

# How a Bill Becomes a Law in Texas

In Texas, a bill becomes a law by passing through a few main stages in the Texas legislature:

- 1. Introduction of the bill
- 2. Committee Action (where the bill is assigned to a relevant subcommittee to review in depth)
- 3. Floor Action (when a bill is discussed by the entire House OR Senate after in-depth review from a subcommittee)
- 4. Enrollment (when both the House and Senate has passed the bill in identical form and it moves to the Governor for final signing/approval).
- 5. The bill becomes a law.

Each bill starts off as either a house bill or a senate bill, or both. If a bill is introduced as both a house bill and a senate bill it is done so to increase the bill's chances of getting passed into law.

# HOUSE

## Introduction:

A bill is first introduced by a legislator in the legislator's own chamber. At this time it is given a House Bill number, read in its entirety for the first time, and assigned to a subcommittee by the Speaker of the House.

### **Committee Action:**

After considering a bill, a committee may choose to recommend the bill as it is, propose amendments to the bill, or not move forward with the bill. If the committee choses to move forward with the bill they will post for and hold public hearing for the bill. This is where the public is permitted to provide writer or verbal testimony for the first time.

## Floor Action:

If a bill is recommended by the assigned committee, it is then discussed by the full House of Representatives. During this phase the House may pass the bill as is, amend the bill requiring separate votes for each amendment made, or deny the bill which effectively kill the bill. Public hearing of the bill is often present here allowing community members to state their opinion on the bill once again in written or verbal format.

Once a bill is amended, House members vote on the bill for passage. If the bill receives a simple majority vote, it is considered passed.

# SENATE

#### Introduction:

A bill is first introduced by a legislator in the legislator's own chamber. At this time, it is given a Senate Bill number, read in its entirety for the first time, and assigned to a subcommittee by the Speaker of the House.

## **Committee Action:**

After considering a bill, a committee may choose to recommend the bill as it is, propose amendments to the bill, or substitute the bill for another, or take no action at all. If the committee choses to move forward with the bill they will post for and hold public hearing for the bill. This is where the public is permitted to provide writer or verbal testimony for the first time.

#### Floor Action:

If a bill is recommended by the assigned committee, it is then discussed by the full Senate. During this phase the Senate may pass the bill as is, amend the bill requiring separate votes for each amendment made, or deny the bill which effectively kill the bill. Public hearing of the bill is often present here allowing community members to state their opinion on the bill once again in written or verbal format.

Once a bill is amended, Senate members vote on the bill for passage. If the bill receives a simple majority vote, it is considered passed.



## Amendments Adopted by Opposite Legislature:

If the bill originated in the House, was approved by the House, and approved by the Senate, the House must vote on all amendments made by the Senate that took place in the approval process within the Senate. If and amendments are rejected, it may be request for a committee conference to work out the difference between the House version and the Senate version.

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# **Enrollment:**

Once a bill has passed through all three actions in both the House and the Senate, the bill is passed to the enrollment phase i.e. The Governor's Desk to be signed and become law or vetoed. If the governor elects to veto the bill and the legislature is still in session, the bill is returned to the chamber in which it originated with an explanation of the governor's objections. A two-thirds majority in each chamber is required to override the veto.

