please complete the enclosed report form and send it back to Kim Siegel at Autism Delaware or Melissa Martin at LDAF. Tracking discussions with legislators helps those of us going to Legislative Hall to tailor our visits. Send your legislator a personal thank-you note for meeting with you, and repeat your request or thanks for their support. Before your guests leave, ask them to write thank-you notes too, and share the legislators' contact information with them.

Meeting a Legislator in their Office or Local Constituent Hour

Personal contact with legislators is very effective. Some host open meetings in their districts on a regular basis, many are willing to set up a meeting with a constituent, and all have offices at Legislative Hall where they can receive visitors.

Arranging the Meeting

If your legislator does not have a regular meeting in your district or you cannot attend that, you can call or email them to ask for an appointment either in the district or at Legislative Hall when they are in session. Autism Delaware and LDAF staff will be setting up meetings with legislators at Legislative Hall and are happy to have constituents join us at these meetings.

If you feel intimidated at the idea of asking for an appointment, remind yourself that it is their job to represent you and they can best do their job when they've heard from their constituents. Legislators genuinely want to hear from you.

At the Meeting

You may only have a few minutes with your legislator. Introduce yourself and tell them about your family member with autism or why you are concerned about someone with autism. Explain the proposed policy changes and how they will affect your family or others that you know. As time allows, touch on each of the basic talking points provided, and show how those translate into actual effects for their constituent(s). Ask them for their support.

Keep in mind that elected officials are responsible for a wide variety of policies and agencies and may not know the fine details of DDDS adult programs, insurance, or autism. Answer their questions as best you can, and don't be afraid to say "I don't know, but I will try to find that out for you." Then contact Autism Delaware or LDAF with those questions and we will do our best to get the information.

After the Meeting

Thank them for their time, and follow up with a thank-you note or email. Email Autism Delaware or LDAF to let us know how it went and share any questions that came up.

Advocate Report

Advocate: _____ **Date/Time/Location of Meeting:** _____

Legislator: _____ **Committee(s):** _____

Topics Discussed:

Legislator Positions/Comments:

Any questions requiring follow-up? If yes, describe:

Please return to Autism Delaware/Lower Delaware Autism Foundation

Advocate Report

Advocate: _____ **Date/Time/Location of Meeting:** _____

Legislator: _____ **Committee(s):** _____

Topics Discussed:

Legislator Positions/Comments:

Any questions requiring follow-up? If yes, describe:

Please return to Autism Delaware/Lower Delaware Autism Foundation

The General Assembly Schedule 2010

When in session, the General Assembly meets Tuesday through Thursday of each week.

