

How a bill becomes law

By Arthur Raymond/Deseret Morning News

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A bill is born

The idea for a new bill may come from a variety of sources. These include a legislator, constituents, government agencies, special-interest groups, lobbyists or the governor. A bill begins in either the House or the Senate.



2

The write-up

The idea is presented as a bill request to the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel. This nonpartisan office conducts a legal review of the bill request and researches issues pertinent to the bill and how it fits with current law. A number is assigned to the bill and a review of its financial implications is done. This review determines issues such as cost of implementation or how the bill may affect revenues, taxes, etc. This information is attached to the bill in the form of a fiscal note.

3

Introduction

The bill is introduced to the floor of the House or Senate (its "birth" place) and routed to the Rules Committee.



4



In the land of committees

The first stop in the committee process is the Rules Committee. This body determines which one of the standing committees should review the bill and routes it accordingly. Each standing committee represents an area of government (education, health and human services, law enforcement, etc.) and, after reviewing a bill, has a variety of options in issuing its opinion. These include amending, holding, tabling, substituting or favorably recommending the bill. Committee reviews are conducted in open meetings and allow the public an opportunity to register its views on the bill. Although most bills get heard by a House and Senate committee, only one committee hearing is required (and even that requirement can be waived through procedural measures within the Rules Committee or on the floor).

5

Back to the floor

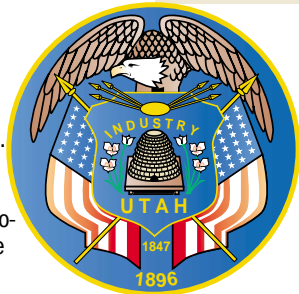
The bill reaches the House or Senate floor after it is recommended favorably by a committee, sent to the floor by the Rules Committee, or brought up for debate by the Rules Committee, or brought up for debate by a two-thirds majority vote. At this point, the bill is debated and can be amended, substituted or held (also known as circled). At the conclusion of debate, any bill not being held is voted on. The passage of a bill requires 38 votes in the House of Representatives and 15 votes in the Senate. If the bill is passed, it is sent to the "other" house and the process begins again with its introduction. If defeated, the bill is dead unless a majority of the legislative body votes to bring it back for another vote.



It's the law!

7

A bill signed by the governor becomes law 60 days after the end of the legislative session, unless another date is specified. If the governor vetoes the bill, it is returned to the Legislature and can be overridden by a two-thirds majority in both the House and Senate. If the bill does not attain the necessary two-thirds vote in either of the houses, it's dead — at least until the next legislative session, when the process can start again.



And now...the governor

A bill that successfully passes both houses of the Legislature is signed by the leaders of those bodies and sent to the governor in its final (or "enrolled") version. Once signed, the bill returns to the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel and is prepared in its final form. This final (or "enrolled") version of the bill is now ready for the governor. The governor may sign the bill, veto it or allow it to become law without his signature.

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 Yes