



HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

The Washington State Legislature is made up of two houses (or chambers), the Senate and the House of Representatives. Washington has 49 legislative districts, each of which elects a Senator and two Representatives. Senators serve four-year terms and Representatives serve two-year terms. The Senate and House of Representatives meet in session each year to create new laws, change existing laws, and enact budgets for the State.

The legislative cycle is two years long. Within that two-year cycle, there are two kinds of legislative sessions: regular sessions and extraordinary, or special, sessions. Regular sessions are mandated by the State Constitution and begin the second Monday in January each year. In the odd-numbered year, for example, 2005, the regular session is 105 days; in the even-numbered year, for example, 2006, it is 60 days. Extraordinary sessions are called by the Governor to address specific issues, usually the budget. There can be any number of extraordinary sessions within the two-year cycle, and they can last no more than 30 days. To see the legislative calendar for the most recent session, go to the [Cut-off Calendar](#) on the Agendas, Schedules, and Calendars page.

The members of the House and Senate offer legislation, or [bills](#), for consideration. The ideas for bills come from a number of places: something has happened in the last year that inspires new legislation (for instance, the change in people's perception of crime gave rise to the youth violence bills that were offered during the 1994 Session), a member wishes to address an issue that is specific to his or her district, the Legislature decides to tackle a major issue (such as regulatory reform), changes in technology dictate a change in the State's laws, etc.

Once a member introduces a bill, the legislative process begins. The process has a number of specific steps. If the bill makes it through all the steps in the chamber in which it was introduced (the "first house"), it goes to the other chamber (or "second house") and goes through the same steps there. Each step is identified and explained below.

Prefiling: Members can pre-file bills for introduction in the month before session begins. Prefiled bills are officially introduced on the first day of the session.

Introduction, or First Reading: The first thing that happens to bills on the "floor" is introduction and referral to committee. This is also referred to as the bill's first reading. (Bills must have three readings in each house in order to pass the Legislature.)

Leadership determines which committees bills will be referred to; this is usually determined by the bill's subject matter. Bills that require an appropriation or that raise revenue must also go to a fiscal committee for review.

To see which bills will be introduced for the upcoming legislative day, go to the [Agendas, Schedules, and Calendars](#) page and display House Introductions or Senate Introductions.

Committee Action: The chair of each committee works with leadership and staff to schedule bills to be heard by the committee. Committees hold three kinds of meetings: (1) work sessions, where issues are determined and reviewed; (2) public hearings, where testimony from interested parties is taken; and (3) executive sessions, where the committee decides how it will report the bill to the whole house. Not all bills get scheduled for hearing, so a good number of bills never get any further than committee.

Bills can be reported in several fashions, the most usual being do pass (pass the bill just as it is), do pass as amended (pass the bill as amended by the committee), and do pass substitute (the committee offers a different version to take the place of the original bill). The members on the prevailing side sign the "majority" report; those members who disagree with the majority sign the "minority" report. Not all bills coming out of committee have minority reports. To see a list of bills reported out of the House or Senate committee each day, go to [Standing Committee Reports](#).

As a bill moves through the committee process, the staff prepares the "bill report." The bill report includes a legislative history of the bill, background on the issue, a summary of the legislation, the names of those who testified on the bill, and a summary of the testimony for and against the bill. The bill report is edited as the bill moves through the process.

When the bill moves to the opposite house, that house prepares a bill report as well. A bill that has finally passed the Legislature would have House, Senate, and Final bill reports.

At the start of the session, both houses agree on dates by which bills have to be reported out of committee in order to be eligible for further consideration by the Legislature. There is a "cut-off" date for bills to be out of committee in the first house and one for bills to be out of committee in the second house.

Rules Committee: Once a bill has been reported by the appropriate committee(s), the floor acts on the committee report and then passes the bill to the Rules Committee. Usually, the floor adopts the committee's recommendation.

The Rules Committee is where leadership exercises the most control over the process. The Rules Committee is made up of members from both parties. Each member on the committee gets to select two or three bills that will move on to the next step in the process. Which bills a member selects could be the result of a party caucus, or another member approaching that member, or a piece of legislation about which the member feels strongly.

Rules Review /Rules White: The first step in the Rules Committee process is called Rules Review in the House and Rules White in the Senate (the report that lists the bills in this step in the Senate is printed on white paper). Rules Committee members review the bills and decide whether or not to move them on to the next step.

Rules Consideration /Rules Green: The next step is called Rules Consideration in the House and Rules Green in the Senate (the report is printed on green paper). Sometimes bills skip this step and go to the calendar for second reading. It is another step that allows leadership to control the process.

Calendars/Bill Report Books: The Rules Committee decides which bills will be scheduled for a second reading. Those bills that will probably require some debate are placed on the regular calendar. Those that are probably not controversial may be placed on the suspension calendar in the House, the consent calendar in the Senate. The Rules Committee also decides whether a bill will be placed on the regular calendar or the suspension/consent calendar.

