

HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW



BILL INTRODUCTION/ FIRST READING

Any legislator from either the House or Senate can sponsor a bill to amend Vermont law. The bill is assigned a number and then introduced on the floor of the sponsor's chamber during first reading.



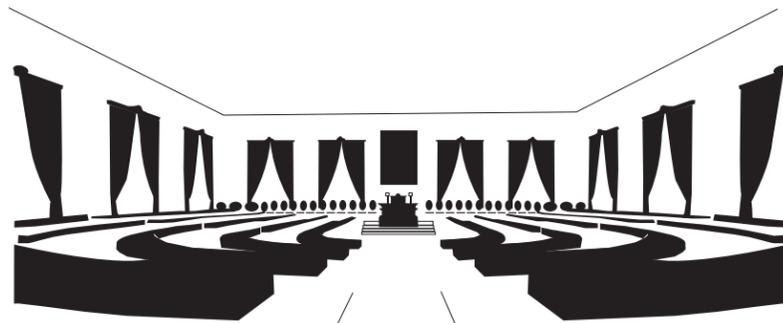
BILL REFERRAL

Upon first reading, the bill is referred to a standing committee of the chamber based on the bill's subject matter. The bill may be subsequently committed to other committees based on its subject matter.



COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

If the committee decides to pursue the bill, the committee may take testimony on and recommend amendments to it. Committee votes on any amendments and whether to pass the bill out of committee are taken by majority vote.



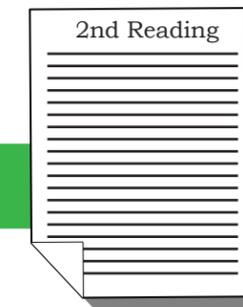
OTHER CHAMBER CONSIDERATION

After passage in one chamber, the bill remains in that chamber for one legislative day and then the bill — as it passed the first chamber — goes through the same process in the other chamber. If the second chamber proposes any amendments, the bill must go back to the first chamber so it can consider those proposed amendments, and the first chamber may agree with those amendments or agree and propose additional amendments.



THIRD READING

Third reading happens the legislative day after second reading and it is another chance for members of the chamber to propose amendments and debate the bill. After voting on any amendments and then reading the bill a third time, the chamber votes by majority vote on whether the bill should pass.



SECOND READING

After it is voted out of committee, the bill is sent to the chamber floor for second reading. A member of a committee to which the bill was referred or committed and considered will report the committee's recommendations; members of the chamber may propose amendments to the bill or to a committee's recommended amendments; and the bill and any amendments are debated. The chamber will take majority votes on any amendments and whether to read the bill a third time.



COMMITTEE OF CONFERENCE

If the two chambers are unable to agree on the bill or the proposed amendments, a committee of conference may be appointed in which three members of each chamber will attempt to reach agreement on a final version — called a committee of conference report — which is then submitted to both chambers for approval. The chambers cannot amend the committee of conference report and will adopt or reject it by majority vote.



GOVERNOR'S CONSIDERATION

If both chambers agree on a final version of the bill, the bill passes and it is sent to the Governor who normally will sign it into law, allow it to become law without his or her signature, or veto it. If the bill is vetoed, the House and Senate may override the veto by a two-thirds vote in each chamber.



BILL ENACTMENT

Once the Governor signs the bill into law or allows it to become law without his or her signature, or if the chambers successfully override the Governor's veto, the bill becomes an official law of Vermont and is assigned an act number.