

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

IN
AZ

1 FILING. The bill is filed for introduction. Bills can be filed only by members of the Legislature.

2 INTRODUCTION. The bill is “introduced”—its reference title is formally read aloud in open session.

3 REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE. The bill is referred to standing committee(s). In the House the speaker decides which bills go to which committees; in the Senate the president decides.

4 FIRST-HOUSE HEARINGS. The committee(s) to which the bill has been referred meet, take testimony on the bill, and make recommendations that the bill “do pass” as is, “do pass as amended,” or be held for later work.

5 COMMITTEE REPORTS. The committee recommendations are read aloud on the floor of the representative chambers.

6 CONSENT CALENDAR. If no amendments have been recommended, the leadership can put the bill on the “consent calendar” and it will not be debated on the floor.

7 DEBATE: THE COW. For a bill not on the consent calendar, the whole House (or Senate) meets to discuss the bill. This is the “Committee of the Whole” or “COW.” During COW, individual members can offer amendments, which will be voted upon by voice vote as they are offered. The bill’s sponsor then motions for a vote.

8 COW VOTES. If the COW votes in favor, the bill moves on. If the COW votes against, the bill reverts to its pre-COW status and is available for debate... but is usually dead.

9 FORMAL VOTE. The bill is reprinted with any COW amendments. This is the House (or Senate) engrossed bill. If it passes the formal vote, it goes to the next house.

10 SECOND HOUSE ACTION. Repeat steps 1 through 9 in the next house. If it passes the second house, it returns to its “house of origin.”

11 UNAMENDED BILL. If the second house did not amend it, the house of origin sends the bill to the governor.

12 AMENDED BILL. If the second house did amend it, the house of origin votes on whether to accept the second-house version of the bill.

13 AMENDMENT ACCEPTED. If the house of origin accepts the changes, it votes on the bill again. If it passes, it goes to the governor.

14 AMENDMENT REJECTED. If the house of origin rejects the changes, the presiding officer creates a conference committee comprised of members of both houses to resolve the differences.

15 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE. The conference committee recommends the bill in one of three versions: (1) as passed by the house of origin, (2) as passed by the second house, or (3) a new version with amendments from the conference committee.

16 CONFERENCE REPORT ACTION. The conference committee’s recommendation is submitted to both houses and must be approved by both.

17 BILL TO THE GOVERNOR. After approval by both houses, the bill is sent to the governor from its house of origin.

18 VETO. If the governor vetoes the bill, it returns to its house of origin. The Legislature can override the veto by a special vote.

19 CHAPTER NUMBER. If the governor signs the bill (or fails to act within a stated period of time), the bill is filed into law and given a final chapter number.



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