

HOW AN IDEA BECOMES A LAW

- **An Idea Is Developed.** A legislator draws from numerous sources in deciding what should be introduced in the Legislature as a bill. Major sources of ideas come from constituents (CITIZENS), government agencies, special interest groups, lobbyists, the Governor, and the legislator.
- **The Bill is Drafted.** The idea is submitted to the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel, a nonpartisan legislative staff office, in the form of a bill request. The assigned bill drafting attorney reviews existing law, researches the issues, and prepares the bill in proper technical form. The bill is given a number. A fiscal review is conducted and a "Fiscal Note" is attached. The bill is also reviewed for statutory or constitutional concerns.
- **The Bill is Introduced.** The bill is introduced into the Legislature and referred to the Rules Committee. If a Representative is the Sponsor, it will first be introduced to the House of Representatives and will be a House Bill (labeled with HB- and a number). If a Senator is the sponsor, it will originate in the Senate (labeled with SB- and a number)
- **The Bill Receives Standing Committee Review and Public Input.** The Rules Committee recommends a standing committee to which the bill should be referred. The standing committee, in an open meeting, reviews the bill and receives public testimony. The committee may amend, hold, table, substitute, or make a favorable recommendation on the bill.
- **The Bill Is Returned to the Floor for Debate.** If the standing committee returns the bill to the full house with a favorable recommendation, the bill is debated in open session. During floor debate, the bill can be amended, substituted, circled (held for future consideration) or tabled (set aside). When a final vote occurs, the bill must receive a majority (38 votes in the House or 15 votes in the Senate) in order to pass.
- **The Bill Passes Both Houses in the Legislature.** The procedure is repeated in the other body -- House bills go to the Senate and Senate bills go to the House. After the bill has passed in both houses, it is signed by both presiding officers (the Senate President and the Speaker of the House).
- **The Bill goes to the Governor for Action.** The Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel prepares the bill in final form. This is called the "enrolled" bill which is then sent to the Governor for Action. He can sign the bill, veto it, or allow it become law without his signature.
- **The Bill Becomes Effective.** A bill enacted by the Legislature is effective 60 days following adjournment, unless another date is specified in the bill.