

How a Bill Becomes Law

Legislation is introduced by a senator or representative in his or her chamber and given a reference number.



The bill is then passed on to the relevant committee or committees within that chamber, depending on the topic of the legislation.



The committee(s) hold hearings and assign the bill to subcommittees if necessary.



The committee(s) discuss the bill and debates potential changes.



The committee(s) votes on the bill, and if passed by a majority it then moves to the full chamber.



The bill is heard and debated in the chamber and may be put up for a vote.



Once the bill has passed a majority vote in both chambers, it moves to the executive office to be signed into law by the governor or president.

Illinois Legislation

- A bill must pass one chamber before being passed onto the next chamber. If a bill is amended (changed) in the second chamber, the changes require the approval of the first chamber.
- Testimony from the public is heard during the committee hearings. Speaking in person or submitting a written testimony is a great way to have your voice heard.
- After a bill is approved by both chambers, the governor has 60 calendar days to sign or veto the bill. If he does not act within that time, it automatically becomes a law.

Federal Legislation

- Bills with similar content are developed in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Differences between the two bills are then reconciled by a Conference Committee. The reconciled version of the bill requires the approval of the full House and Senate.
- The president can either sign the bill, actively veto it, or decide not to act. If Congress adjourns before 10 days and the president has not signed the bill, it is a “pocket veto.” If the president does not act in 10 days and Congress is still in session, the bill automatically becomes law.