

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

- 1.** *First Reading* means that a bill is introduced in the house of origin (House of Representatives or Senate) and the title read aloud by the clerk, who hands it to the presiding officer for assignment to one of the standing committees in the house that it is introduced in. If a bill does not get assigned to a committee, it dies.
- 2.** Committees have great power, especially the Committee Chair who decides which of the bills that have been assigned to the Committee will be considered. On the day that your bill is considered, you should attend and ask to speak in support of your bill. If the Committee decides that your bill is a good one, they will recommend "Do Pass" and send it on for Second Reading.
- 3.** After a bill is reported "due pass" by the Committee, it is reprinted. A copy must lie on every legislator's desk 24 hours to be eligible for *Second Reading*. While up for Second Reading a bill can be amended by a majority vote in favor of the amendment. If the bill survives Second Reading, it is ready after another 24 hours for *Third Reading*.
- 4.** The bill now has arrived at a critical spot for a show of strength, it cannot be amended by less than a two-thirds vote. With no amendments, the bill is voted on as it stands and is either passed or rejected by a majority vote.
- 5.** If the bill survives all of these steps in the house of origin, it is sent to the second house where it must go through the same procedures of three readings and a committee hearing. The second house may then pass the bill, amend it or kill it.
- 6.** Should the second house amend the bill, it must go back to its house of origin for a vote. The house of origin may concur with the amendments made or it can reject those changes. If there are no amendments, the bill is signed by the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate and sent to the Governor.
- 7.** If the house of origin won't accept the new amendments, the bill goes to a two-house committee that draws up a single compromise bill. The compromise bill then goes back to both the House and Senate for another vote. If both houses pass the amended version, it is signed by the Speaker of the House and by the President of the Senate. It then goes to the Governor.
- 8.** If the Governor signs the bill, it becomes a law. If the Governor vetoes the bill, it can only become a law if both the House and Senate override the veto by a majority vote in each house. The Governor can let the bill become a law by taking no action at all for seven days at which point it becomes law.
- 9.** If a bill survives all these steps, IT'S A LAW. The Constitution of Indiana established the House of Representatives and the Senate. It also provides the basic process that a bill must go through to become a law and it places certain limits on the power of the House and Senate. No law is valid if it violates either the Indiana Constitution or the Constitution of the United States.

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