

HOW AN IDEA BECOMES A LAW

A Teacher's Guide

1. **An Idea Is Developed.** Legislators - with the help of constituents, government agencies, special interest groups, lobbyists, or the Governor - come up with ideas they think should become law.
2. **The Bill is Drafted.** The idea is then submitted to the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel in the form of a bill request. At the office, an attorney reviews existing law, researches the issues, prepares the bill and gives it a number. The bill is reviewed one more time before it is introduced.
3. **The Bill is Introduced.** The bill is introduced into the Legislature and referred to the legislature.
4. **The Bill Receives Review and Public Input.** The Rules Committee recommends to the presiding officer the standing committee to which the bill should be referred. The standing committee, in an open meeting, reviews the bill and receives public testimony. The committee may amend, hold, table, substitute, or make a favorable recommendation on the bill.
5. **The Bill is Returned to the Floor.** Once the committee is done with the bill, they return it to the House with their changes. The committee then tells the Representatives what they think of the bill.
6. **The Bill is Debated During Session.** During floor debate, the legislators discuss the bill and make amendments. They decide if they want to continue with the bill, or if it should be held or substituted. In the House, at least 38 votes are required to pass a bill. In the Senate, at least 19 votes are needed. Both the House and Senate need to pass a bill before it can move forward.
7. **The Bill Passes Both Houses in the Legislature.** After the bill has gone through both houses, it is signed by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House.
8. **The Bill is Prepared for the Governor's Action.** Once the bill passes both houses, it goes back to the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel so an attorney can create the "enrolled" bill.
9. **The Bill Receives the Governor's Action.** The enrolled bill is then sent to the Governor. He can sign the bill, veto it, or allow it become law without his signature.
10. **The Bill Becomes Effective.**