HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW AT THE STATE LEVEL

1. Someone says to a legislator “There ought to be a law....”

2. A legislator writes a proposal with the bill drafting office/agency.

3. BILL INTRODUCTION The bill sponsor introduces the bill to the chamber. It is given its first reading, receives a number, and is assigned to a committee.

4. COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION In committee, the sponsor requests a public hearing for the bill. The committee discusses the bill and hears comments. Public participation is encouraged!

5. The committee can
   • Pass the bill and send it to the floor (with or without amendments).
   • Pass it and send it to another committee.
   • Pass it and place it on the consent calendar (for noncontroversial items).
   • Send it to the floor or a committee with no recommendation.
   • Kill it by voting it down, tabling it, ignoring it, or returning it to its author.

6. When passed out of committee, the bill is given its second reading and scheduled to be discussed and debated by the whole chamber.

7. FLOOR CONSIDERATION The bill is placed on the calendar for a floor vote. The bill is read for the third time and faces debate and vote by all members.

8. If passed, the bill is sent to the other chamber. It then goes through the same process of committee and floor votes.

9. If bills passed in both chambers are identical, they are sent to the governor.

10. CONFERENCE COMMITTEE: If bills differ, one chamber can concur with the other’s amendments or go to conference committee. The conference committee of senators and representatives debate a compromise, and that bill is sent to each chamber for approval. The bill is given another reading in each house and a final vote. The new bill is then sent to the governor.

11. The governor signs the whole bill, signs with line-item vetoes, vetoes the bill, or pocket vetoes the bill.

12. If vetoed, the bill goes back to the legislature for reconsideration. A two-thirds vote of both the senate and the house is required to overturn a veto.

13. If the governor signs, or both chambers override the governor’s veto...BILL BECOMES LAW!