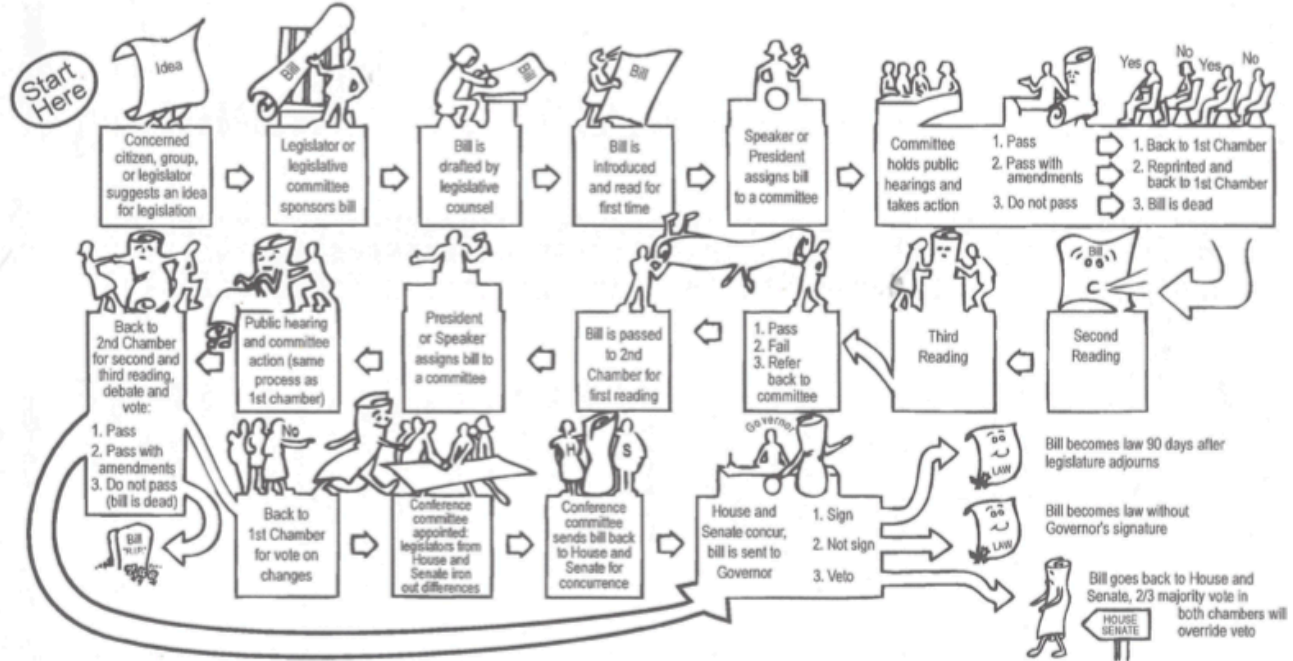


The Process of A Bill, From Idea to Law

How an Idea Becomes Law

A simple view of the Oregon Legislative Process



The Oregon Legislative Assembly

The Oregon Legislative Assembly is state government's "board of directors." It is responsible for making laws dealing with Oregon's well-being, adopting the state's budget, and for setting public policy. The Legislative Assembly is made up of two bodies: the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate consists of 30 members elected for four-year terms. The House consists of 60 representatives elected for two-year terms. Each member of the legislature represents a district (an area determined by population). Every Oregonian is represented by one state Senator and one state Representative.

The legislature convenes annually in February at the State Capitol in Salem, but sessions may not exceed 160 days in odd-numbered years and 35 days in even-numbered years, unless extended by a two-thirds vote in each chamber. About 3,000 bills are considered in each odd-year session. Relying largely upon work done in committees, the legislature enacts about one-third of these bills into Law.

A bill may begin with a request from a citizen, a group, or a particular legislator with an idea for a bill.

Legislators or a legislative committee sponsors a bill.

Bill is drafted by legislative counsel.

First Reading: The recitation on the Chamber floor of the measure number and title by the Reading Clerk upon introduction of a measure in either house. After the First Reading, the measure is referred to a committee by the Senate President or House Speaker (depending on which Chamber originates the bill).

The Committee chair decides which bills to bring forward to be heard.

Public Hearing: A public meeting of a legislative committee held for the purpose of taking public testimony and/or other action concerning proposed legislation. (**The only time citizens can speak publicly for or against a bill**, addressing the whole committee and ask or answer questions to defend your views.

Work Session: A committee meeting held for the purpose of determining the contents of a measure to be reported out of committee. A work session is different from a public hearing. In a work session, testimony is usually not taken from the public, although the public may attend the hearing.

Recommendation is given: Do Pass - Refer back to the committee to consider amendments - Fail, bill dies

Second Reading: Like the First Reading, a recitation of the measure's number and title by the Reading Clerk. Second Reading occurs after the measure has been referred to committee, worked on, and reported back to the floor for a vote.

Third Reading: As in First or Second Readings, a recitation of a measure's number and title by the Reading Clerk on the floor before a final vote by either Chamber.

Final Vote of the complete Chamber.

If the bill passes one Chamber it is sent to the other Chamber for consideration and the process begins again. Example: If the bill passed in the Senate it goes to the House where there is a First Reading and the Speaker assigns the bill to a committee for consideration.

- If both Chambers agree and pass the bill, it is sent to the Governor for signature or veto.
- If the Governor does not sign but does not veto it, the becomes law without the Governor's signature.
- If changes or amendments were added by the second Chamber, it goes back to the first Chamber for a vote on the changes.
- A conference committee is appointed with legislators from both Chambers to iron out the differences. The conference committee sends the bill back to the House and the Senate for approval. The bill is then sent to the Governor.