



## *How a Bill Becomes a Law*

A bill is a proposed change or addition to the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) - Ohio's laws. Suggestions for bills come from businesses, state agencies, legislators, private citizens, and interest groups. Lawmakers in either the Senate or the House can introduce a bill.

### *Introduction*

The Legislative Service Commission (LSC) prepares the first draft of a bill in proper form. The bill is then filed with the Senate Clerk or the Legislative Clerk in the House, who assigns it a bill number. Senate bills carry an **SB** prefix while House bills carry an **HB** prefix.

### *Committee Referral*

The title of the bill is read on the Senate or House floor in a formal introduction called "first consideration." If the bill is introduced in the Senate, the Reference Committee assigns the bill to a standing committee. If the bill is introduced in the House, it is then sent to the Rules and Reference Committee where committee members decide which standing committee will receive the bill for further consideration.

### *Committee Hearings*

Standing committees are the venue for the legislature's substantive work. Committees hold hearings to receive public testimony. During hearings, testimony is offered by representatives, the general public and/or lobbyists who speak in support, in opposition or as an interested party for the legislation. Complex bills may be referred to a subcommittee for in-depth study. After all testimony has been considered, the committee has several options: report the bill without changes; amend the bill and then report it; prepare a substitute bill (then referred as "Sub SB" or "Sub HB"); or indefinitely postpone action. If no action is taken by the committee before the end of the two-year legislative session, the bill dies. The "second consideration" of a bill occurs when the committee reports the bill back to the floor and amendments are read into the journal.

### ***Legislative Calendar***

After a standing committee favorably reports a bill, the Senate Rules Committee or the House Rules and Reference Committee determine when it will be considered by the entire Senate or House. These committees issue a Calendar. The daily Calendar presents lawmakers with a list of bills to be debated during the floor session.

### ***Floor Action***

A bill receives “third consideration” when the full Senate or House considers it for passage. At this time, the bill’s sponsor explains the content and purpose of the bill to other lawmakers. Members then debate the merits of the measure and can offer amendments. Lawmakers may pass, defeat or postpone action. In the Senate, a constitutional majority of 17 votes is required to pass legislation. In the House, a constitutional majority of 50 votes is required to pass legislation. Emergency measures require a two-thirds majority of each body, while constitutional amendments demand a three-fifths majority for passage.

### ***Additional Consideration***

Although a bill may be introduced in either the Senate or the House, it must be approved by both chambers before it can become law. For example, a bill passed by the House then goes to the Senate for hearings and floor action. The Senate may pass the bill as is, or amend it and send it back to the House for approval. If the House concurs (agrees with the Senate changes), the bill goes to the Governor for signature. If the House does not concur with the Senate changes, a conference committee is created consisting of three members from each chamber work to resolve the differences.

### ***Gubernatorial Action***

The Ohio Constitution requires the Governor to consider each bill passed by the General Assembly. If the Governor approves the bill, it is signed and normally becomes effective after 90 days. If the Governor fails to act on a bill within ten days of its receipt, the bill automatically becomes law as though it was signed and the bill becomes effective 90 days after it is filed with the Secretary of State. However, emergency and appropriation bills become effective immediately upon signature of the Governor.

A Gubernatorial Veto sends the legislation back to the house of origin within the General Assembly. If the General Assembly attempts to override the Governor’s veto, three-fifths of the members of each chamber must vote to override the veto and make the bill law. If the General Assembly does not attempt to override the Governor’s veto, the bill dies at the end of the two-year session.