***How a Bill Becomes a Law***

1. **The Creation of a Bill**

Any member of **Congress** – either from the **Senate** or the **House of Representatives** – who has an idea for a law can **draft a bill**. These ideas come from the Congress members themselves or everyday citizens and advocacy groups. The primary Congress member supporting the bill is called the "**sponsor**". The other members who support the bill are called "**co-sponsors**". The House clerk assigns a legislative number for bills introduced in the House of Representatives (e.g., HR1001) and the Senate clerk assigns a legislative number for bills introduced in the Senate (e.g., S1002).

1. **The Bill is Introduced**

Once the bill is drafted, it must be **introduced**. If a **Representative** is a sponsor, the bill is introduced in the **House**. If a **Senator** is a sponsor, the bill is introduced in the **Senate**. Once a bill is introduced, it can be found on [**Congress.gov**](http://www.congress.gov/), which is the official government website that tracks federal legislation.

1. **The Bill Goes to Committee**

As soon as a bill is introduced, it is referred to a **committee**. Both the House and Senate have various committees composed of groups of Congress members who are particularly interested in different topics such as health or international affairs. When a bill is in the hands of the committee, it is carefully examined and its chances of passage by the entire Congress are determined. The committee may even choose to hold **hearings** to better understand the implications of the bill. Hearings allow the views of the **executive branch**, experts, other public officials and supporters, and opponents of the legislation to be put on the **record**. If the committee does not act on a bill, the bill is considered to be **dead**.

1. **Subcommittee Review of the Bill**

**Subcommittees** are organized under committees and have further specialization on a certain topic. Often, committees refer bills to a subcommittee for study and their own hearings. The subcommittee may make changes to the bill and must vote to refer a bill back to the full committee. The subcommittee may request **reports** from government agencies and hold **hearings** so experts and interested parties have an opportunity to testify on the issue.

1. **The Committee Mark Up of the Bill**

When the hearings and subcommittee review are completed, the committee will meet to **mark up** the bill. They make changes and **amendments** before recommending the bill to the **floor**. If a committee votes not to **report** legislation to the full chamber of Congress, the bill dies. If the committee votes in favor of the bill, it is reported to the floor. This procedure is called **ordering a bill reported**. They might also vote to lay the bill aside, otherwise known as **tabling the bill**.

1. **Floor Action**

The bill is returned to the full House or Senate for further debate and approval. At this point members may propose **amendments** to the bill, **add additional text**, or otherwise **alter** the bill.

1. **Vote**

House and Senate members **vote** on their respective versions of the proposed bill.

1. **Conference Committees**

A bill must be **approved** by both Chambers of Congress. When the Senate amends and agrees to a bill or a version of a bill that the House has already passed or when the House amends and passes a Senate bill or a version of a Senate bill, the two Chambers may begin to resolve any legislative differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill by way of a **conference committee**. When the chambers go to conference, the House and Senate send **conferees** or **representatives** to bargain and negotiate. The final compromise is embodied in a **Conference Report** that both the House and Senate must vote to approve before it is cleared for presidential consideration. The Conference Report will recommend a **common version** of the measure for approval and will also include statements of legislative intent regarding provisions of the legislation in a **Joint Statement of Managers of the Conference**. If the conference committee is unable to reach an agreement, the bill **dies**.

1. **Presidential Action**

After the bill is **passed** by both Chambers it is sent to the President for their approval or their signature, which if granted creates a **Public Law**. When a President comments on and refuses to sign a bill, it is known as a **veto**. A vetoed bill may return to Congress for reconsideration. If the President does not act within 10 days the bill automatically becomes **law**. If Congress **adjourns** during the 10 days after the bill is sent to the President and they do not sign it, the bill is automatically vetoed. This process is also known as a **pocket veto.**

1. **Overriding a Veto**

If the President vetoes a bill, Congress may attempt to **override** the veto. If both the Senate and the House pass the bill by a **two-thirds majority**, the President's veto is **overruled**, and the bill becomes law.

1. **The Creation of a Law**

The Office of Federal Register assigns the Public Law a number (i.e. P.L. 109-1) and the Government Printing Office prints a copy of it. Laws are issued first in **slip form** or a single publication containing one law. Later it is organized in the order in which it was passed. Finally, it is **codified** into subject order so that all laws on the same topic fall together.

Source: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/728-how-a-bill-becomes-a-law>

Source: https://www.genome.gov/about-genomics/policy-issues/How-Bill-Becomes-Law