

How a Bill Becomes a Law – *With Public Input*

Public Input *

Progress through the NH State Legislature

Individual or group finds legislators willing to sponsor a bill

New bill is introduced in the Senate (1)



Bill is assigned to a Senate committee



Public gives oral or written →
testimony at the hearing**

Committee holds a public hearing



Public urges committee →
members to make a
particular recommendation*

Committee considers the bill and gives
a recommendation (2)



Public urges their own →
Senators to vote a certain way*

Full Senate votes on the bill



If majority vote YES,
bill goes to the House

If majority vote NO,
the bill dies



Bill is assigned to a House committee



Public gives oral or written →
testimony at the hearing**

Committee holds a public hearing



Public urges committee →
members to make a
particular recommendation*

Committee considers the bill and gives
a recommendation (2)



Public urges their own →
representatives to vote
a certain way*

Full House votes on the bill



If majority vote YES,
bill goes to the
Governor (3)

If majority vote NO,
the bill dies



Public urges the Governor to
sign or veto the bill* →

(Governor has three options; see next page)



Governor signs bill;
the bill becomes law

Governor neither signs nor
vetoes bill within 5 days;
the bill becomes law

Governor vetoes bill
↓ ↓

Senate and House may choose
to do nothing. The bill dies.

**Public urges legislators
to uphold or override
Governor's veto*** →

Senate and House may attempt
to override the Governor's veto

↓
If 2/3 of each body vote YES,
the bill becomes law

↓
If more than 1/3
vote NO, the bill dies

(1) As described here, the bill begins in the NH Senate. It could start in the House instead, and then "Senate" and "House" would be reversed in this chart.

(2) The committee can recommend a bill as "ought to pass" [abbreviated OTP] or as "inexpedient to legislate" [ITL]. Other choices include "tabling the bill" or "retained in committee" for further study. "Tabling a bill" essentially kills the bill for that legislative session.

(3) If the bill has been amended in either the Senate or the House and has passed in both bodies with differences in wording, it goes to a Committee of Conference. A public hearing is held on the differing bills, with testimony from the bills' sponsors and experts. If the Committee of Conference reaches mutually agreeable wording, the rephrased bill goes to both bodies for another vote. If the majority in both bodies vote "ought to pass," this amended bill would then be sent to the Governor.

Public input is of two kinds:

**** oral or written testimony at committee meetings,**

*** phone calls, emails and discussions with elected officials, outside of official meetings, urging them to vote a particular way.**

Useful links:

This is the website for the NH government: <http://www.nh.gov/government/state.html>

To search for bills on a particular subject, use a key word in the title of the bill.

http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_status/

This same link also works if you know the bill's number and wish to find out its status (in committee, next hearing, etc.). or to get the full text of a bill.

To find names, emails, and phone numbers for Senators and Representatives, go to

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/members/wml.aspx>

League of Women Voters New Hampshire LWVNH.org