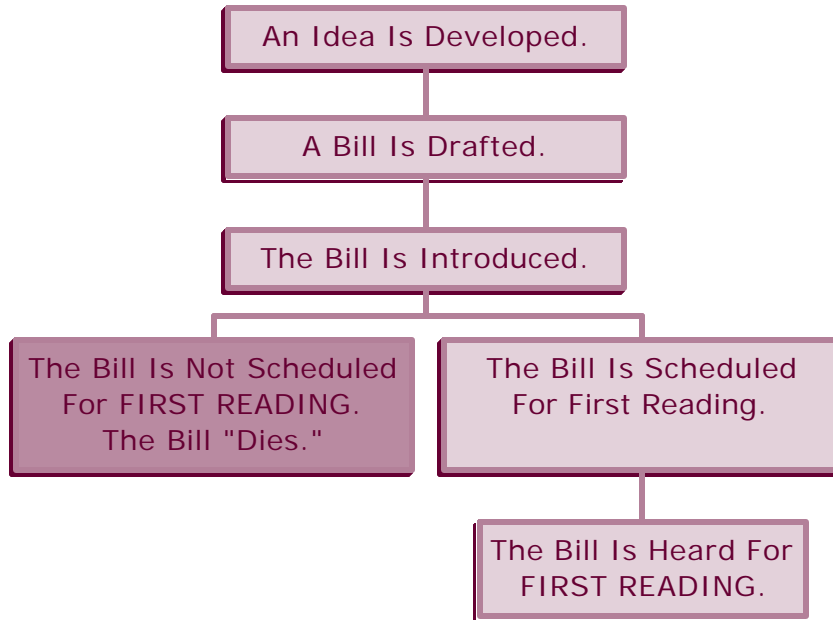


## How a Bill Becomes Law



### **An idea is developed.**

A legislator - either a Representative or a Senator - decides to sponsor a bill. This could be an original idea, or it could come as a suggestion from a constituent, an interest group, a public official, or the Governor. Other lawmakers may be asked to join as co-sponsors. The co-sponsors may or may not be of the same political party as the sponsor.

### **A bill is drafted.**

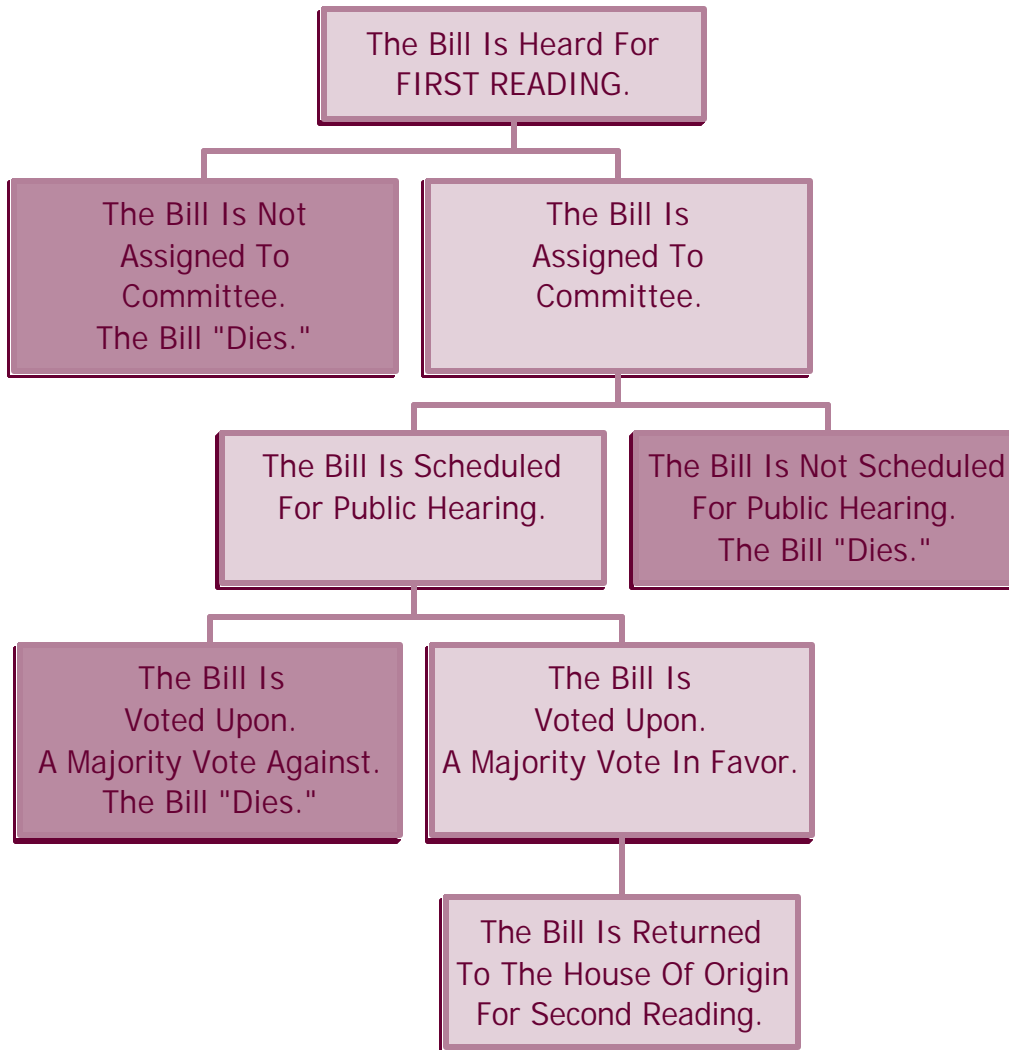
At the sponsoring legislator's direction, the nonpartisan Legislative Services Agency (LSA) provides research and drafting assistance. LSA prepares the bill in proper technical form.

