

How a Bill Becomes a Law: Federal Level



**SPEAK UP ^{AND}
SPEAK OUT**

summit

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Thank you!



Knowledge Check: Pre-module Questions

1. What is a bill?
2. Who can write a bill?
3. Who can introduce a bill?
4. Who votes on a bill?
5. What is a veto?



Advocacy

Definition of Advocacy

- Advocacy is when an individual or group aims to influence decisions within political, economic and social systems and institutions.
- Advocacy can be defined as public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy.



Glossary - 1

The background of the slide is a photograph of the United States Capitol building in Washington, D.C. The building is a large, white, neoclassical structure with a prominent central dome topped by a statue. The building is surrounded by green lawns and trees. The sky is a clear, light blue. The text is overlaid on this image.

Bill

Legislation drafted for introduction into the Senate or the House of Representatives and identified with a bill number.

Floor

The portion of the legislative chamber reserved for legislators, staff, and other people granted access during session.

House

The generic term for a legislative body. Refers to either the House of Representatives or the Senate.

Glossary - 2



House

A committee meeting convened for the purpose of gathering information on a specific subject or considering legislative measures.

Committee

House of Representatives

The House of Representatives consists of 435 Representatives who serve two-year terms.

Law

The system of rules which a particular country or community recognizes as regulating the actions of its members and which it may enforce through penalties.

Glossary - 3



Rules Committee

A committee responsible for establishing and governing the rules and procedures that guide the legislative process. The committee plays a key role in sharing how bills are introduced, debated, amended, and passed.

Senate

The Senate is comprised of 100 Senators, two elected from each state. Senators serve six-year terms.

Veto

The action of the President in disapproval of a bill sent to him or her by the House.

What is a Bill?

- Every law starts out as a bill, which is an idea for a law that has been written down.
- Ideas for bills may come from elected officials, citizens, advocacy groups, or others. Bills can begin in either the House of Representatives or the Senate.
- Bills may be either an idea for a new law or a suggested change to an existing law.



Step 1: Introducing a Bill

- After a bill has been written, it needs support from other members of the House of Representatives or the Senate. Supporters are called “sponsors.”
- Once a bill has been sponsored, it is introduced by a member of the House of Representatives (a congressperson) or a member of the Senate (a senator).
- Once introduced, the bill is assigned a number:
 - Bills in the House begin with the letters H.R. for House of Representatives
 - Bills in the Senate begin with S. for Senate



Step 2: Committee Action

- A bill is assigned to a committee after being introduced. Each committee is responsible for a certain area of policy, so the committee assignment will depend on what the bill is about. The committee may refer the bill to a subcommittee.
- The committee researches, discusses, and edits the bill. Sometimes, the committee won't act on the bill at all, which means that the bill will not go any further. When this happens, it is sometimes said that the bill "died in committee."
- The committee votes to approve or reject the bill. If it is approved, the majority leadership in the House or Senate decide when to schedule the bill for debate.



Step 3: Subcommittee Review

- Bills may be referred to a subcommittee for study and hearings.
- Hearings are an opportunity for the executive branch, public officials, experts, and supporters or opponents of the bill to voice their opinions on the record.
- The subcommittee may then “mark up” the bill, meaning that they make changes before recommending it to the full committee.
- If the subcommittee does not send the legislation back to the full committee, the bill dies.



Step 4: Committee Action

- Once a bill has left the subcommittee, the full committee can choose to vote on the subcommittee's recommendations or can choose to spend more time studying and holding hearings on the bill.
- The full committee then votes on whether to recommend the bill to the House or Senate.
- If the committee votes to report the bill to the House or Senate, the committee will then release a written report on the bill.



Step 5: Debate and Voting

- Once a bill has left committee, it is debated and voted on in the House of Representatives or the Senate.
- If the bill has only been introduced in the House or Senate, then it will move on to the other chamber and go through a similar process (committee review, debate, vote).
- Sometimes, the two chambers will debate and vote on similar versions of the same bill. If two similar bills are passed by both houses, then a committee is formed to resolve any differences between the two bills. Both chambers will then vote on the final version of the bill.



Step 6: Presidential Action

- Once a bill has passed both chambers, it then goes to the President.
- The president has 10 days to approve the bill and sign it into law, or the President can refuse to approve it (veto). If the President fails to act within 10 days and Congress is still in session, the bill becomes a law automatically.
- Congress can override a veto if 2/3 of Senators and Representatives vote again in favor of the bill.



