



# Harrisburg 101



Pennsylvania's General Assembly is the largest full-time state legislature in the United States. Like the United States Congress, it has two "chambers" -- the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The House has 203 members.

They serve 2-year terms, with every seat up for re-election in even-numbered years.

2020 Elections: All 203 House seats + 25 (odd-numbered) Senate seats

2022 Elections: All 203 House seats + 25 (even-numbered) Senate seats

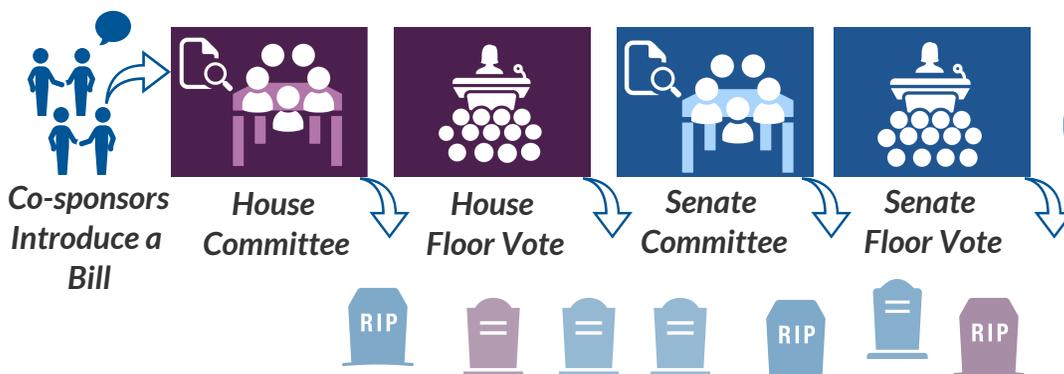
The Senate has 50 members.

They serve 4-year terms. Only half of the seats are up for re-election at a time.

Senators and Representative who win in November are sworn in to begin their terms the following January. The two-year period between legislative elections is called a legislative session.

To become law, a bill has to pass a floor vote in both the House and Senate during one 2-year session.

All legislation must be introduced and completed in one 2-year session, or the bill expires and must be introduced again.



More than 90% of bills "die in committee," do not receive a floor vote, or are voted down on the floor of the House or Senate. Most bills that pass in one chamber, do not even receive a floor vote in the other chamber.

Bills that pass both chambers of the General Assembly are sent to the governor for a signature.

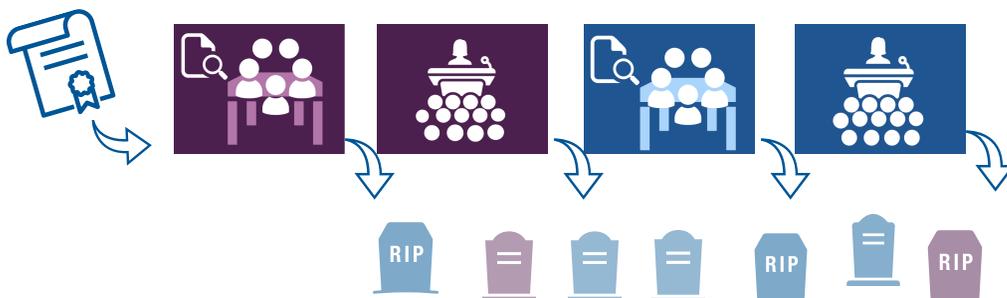


The governor can

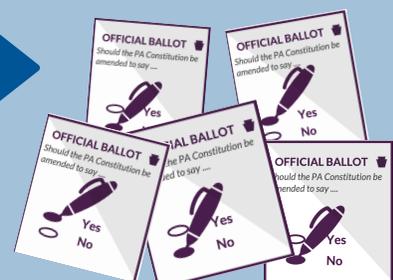
- sign
- veto
- allow the bill to become law without signing it.

An Amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution must pass in 2 consecutive sessions.

A constitutional amendment must pass through the entire process in the General Assembly twice. No changes can be made to the text of the amendment that passed in the first session. The election between the two sessions means that amendment will be voted on by a different group of legislators.



Amendments that pass both chambers of the General Assembly in both sessions are placed on the ballot.



Pennsylvania voters accept or reject the amendment.

Find your state senator and representative here.  
Get involved in the issues that are important to you!