### **The bill is introduced.**

The bill is filed by the legislator in her/his own chamber, which could be either the Senate or the House of Representatives. If the chamber leadership does not call the bill for First Reading, it "dies." If the bill is called, it is scheduled for First Reading.

### **The bill has its First Reading in the house of origin.**

The bill is read by title for the first time to the full legislative body.



### **The bill is assigned to committee.**

The President Pro Tempore of the Senate or the Speaker of the House of Representatives can choose not to refer the bill to a committee. In this event, the bill "dies."

If the bill is to advance, it is referred to a committee for review.

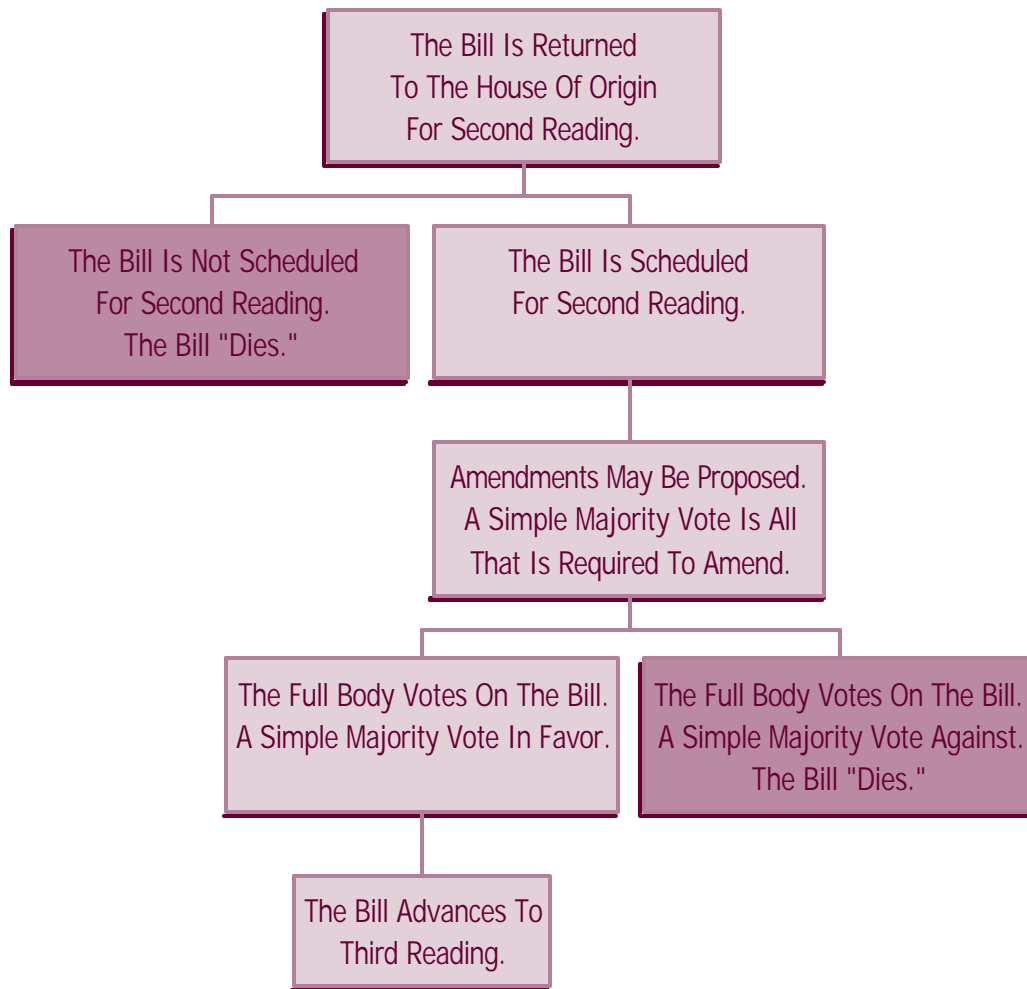
### **The committee takes action on the bill.**