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

What is a bill?



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

What is a bill?

- A bill is a draft, or idea, of a law that has been written down.



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

Who can write a bill?



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

Who can write a bill?

- Anyone can write a bill. Legislators often write bills, but citizens, advocacy groups, and political organizations can also submit draft bills.



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

Who can introduce a bill?



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

Who can introduce a bill?

- Only members of the House or Senate can introduce a bill.



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

Who votes on a bill?



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

Who votes on a bill?

- Representatives in the House of Representatives and Senators in the Senate vote on a bill. A bill must pass both chambers before the president can sign it into law.



Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

What is a veto?

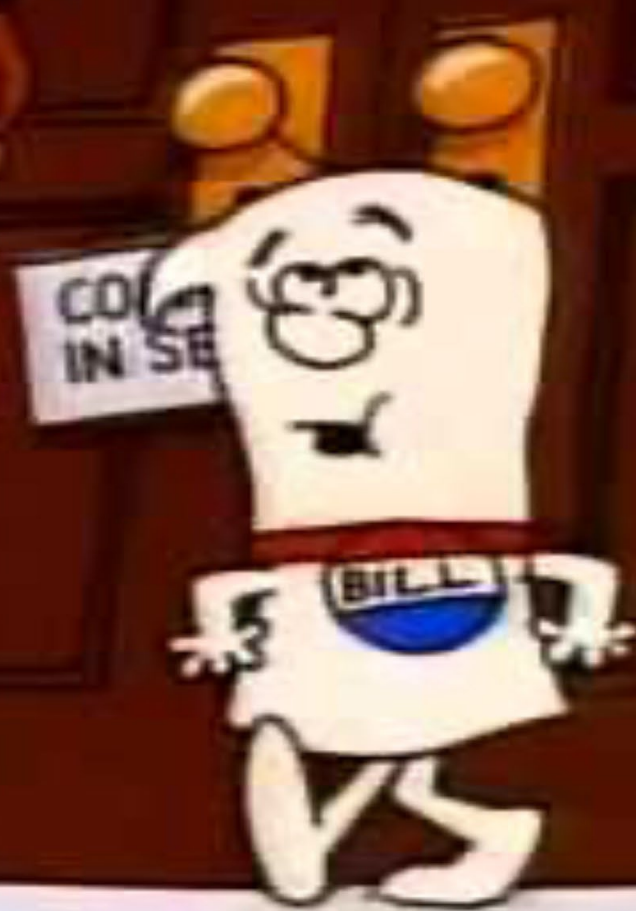


Knowledge Check: Post-module Questions

What is a veto?

- A veto is when a president refuses to approve a bill, meaning that the bill does not become a law.
- However, Congress can override a veto and pass the law anyways if 2/3 of Senators and Representatives vote again in support of the bill.





Speak Up and Speak Out!

Welcome to our advocacy initiative – where self-advocates are empowered to make their voices heard.

Our goal is to facilitate meetings between self-advocates and legislators – because **your voice matters** and **advocacy drives change**.

Feeling ready to set up a meeting with your legislator? Reach out to me:

Sabrina Wyman, Legislative Advocacy Coordinator, The Arc of Illinois

Sabrina@thearcofil.org or 815-464-1832 ext 1016.



Come to the next GHC Meeting!

4.26.24 at 3:00pm - The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

Systems Update

To join our emails list and receive notices about upcoming meetings, please email

elian@thearcofil.org.

Resources

Going Home Coalition Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/GoingHomeLifeintheCommunity/>

Going Home Coalition Instagram Page

<https://www.instagram.com/goinghomeillinois/>

Going Home Coalition Webpage

<https://www.goinghomeillinois.org/>

Going Home Coalition Join Us

<https://www.goinghomeillinois.org/join-us/>



Resources

The Arc of Illinois Website

<https://www.thearcofil.org/>

The Arc of Illinois Newsletter

<https://www.thearcofil.org/take-action/sign-up-for-enewsletter/>

[Recordings of Modules and Slide Decks](#)



Resources

CBS Documentary – *No Place Like Home: People with Disabilities Fight to Stay Out of Institutions* (Long Version)

<https://www.cbsnews.com/video/no-place-like-home-people-with-disabilities-fight-to-stay-out-of-institutions-cbs-reports/https://www.thearcofil.org/>

CBS Documentary – *No Place Like Home: People with Disabilities Fight to Stay Out of Institutions* (Short Version)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GDG0ABlhp4



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Thank you!



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