

How a Bill Becomes a Law



Introduction/First Reading

Any legislator from either Chamber 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 the First Reading.

Bill Referral

The bill is then referred to a standing Committee of the Chamber based on its subject matter; it may be subsequently committed to other Committees based on subject matter.

Committee Consideration

If the Committee decides to pursue the bill, they 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.

Second Reading

After it is voted out of Committee, the bill is sent to the Chamber floor for a second reading. A member reports their Committee's recommendations, members may propose 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

This may be appointed if the two chambers do not agree on proposed amendments or the bill. Three members from each Chamber will try to reach agreement on a final version, called a Committee of Conference Report, which is then submitted for final approval. The Chambers cannot amend the Committee of Conference Report; it is adopted or rejected by majority vote.

Other Chamber Consideration

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

Third Reading

This happens the legislative day after the second reading, and it is another chance for Members 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.

Governor's Consideration

If both Chambers agree on a final version of the bill, it passes and is sent to the Governor, who can: sign it into law, allow it to become law without a signature, or veto it. If it 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, allows it to become law without a 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.