The committee chairperson may choose not to schedule the bill for hearing. In this event, the bill "dies."

If the bill is to advance, it is scheduled for a public hearing. At that hearing, the committee discusses the merits and disadvantages of the bill, and any interested party may ask to speak to the committee. Interested persons may speak in favor of or in opposition to the bill.

Following this hearing, the bill can be voted upon or tabled. If the bill is tabled, it may or may not come back for a vote. If it does not come back for a vote, the bill "dies".

If the committee casts a vote on the bill, the bill can be defeated or it can advance.



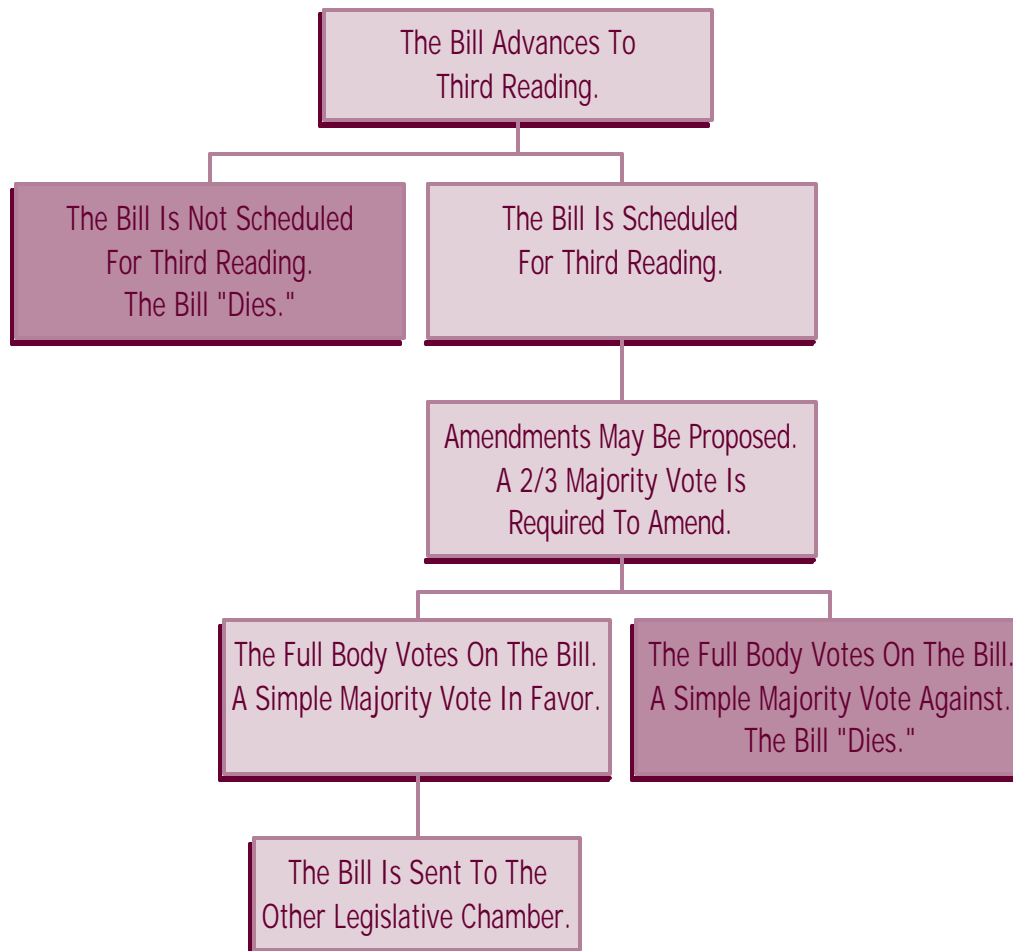
**The committee sends the bill back to the house of origin for Second Reading.**