January

General Assembly in session January 12-14, 19-21, 26-28

February

JFC Hearings: February 1-4, 8-11, 16-18, 22-25

General Assembly out of session throughout February

March

JFC Hearings: March 1-4, 8-11

General Assembly out of session March 1-4, 8-11

General Assembly in session March 16-18, 23-25, 30-31

April

General Assembly in session April 1, 20-22, 27-29

General Assembly out of session April 6-9, 13-15 for Easter Break

May

General Assembly in session May 4-6, 11-13

General Assembly out of session May 18-20, 25-27

JFC Mark-Up May 17-20, 24-27

June

General Assembly in session throughout June

The Budget and Legislative Process- A Brief Overview

The Budget

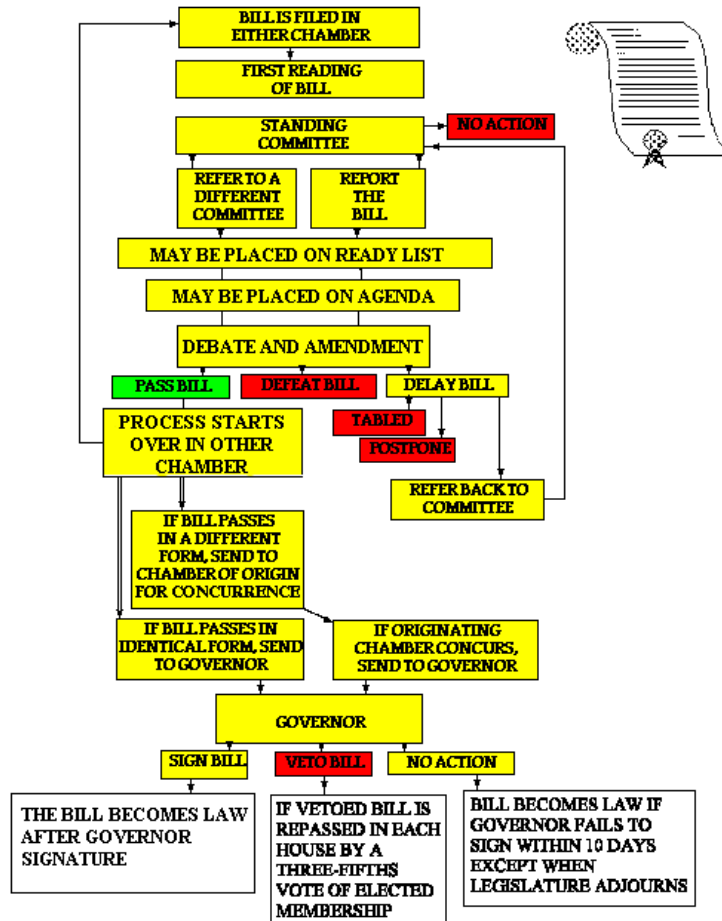
Delaware's fiscal year runs July 1 through June 30. In the executive branch, state agencies work over the summer and fall to develop their budgets and submit their requests to the Office of Management and Budget in October. In November, the agencies make formal presentations of their requests to OMB in a series of public hearings, at which the public is invited to testify. The information presented forms the basis for the governor's budget, which they submit to the General Assembly in January.

On the legislative side, the governor's budget is promptly introduced as new pieces of legislation- the operating and capital budgets. The Joint Finance Committee, made up of six representatives and six senators, then holds six weeks of hearings at which the state agencies make their case for their requests in the operating budget, and again the public is invited to testify. The JFC works throughout the session on the operating budget, and goes into "Mark-Up" in May, meaning that they add or remove budget lines, or increase or decrease the amounts allocated. All of their deliberations are now open to the public as the result of a 2009 law. The Bond Bill Committee reviews the capital budget requests.

A final budget is presented to all legislators for their vote late in the session- often the very last day. Because legislators often do not see the final budget until then, it is critical to advocate budget policy issues to JFC members as well as one's own legislators.

The Legislative Process

How A Bill Becomes A Law



This graphic may be found on the General Assembly's website at www.legis.delaware.gov

RULES OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PROVIDE FOR OCCASIONAL EXCEPTIONS TO THIS PROCESS

Legislator Contact Information

	Name	Address	Office Telephone	E-mail Address
Governor	Jack A. Markell	150 William Penn St. Tatnall Bldg. 2 nd Fl. Dover, DE 19901	(800) 292-9570 744-4101 K 577-3210 NC	http://governor.delaware.gov
Lt. Governor	Matthew Denn	150 William Penn St. Tatnall Bldg. 3 rd Fl. Dover, DE 19901	744-4333 K 577-8787 NC	Matthew.Denn@state.de.us

State Senators: P.O. Box 1401, Dover, DE 19903

Dist	Party/Name	Street/P.O.	City	Zip	Home	Office	E-mail Address
1	Harris B. McDowell, III	2311 Baynard Blvd.	Wilmington	19802	656-2921	744-4147	Harris.McDowell@state.de.us
2	Margaret Rose Henry	1910 N. Washington St.	Wilmington	19802	425-4148	744-4191	MargaretRose.Henry@state.de.us
3	Robert I. Marshall	820 N. French St., 11 th Floor	Wilmington	19801		744-4168	Robert.Marshall@state.de.us
4	Michael S. Katz	P. O. Box 3844	Wilmington	19807		744-4135	Michael.Katz@state.de.us
5	Catherine A. Cloutier	2404 Heather Rd. East	Wilmington	19803	478-9616	744-4137	Cloutiercathy@aol.com
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16	Colin R. M. J. Bonini	276 Banning Rd.	Camden	19934	698-0960	744-4169	Senator-Colin@prodigy.net
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18	F. Gary Simpson*	6 W Clarke Ave.	Milford	19963	422-3460	744-4134	GSimpson@udel.edu
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20	George H. Bunting, Jr.	P.O. Box 1497	Bethany Beach	19930	539-2229	744-4144	George.Bunting@state.de.us
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*Senate Leadership: President Pro Tem-Anthony J. DeLuca; Majority Leader- Patricia M. Blevins; Majority Whip-Margaret Rose Henry; Minority Leader- Gary Simpson; Minority Whip-Liane Sorenson
BOLD=Joint Finance Committee Member

