The Paper Chase: How a Bill Becomes a Law

-The Legislative Process-

2013 Pre-session Orientation Program
Legislative Building, Room 4100

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Legislative Process: Beyond School House Rock
Legislative Process: How A Bill Becomes a Law

🌟 Five separate approvals are required for a bill to become law

🌟 Bills must pass through both houses and the Governor
Legislative Process: How A Bill Becomes a Law

Where a legislator’s bill comes from:

- Idea for a bill (constituents, legislative hearings, personal experience)
- Policy analysis and research on the idea (current Nevada law, national organizations, model legislation from other states, etc.)
- Request a bill draft (BDR)
- Legal Division prepares the bill draft and delivers to sponsor (requester)
# Limits and Deadlines on BDRs During Session

## Legislators

- **Additional BDRs in Session:**
  - Assembly Members – 2
  - Senators – 4

- **Deadline to Request Legislator BDR:**
  - February 11 (8th day of Session)

- **BDR details due to Legal Division:**
  - February 18 (15th day of Session)

- **Deadlines to Introduce:**
  - Within 10 days of delivery
  - March 18 (43rd day of Session)

## Committees

- **Additional BDRs in Session:**
  - 50 per house - Leadership determines number given to each committee

- **Deadline to Request Committee BDR:**
  - February 18 (15th day of Session)

- **BDR details due to Legal Division:**
  - February 25 (22nd day of Session)

- **Deadlines to Introduce:**
  - Within 10 days of delivery
  - March 25 (50th day of Session)
Legislative Process

Before Introduction of Legislator BDR:

- Bill draft delivered to sponsor
- Co-sponsors obtained, if desired
- Delivered to Front Desk for introduction within deadlines
Legislative Process
Action in the House of Origin

**Major Steps**

- Introduction and first reading in full house
- To committee for hearings and possible action
- Second reading in full house
- Floor debate and vote by full house
Legislative Process

Action in the House of Origin

Step-by-Step

- Introduction and first reading in full house
  - Given a bill number
  - Read before full house by title

- Referral to committee for hearings and possible action
Legislative Process

Committee Hearings

Chairman schedules bills:

- Agendas are posted
- All meetings are public

Sponsor’s responsibilities include:

- Presenting the bill
  (Note: Contact the Research Division if you need help with bill remarks)
- Identifying and notifying speakers
- Keeping the Committee Chair informed
Legislative Process

Committee Hearings – Action in Committee

🌟 When committee might act?
- At hearing
- At subsequent work session

🌟 Bill dies if no action is taken by the committee passage deadline
- First House: April 12 (68th day of Session)
- Second House: May 17 (103rd day of Session)
Legislative Process

Committee Hearings – Possible Committee Action Includes:

- Do Pass
- Amend and Do Pass
- Amend and Rerefer
- Indefinitely Postpone
- No Action
Legislative Process

Floor Action in House of Origin
Step-by-Step

- Bill reported out of committee with recommended action

- Second reading and amendment of bills
  - Bill read a second time
  - Amendments, if any, considered and adopted
  - If adopted, bill reprinted and “Engrossed”
Legislative Process

Floor Action in the House of Origin

Step-by-Step

🌟 Third Reading and General File:
- Bill read third time on General File and any additional amendments considered
- General File – Debate merits of bill and vote

🌟 First House Passage Deadline:
- April 23 (79th day of Session)
- Exemptions may apply for certain fiscal measures or bills relating to legislative business
Legislative Process

Action in the Second House

The process repeats itself in the second house:

- First reading in full house
- To committee for hearings and possible action
  - Deadline: May 17 (103rd day of Session)
- Second reading in full house
- Floor debate and vote by full house (Third Reading/General File)
  - Deadline: May 24 (110th day of Session)
Legislative Process

Resolution of House Differences (if necessary)

- If the bill has no amendments in the Second House, it goes to the Governor.

- If the bill is amended by Second House:
  - Does the First House “Concur” with the Second House’s amendment? If so, the bill goes to the Governor.
  - If the First House does not concur, does the Second House “Recede” in its amendment? If so, the bill goes to the Governor.
  - If the Second House does not recede, the bill is assigned to a conference committee.
Legislative Process

Conference Committee

✱ Three members per house appointed, two of whom must have voted in favor of bill.

✱ The conference committee discusses (but is not limited to resolving) differences. Options for a conference committee report include:
  • “Concur in Senate Amendment No. 123 and further amend”
  • “Recede from Senate Amendment No. 123”
  • “Concur in Assembly Amendment No. 456”
  • “Concur in Assembly Amendment Nos. 123 and 456 and further amend”
  • No agreement

✱ To pass, the conference committee report must be approved by both houses by voice vote.
Legislative Process

Governor may:

- Sign the bill
  - Within 5 days if Legislature in Session (excluding the day of receipt and Sundays)
  - Within 10 days if Legislature has adjourned (excluding the day of receipt and Sundays)

- Veto the bill

- Not sign the bill within the period allowed (effectively allowing the bill to go into law without his signature)
Legislative Process

If Governor vetoes:

🌟 Legislature still in Session:
  • Return bill first to House of Origin
  • 2/3 vote of both houses to override

🌟 Legislature no longer in Session:
  • Return bill in following Session
Effective Dates

When does a law take effect?

- On the date specified in the bill; or
- If no date is specified in the bill, it becomes effective on October 1 of that year.
Questions?