If the committee advances the bill, it is printed and the full body of legislators has at least two days to review it.

Chamber leadership may choose not to schedule the bill for Second Reading. In this event, the bill "dies."

If the bill is scheduled, any legislator of the house of origin can suggest amendments to the bill. The amendments can be approved by a majority vote of the full body of legislators.

Following a vote on amendments, a vote is held on the bill itself. The bill may "die" at this point, or it may advance.

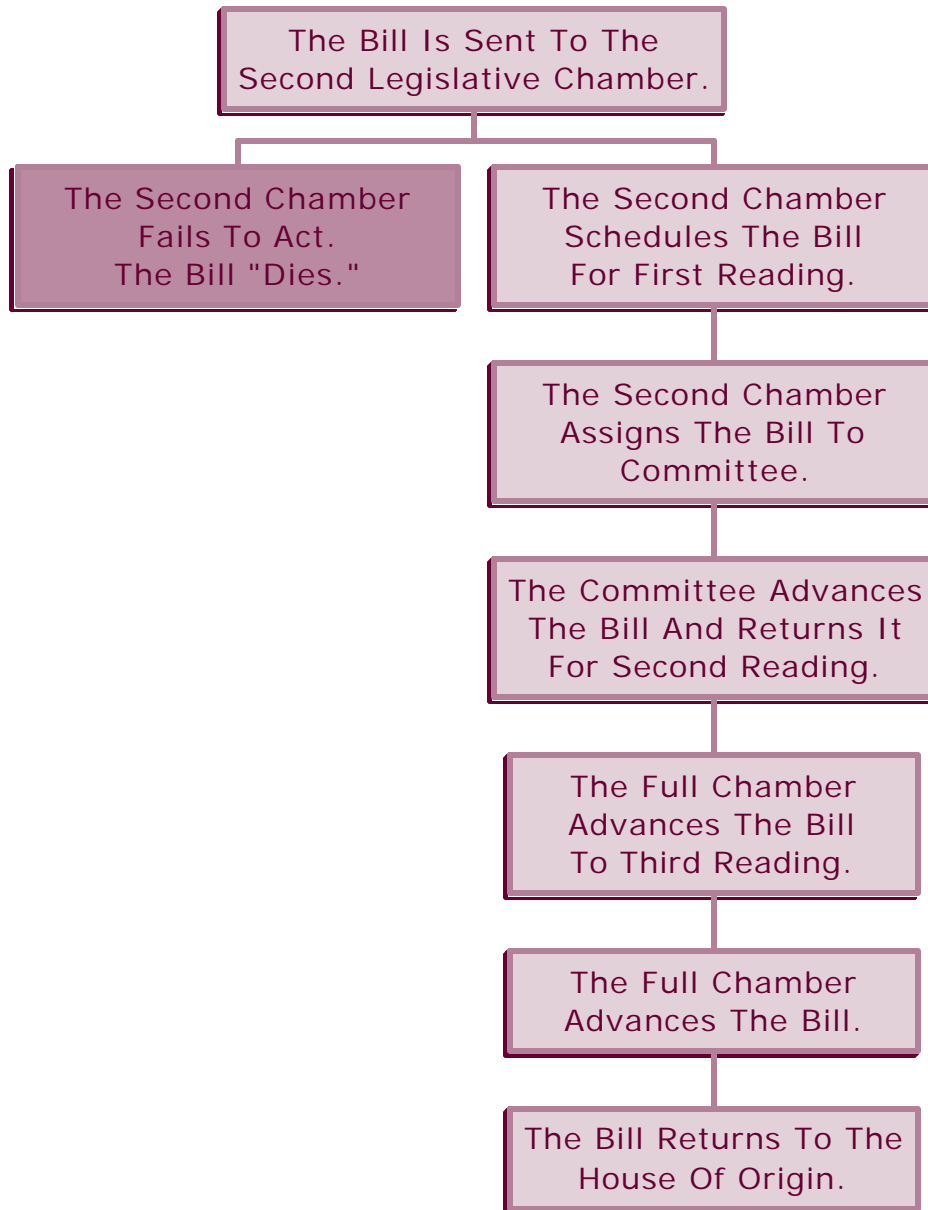