Each house prepares documents that list the bills scheduled to be heard on the floor. The House prepares "bill report books" (containing an order of contents and the bill report of each bill on the calendar) and "floor calendars" (a list of the bills, a brief description for each, and the committee action on each). The Senate prepares "calendars" (with an order of contents and the bill report of each bill), and "flash calendars" (the list with the brief descriptions and committee actions). The Senate flash calendar lists only those bills that were "pulled" from Rules at the last Rules Committee meeting. To see which bills are on the calendar in either house, go to [House Floor Activity Report](#) or [Senate Floor Activity Report](#).

Second Reading: It is on the second reading that the chamber discusses the merits of the legislation. It is here, too, where members can offer amendments to the bill. Most bills that get this far get their second reading in the couple of weeks following the committee cut-off.

If a bill has been amended in committee or on the floor in the first house, it is ordered engrossed. Engrossing a bill means incorporating the amendments into the body of the bill so that the second house gets one document. If a bill has been amended in the

second house, it is returned to the first house with the amendments attached so that the first house can decide whether or not it wishes to agree with the changes the second house-made.

Third Reading: Third reading is where the roll call vote on final passage is taken. If the bill finally passes, it continues in the process. If the bill fails on final passage, it goes no further. Under certain circumstances, the chamber may decide to reconsider the vote that was taken; in that case, the chamber has twenty-four hours to make a motion to reconsider the bill.

If the bill passes the third reading in the second house and the second house did not amend the bill, the bill has passed the Legislature.

At the start of the session, both houses agree on "cut-off" dates by which bills have to be finally passed out of the first house and finally passed out of the second house.

Concurrence, Dispute, and Conference Committees: If the bill has been amended by the second house, the first house has to decide whether it will concur with the amendments or not. Leadership decides which bills returned from the second house will be discussed and places those bills on the concurrence calendar (House) or concurring calendar (Senate). If the first house concurs in the amendments, the bill has passed the Legislature.

If the first house disagrees with the second house, it can ask the second house to recede from the amendments. If the second house recedes, the bill has passed the Legislature.

If the two houses cannot resolve their differences, one of them can ask for a conference committee. Members from each house meet to discuss the differences. If they agree on what is to be done, the conference committee makes a report. Both houses must adopt the conference committee report for the bill to pass the Legislature. If one house does not adopt the conference committee report (whether by vote or inaction), the bill has not passed. The House Floor Activity Report and the Senate Floor Activity Report list the bills on the concurrence, dispute, and conference calendars.

Enrolling: Once a bill has finally passed the Legislature, it is enrolled. A certificate proclaiming that it has passed is attached and, if necessary, the amendments from the second house or conference committee are incorporated into the body of the bill. The bill is signed by the Speaker of the House, the Chief Clerk of the House, the President of the Senate, and the Secretary of the Senate and is sent to the Governor for his or her action.

Governor's actions: The Governor reviews the bill. The Governor may decide to sign it, veto part of it, or veto all of it. If the Governor vetoes part or all of it, the Legislature may vote to override the veto. (That happens rarely.) If the governor does not act on a bill after

the allotted number of days, it is as if it was signed. From the Governor's desk, bills go to the Secretary of State who assigns a session law chapter number. The Chapter to Bill Table (available on the [Bill/Law Cross Reference](#) page) lists the bills that have passed the Legislature, the chapter numbers assigned by the Secretary of State, vetoes, short descriptions, and the effective dates.

Carryover: The Legislature works within the framework of a two-year cycle. For instance, the 2005-06 Session is the 59th Session of the Legislature. There will be at least two regular sessions, a "long" session in 2005 (105 days) and a "short" session in 2006 (60 days). There could also be any number of special sessions, none of which can last longer than 30 days.

Therefore, just because a bill did not make it all the way through during the regular session in the odd-numbered year (for example, 2005) does not mean it is "dead." At the end of the session, all bills in the second house are returned to the first house; so a House bill in committee in the Senate when session ends is returned to the House. At the start of the next session, be it a special session or the next regular session, bills from the previous session are reintroduced and retained in their present position.

"Carryover" bills can be taken up again in subsequent sessions during the biennium. The Legislature has a lot of latitude with these bills. The first house can place the bill on the calendar for a third reading and send it right back to the second house, or it can make the bill go to committee and through the whole process again.

This is in addition to the new bills introduced during the current session. This procedure can make it difficult to keep track of bills during a special session or the second regular session. If a bill does not make it through the process by the end of the two-year cycle, it is "dead."

HOW TO READ A BILL

SENATE BILL 7999

BILL NUMBER: Each bill is assigned a number for identification.

State of Washington 59th Legislature 2005 Regular Session

PRIME SPONSOR: The member of the Legislature who first introduced the bill.

By Senators Green and Blue (by request of Department of _____)

CO-SPONSOR(S): The member(s) of the Legislature who join the prime sponsor in introducing the legislation.

Read first time 01/10/2005. Referred to Committee on Government Operations & Elections.

1 AN ACT Relating to the board of accountancy; amending RCW
2 18.04.180; adding a new section to chapter 18.04 RCW; repealing RCW
3 18.04.183 and 18.04.320; and providing an effective date.

