



Information & Communications Services (ICS)
House of Delegates Clerk's Office
State Capitol • P.O. Box 406
Richmond, Virginia 23218
(804) 698-1500 or Toll Free 1-877-391-FACT
HICS@house.virginia.gov • virginiageneralassembly.gov

G. Paul Nardo, Clerk of the House of Delegates



How a Bill Becomes a Law in Virginia

The following steps are the typical process by which bills become laws:

1. Drafting and Introduction

A legislator has an **IDEA FOR A BILL**, usually from a constituent.

The legislative member presents the idea and requests that it be **DRAFTED INTO A BILL**. In January, when the General Assembly meets, the Delegates and Senators introduce their bills in their respective chambers.



2. Committee Action

The bill is **REFERRED** to a committee. The members of the committee consider the bill and decide what action to take. This is when the public may speak.

After listening to the testimony, the committee will vote to recommend the passage or defeat of the bill. They may also offer changes (called amendments). If the committee recommends passage of the bill, it then goes back to the chamber where it was introduced.

3. "Floor" Action

The title of the bill must be read or printed in the calendar three times.



FIRST READING: The bill is printed in the calendar or is read by the Clerk.

SECOND READING: The bill may be amended after it has been read a second time. In the House of Delegates, the bill will be debated.

THIRD READING:

In the Senate, the bill may be debated. A final vote is taken during the third reading.



4. Voting

If the bill passes, it is then **SENT TO THE OTHER CHAMBER** where it follows a similar process of committee action, floor debate, amending, and voting. If the bill passes both houses in the same form, it then goes to the Governor. If the bill is amended by the other house, it is then returned to the body from which it originated for approval of the amendment.



A **COMMITTEE OF CONFERENCE** is usually created to resolve any differences between the House of Delegates and Senate.

5. Governor's Action

Once passed in the same form, the bill is then sent to the Governor for his approval.

The **GOVERNOR** may:

- sign the bill into law.
- amend the bill and return it to the General Assembly for their approval.
- veto the bill and return it to the General Assembly, where the House of Delegates and Senate may override the Governor's veto by a two-thirds vote of both houses.
- take no action and the bill becomes law without his signature.

6. Law

Bills that become law during a Regular Session (or the Reconvened Session that

follows) are effective on July 1st, unless otherwise specified.

