



# How to Follow a Bill

## **First Reading**

A brief description of the bill is read for the first time and referred to committee by the presiding officer.

## **Second Reading**

Usually on the next legislative day, the bill is read for the second time in the committee to which it was assigned.

## **Committee Action**

Committee members review the bill; they may solicit expert testimony and hear from interested parties to help them reach a conclusion. In some instances, members may elect to assign the bill to a sub-committee (made up of selected members from the full committee).

Committees may take one of the following actions:

- 1) Recommend Bill or Resolution “Do Pass”;
- 2) Recommend “Do Not Pass”;
- 3) Recommend “Do Pass with Changes” (amendments or substitutes);
- 4) Report without recommendations;
- 5) Refer to Sub- or Study Committee;
- 6) Table (Hold).

When the bill/resolution leaves the full committee, it goes before the full House/Senate for debate. After the 20th legislative day, the bill must go to the Rules Committee, which then controls the flow of legislation to the floor.

*Beginning the 20th day of the Session, each bill that comes out of the House or Senate committees is referred to the “Rules” Committee. The Rules Committee then considers all of these respective bills and establishes the calendar of bills that will be discussed by the members of the House or Senate during the next day. Not every bill that is sent to the Rules Committee makes it to the House or Senate floor.*

## **Third Reading and Passage**

A bill is read for the third time just prior to the debate on the floor of the full House or Senate. Bills may be amended and final vote taken.

## **Transmittal Back to the Other Body**

A bill that receives favorable floor consideration is “transmitted” to the other body for consideration. Both bodies must pass the bill in identical form before it is sent to the Governor. If the two “bodies” fail to reach agreement on a measure, a conference committee may be established with three members from each house appointed by the presiding officers.

**Governor's Signature**

When a bill has passed both the House and Senate and has been signed by the President of the Senate, Secretary of the Senate, Speaker of the House and Clerk of the House, it is listed as "Enrolled" and is sent to the Governor for his review. The Governor may elect to sign the bill into law, veto the bill or may do neither; allowing the legislation to become law at the time specified within the bill. An "Act" number is assigned to the bill, which is now an Act (Law) to the Secretary of State for filing, printing and safekeeping.

**Veto**

The Governor may approve or veto a bill within six days after receipt when the General Assembly is in session. After the Session is concluded, he/she has forty days to approve or veto the bill. If he/she fails to take action within the prescribed time, the bill becomes a law. If the bill is vetoed, the General Assembly may over-ride the veto by a two-thirds vote of the House and Senate in the next Session.