



How a Bill Becomes a Law

- 1.** Either a citizen brings an idea to their legislator, a legislator has an idea, or a Standing Committee chooses to bring a bill on a particular topic. They bring their bill to the Legal Services Office (LSO) and LSO drafts the bill.
- 2.** In a 40-day general session, any bill may be introduced. In a 20-day budget session, all non-budget bills (that is, everything except the general government appropriations bill) must get a two-thirds vote for introduction to be considered.
- 3.** After introduction, the Speaker of the House or President of the Senate assigns the bill to a standing committee that relates to its purpose.
- 4.** In committee, the sponsor explains the bill, and the committee usually hears testimony from private citizens, non-governmental organizations, and public agencies. The committee may pass the bill as is, amend and pass it, or kill it. Committees rarely have time to hear every bill they are assigned, so chairs choose when or whether to hear a bill. This decision can kill bills if the chair decides not to hear them.
- 5.** Once a bill passes committee, it goes to “General File,” which is the list of bills waiting for floor debate.
- 8.** Bills must pass three readings in their chamber of origin: Committee of the Whole (General File), Second Reading, and Third Reading (Final Passage). These readings will usually occur on consecutive days. It can be amended during any of the three readings.
- 9.** Once a bill has passed all three readings in its chamber of origin (the House and the Senate) it is sent to the other chamber to be introduced there and repeat the same process. House Bills pass through the House and then on to the Senate, and Senate Files pass through the Senate and on to the House.
- 10.** Once a bill is passed to the other chamber, it must be introduced again (again by a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote during a budget session), and referred to another standing committee. This will usually be the mirror committee of the other chamber (i.e., the House Travel, Recreation, and Wildlife Committee and the Senate Travel, Recreation, and Wildlife Committee), but not always.
- 11.** If the bill is amended while moving through the second half of the process, after being passed on Third Reading it must go through a “concurrence vote” with the chamber of origin to agree on the changes. If the chamber of origin does not concur, a concurrence committee is assembled to resolve the differences.
- 12.** Once a bill has passed both chambers, it goes to the Governor who can sign, veto, or refuse to sign a bill. A veto can be overridden by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote in both chambers. A bill that is not vetoed or signed will still become law, but without the Governor’s official stamp of approval.