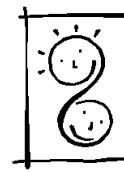




How a bill becomes a law



A delegate or senator has an [idea for a bill](#), usually from a constituent.

He or she presents the idea to the Division of Legislative Services and requests that it be [drafted into a bill](#). The bill is signed by the patron, introduced, and printed.

The bill is [referred](#) to an appropriate committee.

The members of the committee consider the bill and decide what [action](#) to take (committee action detailed below). This is when the public may speak.

[First Reading](#): The bill title is printed in the Calendar or is read by the Clerk, and the bill advances to second reading.

[Second Reading](#): The next day the bill title appears in the printed Calendar on second reading. Bills are considered in the order in which they appear on the Calendar. The Clerk reads the title of the bill a second time. A bill on second reading is amendable. A bill that has passed second reading with or without an amendment is engrossed. If an amendment is adopted, the bill is reprinted in its final form for passage.

[Third Reading](#): The next day, the engrossed bill title appears in the Calendar on third reading. The title is read a third time by the Clerk. By recorded vote, the bill is passed.

Communication: When passed, the bill is sent to the other body, either by the Clerk in a [communication](#) or by a member in person, informing the other body that the bill has passed.

In the [other body](#): The bill goes through essentially the same procedure as it did in the house of origin. The bill title is printed in the Calendar or is read by the Clerk. The bill is referred to a standing committee, considered, and reported by the committee. The title is read a second and a third time before passage.

Committee of Conference: If the House amends a Senate bill, or the Senate amends a House bill, and the house of origin disagrees with the amendment, a [conference committee](#), usually three members from each legislative body, may be formed to resolve differences.

Enrollment: After being passed by both houses of the General Assembly, the bill is printed as an enrolled bill, examined, and signed by the presiding officer of each chamber.

Governor: The bill is then sent to the [Governor](#) for his approval. After being signed by the Governor, the bill is sent to the Clerk of the House (Keeper of the Rolls of the Commonwealth) and is assigned a Chapter number. All Chapters of a session are compiled and bound as the *Acts of Assembly*.

Bills that become law at a regular session (or the reconvened session that follows) are effective the first day of July following adjournment of the regular session, unless otherwise specified.

Committee Action

After the committee hears the patron and any other witnesses, the committee has several options when the chairman calls for a vote. One of the following actions may be taken and recorded by the committee clerk:

1. **Report**: The majority of the committee approves of the bill and it is reported to the floor. The bill may be reported 1) without amendment, 2) with amendment(s), or 3) with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. A bill may also be reported and referred to another committee using this method.
2. **Defeat**: The committee rejects a motion to report the bill, and there is no further action by the committee.
3. **Pass by Indefinitely (PBI)**: This action allows the committee to reconsider the legislation prior to the deadline established by the procedural resolution that sets the schedule for consideration of bills. It is *extremely* unlikely that a PBId bill will be brought up again.
4. **Table**: A bill “laid on the table” can be reconsidered prior to the deadline established by the procedural resolution that sets the schedule for consideration of bills. Tabling is a gentler version of PBI – it is still unlikely that the bill will be brought up again for consideration.
4. **Continue/Carry Over**: A bill introduced in an even-numbered year session may be continued or carried over to an odd-numbered year session for further action or study during the interim. A carry-over bill retains its assigned bill number in the odd-numbered year session. A bill may not be continued or carried over from an odd-numbered year session to an even-numbered year session.
5. **Pass by for the day**: The committee is not ready to act on the bill. If the bill is not taken up before the deadline, then it is considered Left in Committee or No Action Taken.
6. **No Action or Left in Committee**: No motion is made on the bill and it dies at the time of the committee action deadline.
7. **Incorporate into other Legislation**: The bill is incorporated, or included into another bill through an amendment or a substitute. The bill may have similar language or duplicate language with the same intent.