**The house of origin holds the Third Reading and the bill is voted upon by the full chamber.**

Again, chamber leadership may choose not to schedule the bill for Third Reading, and the bill "dies."

If the bill is scheduled, amendments can once again be made. However, on Third Reading, the amendments cannot be approved unless two-thirds of the legislators agree to the change.

Following a vote on amendments, the bill once again comes to a vote by the full body. A simple majority of the full house can advance the bill. If a majority vote is not received, the bill "dies."



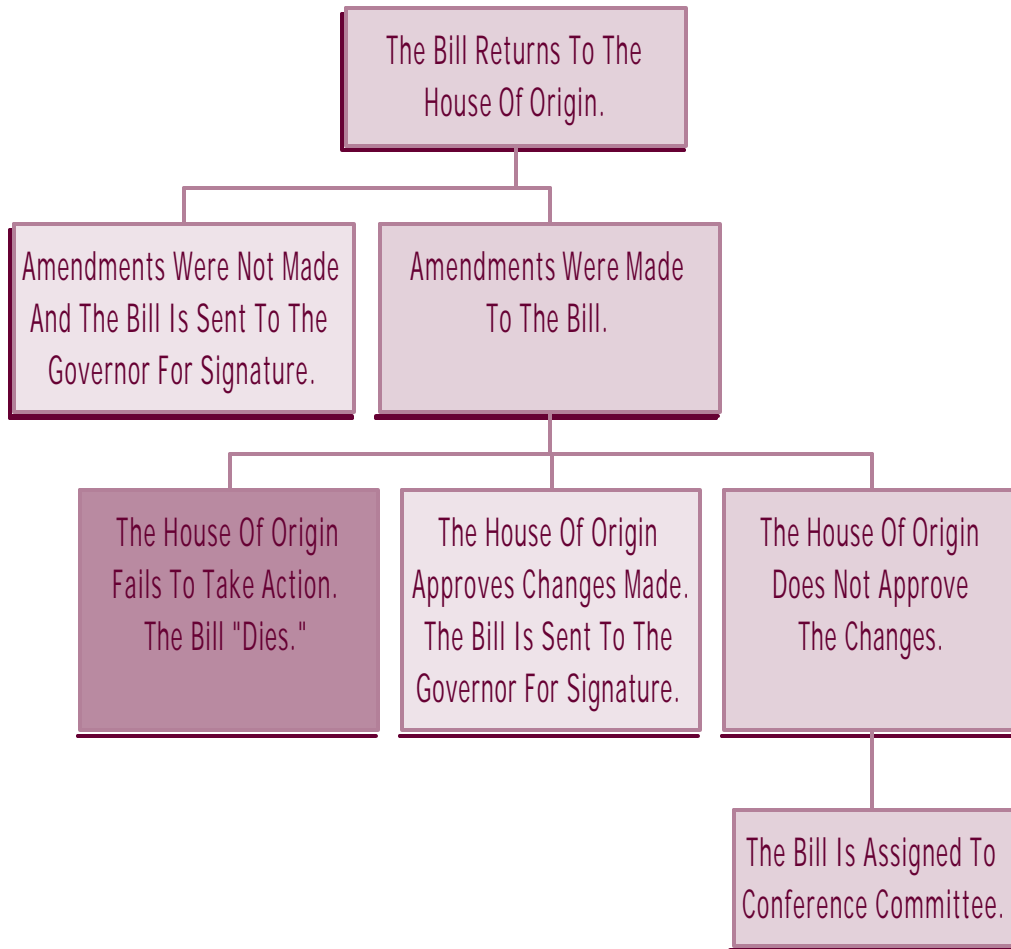
### The process repeats in the other chamber.

