

Excerpted from: <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/HouseClerk/Vermont%20Legislative%20Process.htm>

"One of the common misconceptions about the Legislature is that the Members are at work for only three or four days a week when the Legislature meets. What the public fails to realize is that most of the work of the Legislature is done by committees. Actually they are the backbone of the legislative process. Before any bill of general importance is considered on the floor of either body, many hours of careful work are spent by the members of the standing committee to which the bill is referred. The Legislature as a whole, therefore, relies on its committees to work out the frivolous or less important measures and to report those deserving the consideration of the entire House or Senate.

By working through its standing committees, it is possible for each house of the Legislature to have each bill considered by a group of members who have specialized in the subject matter of the bill. Some members of the Legislature have expert knowledge of particular subjects of legislation, and such members are usually placed on committees in such a manner as to take full advantage of this specialized knowledge. For this reason, the Legislature usually accepts the recommendations of the standing committees. However, the Legislature does not completely abdicate its responsibility for the careful consideration of pending bills. If the need arises, the members of either house can force a committee to take action on a bill, or they can ignore the committees recommendations. Moreover, a great deal of legislative work is done by interim committees, or committees which are appointed to consider important subjects of legislation between the sessions of the Legislature. Interim committees usually are composed of members of both houses, and they meet for a number of days to consider special problems which the Legislature thinks should be studied carefully before a bill is drafted for introduction.

In this respect, the legislative process may be aptly compared with the iceberg. What the casual observer sees of the legislative process, as they observe the Legislature in session, is comparable to the 1/8th of the iceberg that is visible above water. The background work of studying problems requiring legislative solution is comparable to the submerged 7/8ths of the iceberg. It is not apparent on the surface, but it is there.

This background work of study and research is probably the most important aspect of the legislative process. And its importance will increase even more as the problems of our society with which the Legislature deals grow ever more technical and complex.

This article is patterned after one written in 1974 by Sylvia W. Orange, Clerk of the South Carolina House of Representatives"

=====
===
Excerpted from The Federalist 62 by James Madison, 1788:
<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-04-02-0212>

The necessity of a senate is not less indicated by the propensity of all single and numerous assemblies, to yield to the impulse of sudden and violent passions, and to be seduced by factious leaders, into intemperate and pernicious resolutions. Examples on this subject might be cited without number; and from proceedings within the United States, as well as from the history of other nations. But a position that will not be contradicted need not be proved. All that need be remarked is that a body which is to correct this infirmity ought itself³ be free from it, and consequently ought to be less numerous. It ought moreover to possess great firmness, and consequently ought to hold its authority by a tenure of considerable duration.

and:

The internal effects of a mutable policy are still more calamitous. It poisons the blessings of liberty itself. It will be of little avail to the people that the laws are made by men of their own choice, if the laws be so voluminous that they cannot be read, or so incoherent that they cannot be understood; if they be repealed or revised before they are promulged, or undergo such incessant changes that no man who knows what the law is to day can guess what it will be to morrow. Law is defined to be a rule of action; but how can that be a rule, which is little known and less fixed?

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2018/S.55>

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2018/S.55>

<http://digital.vpr.net/post/public-hearing-gun-legislation-draws-huge-crowd-statehouse#stream/4>