State Representatives: P.O. Box 1401, Dover, DE 19903

Dist	Party/Name	Street/P.O.	City	Zip	Home	Office	E-mail Address
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12	Deborah D. Hudson	1022 Oriente Ave.	Wilmington	19807	651-9571	577-8723	Deborah.Hudson@state.de.us
13	John L. Mitchell, Jr.	1234 Sycamore Avenue	Wilmington	19805	995-1803	577-8473	John.L.Mitchell@state.de.us
14	Peter C. Schwartzkopf*	24 Coventry Rd.	Rehoboth Beach	19971	227-6252	744-4351	Peter.Schwartzkopf@state.de.us
15	Valerie J. Longhurst *	11 Winchester Ct.	Bear	19701	836-3717	577-8476	Valerie.Longhurst@state.de.us
16	James Johnson	105 Skelton Dr..	New Castle	19720	322-3521	577-8476	JJ.Johnson@state.de.us
17	Michael P. Mulrooney	32 Saratoga Dr.	New Castle	19720	322-1249	577-8476	Michael.Mulrooney@state.de.us
18	Michael A. Barbieri	88 Iroquois Ct.	Newark	19702	420-6564	577-8476	Michael.Barbieri@state.de.us
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20	Nick T. Manolakos	227 Charleston Dr.	Wilmington	19808	239-3943	577-8723	Nick.T.Manolakos@state.de.us
21	Michael Ramone	211 Nathan Ct.	Newark	19711	737-7529	577-8723	Michael.Ramone@state.de.us
22	Joseph E. Miro	5 Firechase Circle	Newark	19711	454-1840	577-8723	Joseph.Miro@state.de.us
23	Teresa L. Schooley	2 Chapel Hill Dr.	Newark	19711	454-8322	577-8342	Terry.Schooley@state.de.us
24	William A. Oberle, Jr.	2 Danver's Way	Newark	19702	738-6241	577-8475	William.Oberle@state.de.us
25	John A. Kowalko, Jr.	134 N. Dyllwyn Rd.	Newark	19711	737-2396	577-8342	John.Kowalko@state.de.us
26	John J. Viola	P. O. Box 1626	Bear	19701	832-2209	577-8476	John.Viola@state.de.us
27	Earl G. Jaques, Jr.	82 Cann Rd.	Newark	19702	834-9231	577-8476	Earl.Jaques@state.de.us
28	William J. Carson, Jr.	680 Lake Dr. West	Smyrna	19977	653-8642	744-4351	William.Carson@state.de.us
29	Pamela J. Thornburg	176 Cardinal Hills Parkway	Dover	19904	736-5121	744-4175	Pam.Thornburg@state.de.us
30	William R. Outten	206 Delaware Ave.	Harrington	19952	398-3816	744-4083	Bobby.Outten@state.de.us
31	Darryl M. Scott	102 Cobblestone Ln.	Dover	19904	747-7765	744-4351	Darryl.Scott@state.de.us
32	E. Bradford Bennett	P. O. Box 344	Dover	19903	697-8110	744-4253	Bradford.Bennett@state.de.us
33	Robert E. Walls	2645 Milford Harrington Hwy	Milford	19963	424-2261	744-4351	Robert.Walls@state.de.us
34	Donald A. Blakey	956 Bison Rd.	Dover	19904	697-6723	744-4103	Donald.Blakey@state.de.us
35	David L. Wilson	P.O. Box 84	Lincoln	19960	422-9270	744-4150	David.L.Wilson@state.de.us
36	V. George Carey	24625 Sugar Hill Rd.	Milford	19963	684-8358	744-4119	George.Carey@state.de.us
37	Ruth Briggs King	3 Par Court	Georgetown	19947	856-2772	744-4251	
38	Gerald W. Hocker	P O Box 930	Ocean View	19970	539-4140	744-4381	Gerald.Hocker@state.de.us
39	Daniel B. Short*	133 N. Cannon St.	Seaford	19973	629-6525	744-4172	Daniel.Short@state.de.us
40	Clifford G. "Biff" Lee	705 S. Central Ave.	Laurel	19956	875-5119	744-4034	Biff.Lee@state.de.us
41	John C. Atkins	P. O. Box 717	Millsboro	19966	934-1587	744-4351	John.Atkins@state.de.us

*House Leadership: Speaker of the House-Robert F. Gilligan; Majority Leader-Peter C. Schwartzkopf; Majority Whip-Valerie J. Longhurst; Minority Leader-Richard Cathcart; Minority Whip-Daniel B. Short
BOLD=Joint Finance Committee Member

Thank you to the League of Women Voters of Delaware; this list was adapted from their publication "They Represent You"