

Tracking a Bill through the General Assembly

Idea

Legislator sees need for a new law or changes in existing law and decides to introduce a bill.

Drafting

Legislator goes to Office of Legislative Counsel. There, attorney advises legislator on legal issues and drafts bill.

Introduction and First Reading

Legislator files bill with the Clerk of the House or Secretary of the Senate. On legislative day after filing, bill is formally introduced. In chamber, bill's title is read during period of first readings. Immediately after first reading, presiding officer assigns bill to a standing committee.

Second Reading

In the House only, on next legislative day, Clerk reads bill's title (second reading) in chamber, although actual bill is now in committee. In Senate, second reading comes after bill is reported favorably from committee.

Committee Action

Bill considered by committee. Author and other legislators may testify. If controversial, public hearings may be held. Final Committee action reported in a written report. Committee options are:

- Recommend Bill or Resolution Do Pass;
- Recommend Do NOT Pass;
- Recommend Do Pass with changes (amendments or substitutes);
- Hold Bill.

Third Reading and Passage

Clerk or Secretary prepares a General Calendar of bills favorably reported from committee.

- Legislation which was second read the day before is placed on a calendar in numeric order for floor action prior to the the Rules Committee meeting to choose bills for consideration.

- After a certain point, set by rule, the Rules Committee meets and prepares a Rules Calendar for the next day's floor consideration from bills on General Calendar.
- The presiding officer calls up bills from the Rules Calendar for floor action in order as they appear on this calendar.

Once presiding officer calls bill up from Rules Calendar, Clerk or Secretary reads bill's title (third reading). Bill is now ready for floor debate, amendments, and voting. After debate, main question is called and members vote. If bill is approved by majority of total membership of that house, it is sent to the other house.

Transmittal to the Other Chamber

Bill is passed if:

- If second chamber passes bill, it is returned to chamber where bill was introduced.
- If first chamber rejects changes and second chamber insists, a conference committee may be appointed. Committee report is accepted by both chambers.

Governor's Signature/Veto

Governor may sign bill or do nothing, and bill becomes law. Governor may veto bill, which requires two-thirds of members of each house to override.

Act

Act and other laws enacted at the session are printed in the Georgia Laws series. Also, act is incorporated into the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. Act becomes effective the following July 1, unless a different effective date is provided in act.