AGENCY REQUEST: Indicates that bill was requested by an executive branch agency (legislative sponsor still required).

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 18.04.180 and 2004 c 159 s 3 are each amended to read
6 as follows:

REFERRAL: The date the bill was introduced and to which committee it was referred.

7 (1) The board shall issue a license to a holder of a
8 certificate/valid license issued by another state that entitles the
9 holder to practice public accountancy, provided that:

BILL TITLE: Identifies the subject of the legislation and how it affects the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

10 (a) Such state makes similar provision to grant reciprocity to a
11 holder of a valid certificate or license in this state;

12 (b) The applicant meets the CPE requirements of RCW 18.04.215(5);

13 (c) The applicant meets the good character requirements of RCW
14 18.04.105(1) (a); and

ENACTING CLAUSE: This states who intends to make this bill a law. It will either be by the people of the state or by the Legislature.

15 (d) The applicant passed the examination required for issuance of
16 his or her certificate or license with grades that would have been
17 passing grades at that time in this state and meets all current
18 requirements in this state for issuance of a license at the time
19 application is made; or at the time of the issuance of the applicant's
20 license in the other state, met all the requirements then applicable in
21 this state; or has three years of experience within the five years
22 immediately preceding application or had five years of experience
23 within the ten years immediately preceding application in the practice
24 of public accountancy that meets the requirements prescribed by the
25 board.

AMENDATORY HEADING: Also known as the "jingle," recites both the most recent session law and RCW citation being amended.

26 (2) The board may accept NASBA's designation of the applicant as
27 substantially equivalent to national standards as meeting the
28 requirement of subsection (1)(d) of this section.

EXISTING LAW: The text of the current RCW to be amended.

29 (3) A licensee who has been granted a license under the reciprocity
30 provisions of this section shall notify the board within (~~(thirty)~~)
31 ~~sixty~~ days if the license or certificate issued in the other
32 jurisdiction has lapsed or if the status of the license or certificate
33 issued in the other jurisdiction becomes otherwise invalid.

DELETED LANGUAGE: Lined-out phrases are proposed deletions to existing law.

34
35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 18.04 RCW
36 to read as follows:

NEW LANGUAGE: Underlined phrases are proposed new language to existing law.

37 Each member of the board shall be compensated in accordance with
38 RCW 43.03.240 and shall be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in
39 the discharge of such duties in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and
40 43.03.060.

NEW SECTION: Proposed new language to be added as a new section to the existing RCW.

41 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The following acts or parts of acts are each
42 repealed:

REPEALER: The section of a bill that lists which RCW sections are to be removed from state law by the proposed legislation.

43 (1) RCW 18.04.183 (Accountants from foreign countries) and 2001 c
44 294 s 9, 1999 c 378 s 3, & 1992 c 103 s 18; and

45 (2) RCW 18.04.320 (Actions against license--Procedures) and 1986 c
46 295 s 13, 1983 c 234 s 14, & 1949 c 226 s 31.

47
48 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act takes effect July 1, 2006.
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EFFECTIVE DATE: The date the bill becomes a law.

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HOW TO READ A BILL

TYPES OF MEASURES

Bill: A proposed law presented to the Legislature for consideration; it may originate in either house.

Joint Memorial: A message or petition addressed to the president, Congress, or the head of any other agency of the federal or state government, asking for consideration of some matter of concern to the state or region. Proposed amendments to the U.S. Constitution are also in the form of joint memorials.

Joint Resolution: An act of the legislature which proposes an amendment to the state constitution for reference to the people for acceptance or rejection. Joint resolutions must receive a two-thirds affirmative vote in each house.

Concurrent Resolution: A resolution relating to the internal operation of the legislature, in which one house concurs in the action of the other; it may originate in either house.

Floor Resolution: A resolution adopted by either house usually honoring or commemorating an individual, organization, or event. It also may call for some type of action.

Initiative: A legislative power vested in the people. There are two types: (1) initiative to the people, which goes directly to the voters without consideration by the legislature; and (2) initiative to the legislature, which is considered by the legislature at its next regular session, and if not enacted, is placed on the next general election ballot.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Amendment: Any change in a bill, resolution or memorial. A committee amendment is an amendment proposed in a committee meeting. A floor amendment is an amendment proposed on the floor of a legislative chamber.

Striking Amendment: Amendment removing everything after the title and inserting a whole new bill.

HB: Abbreviation for House Bill.

SB: Abbreviation for Senate Bill.

S (Substitute): A new bill is proposed by a committee to replace the original one. The substitution must be approved by the entire body.

E (Engrossed): Incorporates amendments that were passed by the house of origin (where the bill was introduced).

Scope and Object: If an amendment offered to a proposed bill does not relate closely to the content of the bill, a member may raise "scope and object." The president then rules if the amendment is "in order" or "out of order."

Enacted: When a bill is passed by both houses of the legislature and signed by the governor.

New Section: Proposed new language to be added as a new section to existing law.

Veto: Partial or complete rejection of a bill by the governor. The governor has the power to veto sections of bills but cannot make any additions.

Override: The legislature can override the governor's veto with a two-thirds vote of both houses.