

Bill Progression Check List

Most people who took middle school civics, or who are fans of School House Rocks, know the basics of how a bill becomes a law. In an effort to provide a better understanding of the stages of legislation, here is a detailed outline of the process including the terminology used by lobbyists, legislators, and staff inside the Capitol building.

- Introduced** - Bills may be introduced any time between December 1 and March 1. Many bills get introduced as support to a press effort or because of pressure from a constituent or local group. There are generally over 2000 bills that get filed every year and only about 500 of them (including the 20 or so budget bills) will be sent to the Governor.
 - First Read in Originating Chamber - This is just a formal way to introduce the bill. Every bill gets First Read.
- Referred to Committee / Second Read** - The Speaker of the House or the Senate Pro Tem have the authority to send bills to a committee. There are no rules on which committee a bill is sent to; so a bill may go to a committee that doesn't appear to deal with that subject matter. Many bills get referred to a committee but never heard.
 - Committee Hearing - The Chair of the committee has the authority to decide if and when a bill gets a public hearing. There must be at least 24 hours' notice before a hearing occurs, but the hearing notice can be amended after it was posted. At the public hearing, testimony is taken from people who support or oppose the bill. Each witness gets 3 minutes for a statement then gets asked questions from the committee members. Additional written testimony may be given to the committee.
 - Voted Out/Executive Session - After a bill receives a public hearing it is voted out in an executive session of the committee. This generally occurs at the next weekly meeting of the committee, but can occur at the same meeting of the committee. Committees usually include a catch-all executive session notice in their committee postings so they can vote on any bill before the committee.
 - Rules Committee (House Only) - In the House, there is a second committee review step called the Rules Committee. This committee does not take public testimony. It reviews the bills passed by other committees and has the option to send the bill back for changes or send the bill on for debate by the House. It can also set time limits for floor debate on a bill.
- Reported From Committee** - Once a bill has been voted out of committee, the Chair must report it in to the Majority Floor Leader of their chamber. By tradition, the Chair only reports in bills the Floor Leader has requested.
 - On the Calendar - Once a bill has been reported from the committee, the Floor Leader may place the bill on the Calendar for Perfection. In the Senate, there are two calendars, a formal and an informal. Bills on the formal calendar must be taken up in order. Bills on the informal

calendar can be brought up at any time. In the House there is only one calendar and no required order, but bills are generally brought up in the same order they were placed on the calendar. The calendar is not an indication of the business the chamber intends to do that day. It is more like a to-do list; so a bill will have a new action reported every day saying it is “on the calendar.”

- Laid Over - If the House or Senate finishes work for the day without taking a vote on the bill, the bill is placed back on the calendar to (possibly) be taken up at another time.
- Substitutes/Amendments - During the perfection debate, the bill may be amended or substituted by any member of the chamber. In the House, the member must have distributed the amendment before the bill was brought up for debate and substitutes are not allowed. In the Senate, any member may offer an amendment or a substitute, but traditionally only the sponsor or a member of leadership offer substitutes. If the sponsor of a bill speaks against the substitute or amendment, the change is typically voted down.
- Perfected** - A bill is considered “perfected” after the chamber has voted to accept the changes made during the debate and end debate on the bill. This does not have to be a roll call vote.
- Third Read/Passed 1st Chamber** - Once a bill has been perfected, it is voted on a final time by its originating chamber. This is called the “third reading.” This vote must be a roll call vote and must happen on a different legislative day than the perfection debate. If a fiscal note is included with the bill, it is first sent to fiscal review to determine the impact of the bill on state budgets.
- Crossed Over/Sent to Opposite Chamber** - After a bill has been third read, it is sent to the other chamber. It used to actually physically cross through the third floor rotunda; so it is colloquially referred to as having “crossed over.”
- First Read in Opposite Chamber** - Once the message about a bill’s third reading has been accepted by the opposite chamber, the bill must begin the process again with a first reading in the new chamber.
- Referred to Opposite Committee** - This process is exactly like it was in the originating chamber.
 - Committee Hearing - This process is exactly like it was in the originating chamber.
 - Voted Out/ Executive Session - This process is exactly like it was in the originating chamber.
- Reported from Committee** - This process is exactly like it was in the originating chamber.
 - On the Calendar - This process is exactly like it was in the originating chamber.
 - Laid Over - This process is exactly like it was in the originating chamber.
 - Substitutes/Amendments - This process is exactly like it was in the originating chamber.
- Third Read** - The bill does not get “perfected” a second time. Instead, it goes straight to a third reading vote. This vote must be a roll call vote.
- Passed 2nd Chamber (with or without amendments)** - If the 2nd chamber makes changes to the bill, those changes have to be accepted by the originating chamber OR the bill will go through the conference committee process.

- Sent to Originating Chamber for Approval - The originating chamber can vote to adopt the changes to the bill from the 2nd chamber.
 - Conference Committee - If the House and Senate Versions are not identical, the bill goes to a conference committee. The committee is made up of members from both chambers and both parties. The committee must reconcile the two versions of the bill and send the new, combined version to both chambers for a final vote. The committee cannot change portions of the bill that are the same in both versions unless they are given special permission by a vote of both chambers called “exceeding the differences.”
- Truly Agreed to and Finally Passed (TAFP)** - The final vote in the process is the TAFP vote. This vote is taken in wither the originating chamber (if the 2nd chamber made changes to the bill) or, if the 2nd chamber adopted the bill as it was sent to them, in the 2nd chamber. This must be a roll call vote.
- Signed/Vetoed** - Once the bill has been approved by both chambers in its final form, both the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tem of the Senate sign the document during session. The bill is then sent to the Governor.
- Veto During Session - If a bill is delivered to the Governor before April 21, 2017, the Governor has 15 days to sign or veto the bill.
 - Veto After Session - If a bill is delivered to the Governor after April 21, 2017, The Governor has 45 days (Around July 15) to sign or veto the bill.
 - Passive Enrollment - If the Governor does not sign or veto the bill by the deadline, the bill is sent to the Secretary of State’s office where the SOS will enroll the bill into law.
- Effective Dates**
- Emergency Clause - If a bill has an emergency clause, it becomes effective upon the Governor’s signature, or the expiration of the time to veto the bill.
 - Effective Date - A bill may contain a specific date on which the bill becomes law unless successfully vetoed.
 - Default Effective Date - If a bill does not contain a specific effective date or emergency clause, it becomes effective on August 28 by default.