



Louisiana State Legislature Primer

Snapshot of How A Bill Becomes Law in Louisiana

IDEA

All legislation begins as an idea. Ideas can come from anyone. The process begins when someone persuades a Senator or Representative to author a bill.

AUTHOR

A legislator sends the idea and sometimes the language for the bill to the Legislative staff where it is drafted into the actual bill. The drafted bill is returned to the legislator for introduction.

FIRST READING

A bill's first reading is when the Clerk reads the bill number, the name of the author, and the descriptive title of the bill in the chamber while the legislators are on the floor. The bill then remains on the docket until the second reading.

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

The bill then goes to the Senate or House Rules Committee where it is assigned to the appropriate standing committee for its first hearing. Bills are assigned according to subject area. During the hearing, the author presents the bill, people testify in support or opposition of the bill, and the committee acts on the bill. The committee can pass the bill, pass the bill as amended, or defeat the bill. It takes a majority vote of the membership of the committee to pass a bill. Bills which require money must also be heard in the Senate Finance committee, or House Appropriation Committee.

SECOND AND THIRD READING

Bills passed by committees are read a second time in the house of origin and then placed in the Daily Digest on Third Reading. When a bill is read the third time it is explained by the author, discussed by the Members and voted on by a roll call vote. Bills generally require a majority vote of the body to be passed out of the chamber.

REPEAT PROCESS IN OTHER HOUSE

Once the bill has been approved by the house of origin it proceeds to the other house where the procedure is repeated.

RESOLUTION OF DIFFERENCES

If a bill is amended in the second house, it must go back to the house of origin for concurrence, which is agreement on the amendments. If agreement cannot be reached, the bill moves to a two house conference committee consisting of two Senators and two Representatives to resolve differences. If a compromise is reached, the conference report is voted upon in both houses.

GOVERNOR

The bill then goes to the Governor. The Governor has three choices. He or she can sign the bill into law, veto the bill, or allow it to become law without his or her signature or veto it. A governor's veto can be overridden by a two-thirds vote in both houses. Most bills go into effect on August 1 of the next year. Urgency measures take effect immediately upon being signed by the Governor and chaptered by the Secretary of State.

The Louisiana Legislature's Standing Committees

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- Administration of Criminal Justice
- Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture and Rural
- Appropriations
- Civil Law and Procedure
- Commerce
- Education
- Health and Welfare
- House and Governmental Affairs
- Insurance
- Judiciary
- Labor and Industrial Relations
- Municipal, Parochial, and Cultural Affairs
- Natural Resources and Environment
- Retirement
- Transportation, Highways, and Public Works
- Ways and Means

SENATE

- Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture and Rural
- Commerce, Consumer Protection and International Affairs
- Education
- Environmental Quality
- Finance
- Health and Welfare
- Insurance
- Judiciary A
- Judiciary B
- Judiciary C
- Labor and Industrial Relations
- Local and Municipal Affairs
- Natural Resources
- Retirement
- Revenue and Fiscal Affairs
- Senate and Governmental Affairs
- Transportation, Highways, and Public Works

SAMPLE COMMITTEE ANALYSIS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS AND REAPPORTIONMENT

SUSAN SMITH, CHAIR

SUBJECT: Student poll workers

EXISTING LAW:

Existing law requires members of precinct boards (poll workers) to be registered to vote in the precinct in which he or she is assigned or in a precinct in the same general area.

PROPOSED LAW:

This bill would allow students to serve as members of precinct boards whether or not they are registered voters. Student poll workers must be at least 16 years of age and be a student in good standing attending a public or private secondary or post-secondary educational institution. No more than two students may serve at the same precinct. Students must also receive approval from their school board to participate.

COMMENTS:

1. According to the author, this bill is intended to address the problems of low voter turnout among 18-21 year olds and counties' difficulties staffing polling places on election day.

POSITIONS:

Sponsor: Author

Support: Secretary of State California
School Boards Association
California Coalition of Hispanic Organizations
California Common Cause

Opposition: Unknown

HEARING DATE: May 5, 2016