

How a Bill Becomes a Law in Virginia

Bills may originate in either the House of Delegates or the Senate.

A Delegate, as requested by constituents, **prepares to introduce legislation**. (For example: Permitting the governing bodies of localities to prohibit the sale and use of certain fireworks)



The Delegate then explains exactly the proposal he/she has in mind to a staff attorney in the Division of Legislative Services. **A staff attorney checks existing law and the constitutionality of the proposed legislation.**



The bill is then drafted by the Division of Legislative Services. Draft copies of the bill are made and delivered to the Delegate.



The Delegate signs his/her name on the bill and introduces it by laying the original and duplicate copies on the desk of the Clerk of the House of Delegates.



The bill is ordered printed and referred by the Speaker to the appropriate Standing Committee. (The House of Delegates has 14 Standing Committees and the Senate has 11 Standing Committees.)



The members of the Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns-in public session-**study, discuss, and vote on the bill.**

The Committee then reports (“approves”) the bill, without amendments, to the House of Delegates.



First Reading: The bill title is printed in the Calendar (the daily printed agenda of business) **or is read by the Clerk of the House of Delegates.**



Second Reading: The next day the bill title appears in the House Calendar. Bills are considered in the order in which they appear in the Calendar. **The Clerk of the House of Delegates reads the title of the bill.**



A bill on second reading is amendable. The bill is explained by its patron (Delegate), who answers any questions that may be asked. By voice vote, the House of Delegates votes to engross the bill and pass it to its third reading.

A bill that has passed the second reading with or without amendments is engrossed.

If amendments are adopted, the bill is reprinted in its engrossed form for passage.



Third Reading: The next day, the engrossed bill title appears in the House of Delegates calendar on third reading. **The bill is read by title by the Clerk.** By a **recorded vote**, the bill is passed by the House of Delegates.

Communication: When passed, the bill is sent to the Senate either by the Clerk of the House of Delegates in a communication or by a Delegate in person, informing the Senate that the bill has passed the House of Delegates and requesting the concurrence of the Senate.



In the Senate: The bill goes through substantially the same procedure as it did in the House of Delegates.

The bill is read by title a first time, then the bill is referred to a Standing Committee, considered and reported by the Standing Committee, read a second time and a third time before passage by a constitutional majority.



If there are differences between the House of Delegates and Senate, a Committee of Conference is created to resolve them.



After the bill has been passed by both houses of the General Assembly, it is printed as an enrolled bill, and examined and signed by the presiding officer of each house.



The bill is sent to the Governor for approval, where the Governor may 1) sign the bill into law; 2) amend the bill and return it to the General Assembly for approval; 3) veto the bill and return it to the General Assembly, where the House of Delegates and the Senate may override the veto

by a two-thirds vote of both houses; or, 4) take no action and the bill becomes law without the Governor’s signature.



After being signed by the Governor, the bill is sent to the Clerk of the House of Delegates (Keeper of the Rolls of the Commonwealth) and is assigned a Chapter number. All Chapters of a Session are compiled and bound as the Acts of Assembly.



Bills enacted at a Regular Session (or the Reconvened Session which follows) **are effective the 1st day of July following adjournment of the Regular Session**, unless another date is specified.

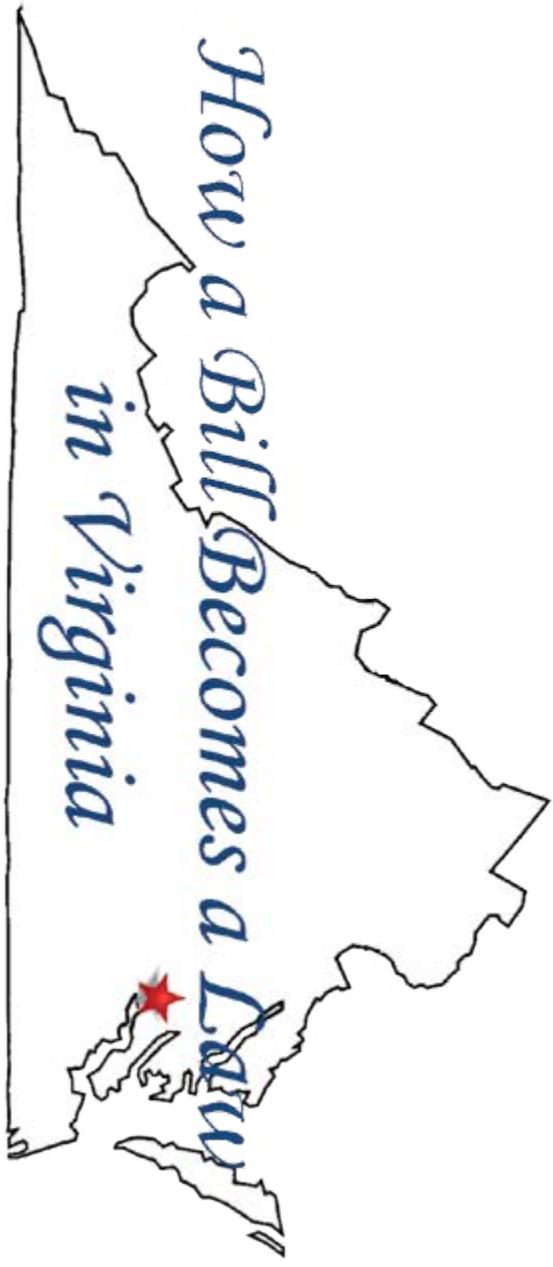


Bills enacted at a Special Session (or Reconvened Session) **are effective the 1st day of the fourth month following the adjournment of the Special Session**, unless another date is specified.



The General Appropriations Act is usually effective July 1st and Emergency Acts become effective when signed by the Governor.





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G. Paul Nardo, Clerk of the House of Delegates

The Great Seal of Virginia



Obverse



Reverse

The obverse side of the Great Seal of Virginia depicts the Roman goddess Virtus representing the spirit of the Commonwealth. She is dressed as an Amazon, a sheathed sword in one hand and a spear in the other, and one foot on the form of Tyranny, who is pictured with a broken chain in his left hand, a scourge (whip) in his right, and his fallen crown nearby, implying struggle that has ended in complete victory. Virginia's motto, "Sic Semper Tyrannis" (Latin for "Thus Always to Tyrants"), appears at the bottom.

On the reverse side are the three Roman goddesses, Libertas (Liberty) in the center holding a wand and pileus (cap) in her right hand, Aeternitas (Eternity) with a globe and phoenix in her right hand, and Ceres (Fruitfulness) with a cornucopia in her left hand and an ear of wheat in her right. At the top is the word "Perseverando" (Latin for "by Persevering"). A border of Virginia creeper encircles the designs on each side.

Source: Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Virginia