



How a Bill Becomes Law

I. INTRODUCTION

There are certain basic rules which guide the movement of legislation in the Rhode Island General Assembly. Although these rules may vary somewhat from session to session, and although certain exceptions are permitted, bills generally must follow a certain prescribed course through both houses of the legislature to be enacted into law. The following outline of the course of legislation is offered for your assistance.

II. COURSE OF LEGISLATIVE MEASURES THROUGH THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. Any Representative or Senator may introduce a bill in his or her respective house.
2. The Recording Secretary numbers a bill introduced in the House of Representatives. The Secretary of the Senate numbers a bill introduced in the Senate.
3. The Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate refers the bill to the proper committee.
4. A House or Senate Committee may take the following action on a bill:
 - a. Recommendation of passage as introduced;
 - b. Recommendation of passage with amendments;
 - c. Recommendation of passage of a substitute;
 - d. Recommendation of reference to another committee;
 - e. Recommendation of indefinite postponement;
 - f. Reporting the bill to the floor and giving no recommendation, in which case it stands or falls on its own merit;
5. A bill goes on the calendar when a given committee makes a recommendation of passage. Under the existing rules of the Senate and House, all "Public Bills" are reproduced with a short explanation attached thereto, for distribution to the members of the legislature.
6. After passage, in either the House or the Senate, the bill is transmitted to the other house where it will follow the same procedure.
7. Upon passage in concurrence by the second house, a bill is forwarded to the Governor.

III. ACTIONS ON LEGISLATION TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. The Governor may sign and approve a bill. It is then returned to the Secretary of State who notifies the branch of origin of the bill's passage into law.
2. The Governor may veto a bill and return it to the branch of origin. If three-fifths (3/5) of the members present and voting (by roll call vote) approve the bill in both houses, it becomes law, the Governor's veto notwithstanding.
3. The Governor may allow a bill to become law without his signature. If the General Assembly is in session, the Governor transmits the bill without a signature to the Secretary of State following the sixth day (Sunday excepted) that the measure has been presented to him or her. If the General Assembly has adjourned, the act becomes law unless it has been transmitted by the Governor to the Secretary of State with his or her disapproval in writing within ten (10) days after adjournment.
4. By statute (Section 43-3-25 as amended) every statute which does not expressly prescribe the time it shall go into operation shall take effect on the first day of July of the calendar year of its enactment into law by the General Assembly.

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