Once the bill has advanced through the house of origin, it is sent to the second house, where the process repeats.

The second chamber may fail to act on the bill, in which case the bill "dies." If action is taken, the bill must pass through First Reading, Committee, Second Reading and Third Reading.

The bill can "die" at any step of the way, just as it can in the house of origin.

At the same stages as in the house of origin, as long as the bill is advancing, amendments may be proposed and accepted.



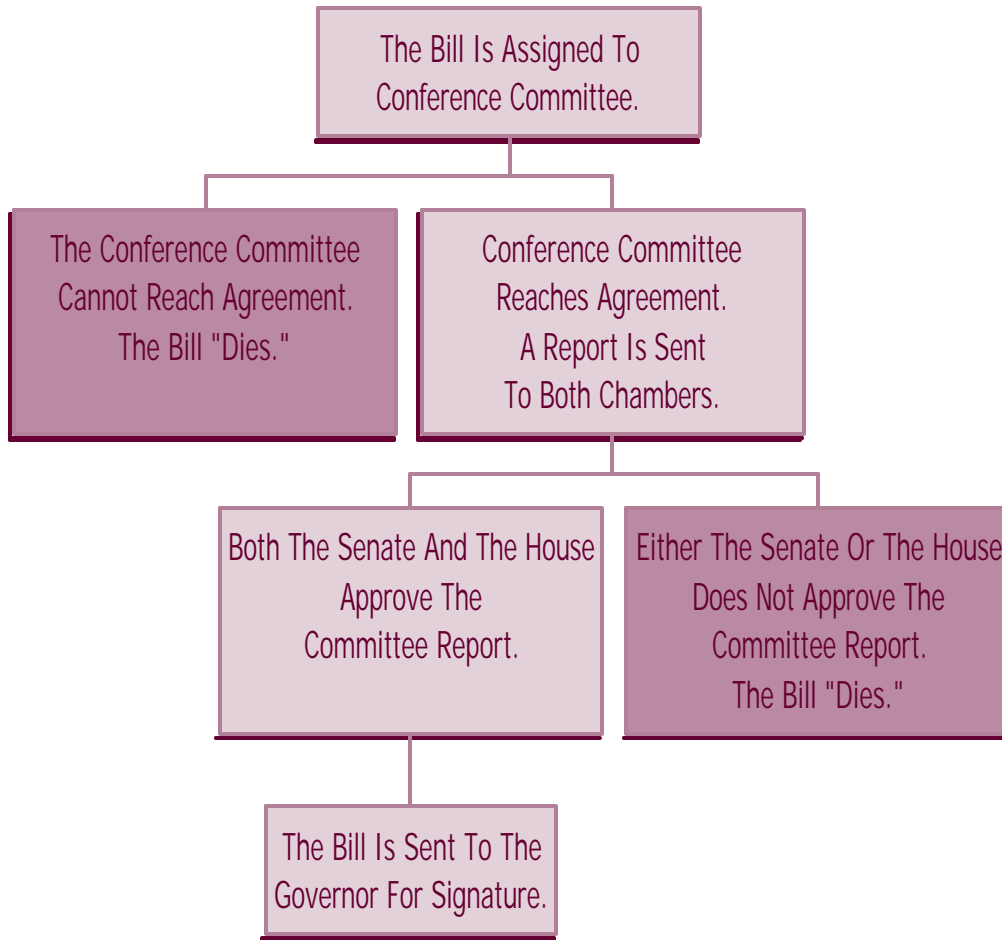
### **The bill returns to the house of origin.**

If the bill advances through the second chamber without amendments, the bill is sent to the Governor for signature.

