

## **Steps In The Legislative Process**

### **Step 1 - Drafting**

A member of the General Assembly has an idea for legislation, which he or she has drafted and processed for introduction by the Legislative Service Agency's Office of Bill Drafting and Research and Office of Code Revision. A fiscal note is prepared for each bill to be introduced by the Office of Fiscal Review of the Legislative Services Agency.

### **Step 2 - First Reading**

The bill is filed for introduction by the author in the house in which the author serves (called the "first house"), assigned a number and referred to a standing committee.

### **Step 3 - Committee Action**

A committee of the first house may consider the bill. Assignment of a bill to a committee is solely within the discretion of the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Public hearings may be held, after which the committee debates and votes on the course of action to be taken and reports its recommendations to the first house. A committee may, if it chooses, retain a bill in the committee and not report any recommendation to the first house. If the committee report is adopted by the first house, the bill is printed along with amendments made by the committee.

### **Step 4 - Second Reading**

A bill on second reading may be amended, recommitted to the same or another committee or sent on to its final passage without change.

### **Step 5 - Third Reading**

Debate on the final passage of a bill occurs on its third reading. At the close of debate, a roll call vote is taken on the passage or rejection of the bill.

### **Step 6 - Second House Consideration**

If a bill passes the first house, it is sent to the other house (referred to as the "second house") for consideration. A sponsor, who is a member of the second house, is identified. The bill must progress through essentially the same steps as in the first house (See Steps 2-5).

### **Step 7 - Enrollment**

A bill passed in identical form in both houses is returned to the first house for final printing. If, on the other hand, the two houses pass a bill in differing forms, it is returned to the first house for concurrence in the second house amendments. If no agreement can be achieved at this point, a conference committee may be appointed to resolve the differences. Each bill must ultimately be approved in identical form by both houses or it dies. When a bill is approved in final form, it is enrolled, which means it is printed with all amendments incorporated in the text. The bill is then signed by the presiding officer of each house and sent to the Governor.

**Step 8 - Governor's Action**

The Governor may sign the bill, which is then filed with the Secretary of State and becomes effective when specified by law or in the bill. The Governor may file a bill with the Secretary of State without signing it, allowing it to become law but indicating some disapproval of it. The Governor may choose to veto a bill, returning it with reasons for the veto to the first house for consideration. If the General Assembly has adjourned at the end of a session when a bill is vetoed, the vetoed bill is filed with the Secretary of State for reconsideration at the next regular or special session.

**Step 9 - Override of Veto**

The General Assembly may override a veto by vote of a majority of all members elected in each house (51 in the House, 26 in the Senate). If either house votes to sustain the veto, the bill dies at that point.