

Passing Legislation: House and Senate Process

Writing, 1st Reading, Committee Passage of Legislation

- There are many ways a bill can start, they range from a concerned citizen writing legislation, to groups or elected officials writing. Once the bill is drafted, it is read for the first time by title only. After the first reading the Speaker of the House or President of the Senate (SH/PS) refers the bill to a committee for research, review, debate, and voting of the legislation.
- The committee can hear public input on the bill, as well as lobbyist and other groups input. The committee can hear amendments from the members, and from there, will either put the bill as Unfavorable, Favorable, or Favorable with amendments.

2nd Reading and Debate

- The House or Senate will take up the legislation with the committee-passed amendments (if any) and place the bill on the calendar.
- As the bill is on the floor for the 2nd time, it is read by title only.
- The sponsor(s) of the bill gives an introduction of the bill and may be asked **Non-debatable Questions**. The SH/PS shall set an appropriate time limit for this process.
- After the introductions and questions, the floor will be opened for debate by the SH/PS, who will facilitate the debate. Please take note of the debate motions on the short form for Florida Model Legislature.
- After debate has been exhausted on the bill, the Presiding officer shall ask the clerk/secretary if there are any amendments on the table.

Amendments and 3rd Reading

- Debate on the Legislation will typically bring up points which find possible solutions to different sides of the Legislation. Please note Florida Model Legislatures Amendment Form. **Amendments must be turned in via email or neatly handwritten, to the presiding officers or clerk/secretary.**
- If amendments exist, the **amendment** sponsor will introduce it, and may be asked **Non-debatable Questions** by the members of the chamber. The SH/PS shall then determine debate on the amendment, and after debate take a vote on the amendment. If the amendment passes, the bill shall be amended, if it fails, then the bill remains the same. PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF MOTIONS WHICH KILL ANY AMENDMENTS!
- The Bill is read for a third and final time by title only, and the Legislation, either amended or un-amended, is voted on by the body. Legislation must receive a majority vote (50%+1) by the body to pass to the governor's desk to be signed, allowed to become law without signature or vetoed. Please note that identical pieces of legislation must be passed by both chambers before being presented to the Governor.

What If Scenarios

- If the House and Senate both pass different versions of a bill, there may be a joint conference committee of the majorities of both houses. This will allow for reconciliation of the bill, which then has to be passed by both houses with revisions.
- If one legislative body fails a bill, then the legislation has essentially died. However, the motion to reconsider will bring up failed bills and allow for amendments to be done. This may be done to amend bills to fit more parties' ideologies and make the legislation agreeable to a passing vote.
- Legislation that is passed by both chambers but vetoed by the Governor may still be passed but only by a two-thirds majority vote of both chambers. This is called a veto override.