If the bill advances with amendments, it returns to the house of origin.

The house of origin may fail to take action, and the bill "dies." The legislative body may vote to approve the changes made by the second chamber. If this happens, the bill is sent to the Governor for signature.

If the first chamber does not approve the changes made by the second chamber, and both houses want the bill to advance, the bill is assigned to a Conference Committee.

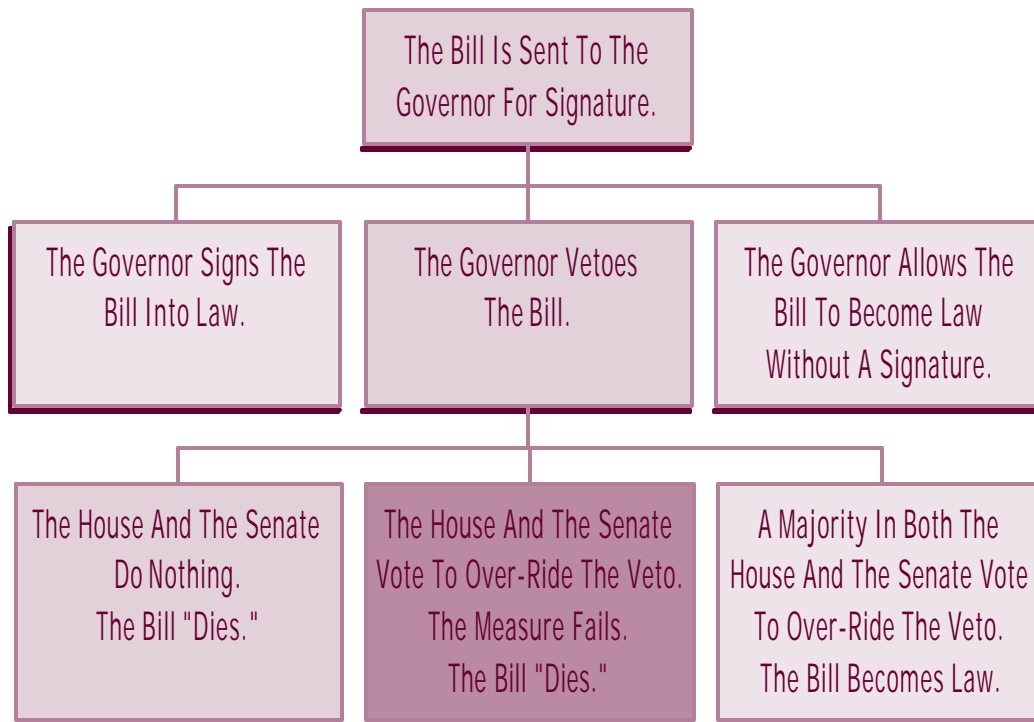


### **Conference Committee.**

Conference Committee is made up of two members from each of the legislative bodies. Each chamber sends one member from both major political parties. The four members attempt to reconcile differences between the chambers.

If agreement cannot be reached, the bill "dies."

If agreement is reached, the bill returns to both chambers. Both the Senate and the House of Representatives must approve the bill before it can be sent to the governor for signature.



**The bill is sent to the Governor.**

Once the governor receives a bill, he can sign it, veto it, or do nothing. If he signs it, the bill becomes law. If he does nothing, the bill becomes law without his signature.

If he vetoes the bill, and the Senate and House of Representatives do nothing, the bill “dies.” If he vetoes the bill and the Senate and the House of Representatives attempt to over-ride the veto, the bill may still become law.

If less than 26 Senators and less than 51 House members do not vote to over-ride the veto, the bill “dies.” If a simple majority of both chambers vote to over-ride the veto, the bill becomes law.

**The bill becomes law.**

The bill becomes law at a date specified in the body of the bill. It could be the date of the actual passing or a date at some point in the future.

**For More Information, or to Schedule A State House Tour**

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