



# How a Bill Becomes Law

1. A bill is introduced in either the Senate or the House. Sometimes identical bills are introduced simultaneously. The bill receives a **FIRST READING** in the House and a **FIRST AND SECOND READING** in the Senate (at which time the title is read). Then either the Majority Leader of the Senate or the Speaker of the House refer the bill to an appropriate standing committee (Education, Commerce, Health and Social Services, etc.). If the bill is a budget bill or has fiscal implications, it will be referred directly to the Appropriations Committee or to an appropriate standing committee and then to the Appropriations Committee.

2. In committee, the bill is discussed and debated. Public hearings may be held. Not every bill in the committee will be considered. The committee may take several different actions:



- Report the bill with favorable recommendation.
- Add amendments and report the bill with favorable recommendation.
- Report the bill with the recommendation that a substitute be adopted.
- Report the bill with adverse recommendation.
- Report the bill without recommendation.
- Report the bill with amendments but without recommendation.
- Report the bill with the recommendation that the bill be referred to another committee.
- Take no action on the bill.
- Refuse to report the bill out of committee.

3. If a bill is reported out favorably or a substitute is offered, the bill is returned to the Senate or House where it receives a **GENERAL ORDERS** status in the Senate and a **SECOND READING** status in the House. The Senate resolves itself into the Committee of the Whole and the House assumes the order of **SECOND READING**. At this time, committee recommendations are considered and amendments may be offered and adopted. The bill then advances to **THIRD** reading.



4. Upon **THIRD READING** in the Senate, an entire bill is read unless unanimous consent is given to consider the bill read. In the House, the bill is read in its entirety on **THIRD READING** unless four-fifths of the members consent to consider the bill read. At **THIRD READING** the bill is again subject to debate and amendment. At the conclusion of **THIRD READING**, the bill is either passed or defeated by a roll call vote of the majority of members elected and serving OR one of the following options may be used to delay final action:



- Refer bill back to committee for further consideration.
- Postpone bill indefinitely.
- Make the bill a special order of business on **THIRD READING** for a specific date.
- Table the bill.



5. Following either passage or defeat of a bill, a legislator may move to have the bill reconsidered. In the Senate the motion must be made within the next two session days; in the House within the next succeeding day



6. If the bill passes, it goes to the other house where the same procedure is followed. If the bill is passed in the same form by both houses, it is ordered "enrolled" in the house in which it originated. It then goes to the Governor for his signature.



7. If the bill is passed in a different form by the second house, the bill is returned to its house of origin. If this house accepts the changes, the bill is enrolled and sent to the Governor. If the changes are rejected, the bill is sent to a conference committee which tries to resolve differences. If the first conference report is rejected, a second conference committee may be appointed

8. The Governor has 14 days after receiving a bill to consider it. He may:



- Sign the bill. The bill becomes law either 90 days after the legislature adjourns sine die\* or at a later date specified in the bill. If the bill has been given immediate effect by a 2/3 vote of the members elected and serving, it becomes law upon the Governor's signature.
- Veto the bill (which would then require a 2/3 vote to override). See No. 8 below.
- Neither sign nor veto, in which case the bill becomes law 14 days after reaching the Governor's desk unless the legislature adjourns sine die within the 14 days. In that case the bill does not become law.

9. If the Governor vetoes a bill while the legislature is in session or recess, one of the following actions may occur:



- Legislature may override the veto by a 2/3 vote of the members elected and serving in both houses.
- Bill may not receive the necessary 2/3 vote and thus the attempt to override the veto will fail.
- Bill may be tabled pending an attempt to override veto.
- Bill may be re-referred to a committee.