

# Steps of the Legislative Path in Maine

## 1 IDEA DEVELOPMENT

Legislator decides to sponsor or cosponsor a bill. The idea could be an "Ask" from a constituent, public official or Governor. Co-sponsorship of a bill can be from either chamber.

## 2 BILL DRAFTED

A draft proposal is reviewed for proper technical format through Revisor's Office, Office of Policy, Legal Analysis and the Office of Fiscal and Program Review.

## 3 BILL INTRODUCED

The legislator (sponsor) of the bill gives it to the Clerk of the House or Senate. The bill is numbered, and a suggested committee is recommended. The bill is printed and added to the committee or respected body for initial review.

## 4 COMMITTEE REFERENCE

The bill is referred to one of the Joint Standing or Joint Select committees in the originating branch and then sent to the other body for concurrence.

## 5 COMMITTEE ACTION

When scheduled by the chairs, the committee conducts a public hearing where it accepts testimony in support or opposition to the proposed legislation. Notice of public hearings are printed in newspapers or shared on statewide media outlets letting the public be aware.

## 6 GENERAL ORDER

When the bill is reported to the floor it receives its first reading and any committee amendments are adopted at this time. The committee reports the bill to the originating body as is, with amendment, with a divided report or with a unanimous recommendation of Ought Not to Pass.

## 7 SECOND READING

The next legislative day the bill is given its second reading and floor amendments may be offered. When one chamber has passed the bill to be engrossed, it is sent to the other body for its consideration. The House has a consent calendar for unanimous Ought to Pass or Ought to Pass as amended bills which takes the place of First and Second readings.

## 8 SECOND CHAMBER

The bill goes through a similar process. If the second chamber amends the bill, it is returned to the first chamber for a vote on the changes. It may then be sent to a conference committee to work out a compromise agreeable to both chambers. A bill receives final legislative approval when it passes both chambers in identical form.

## 9 GOVERNOR

After final passage (enactment) the bill is sent to the Governor. The Governor has ten days in which to sign or veto the bill. If the Governor does not sign the bill and the Legislature is still in session, the bill after ten days becomes law as if the Governor signed it. If the Legislature has adjourned for the year the bill does not become law. This is called a "pocket veto." If the Legislature comes back into special session, the Governor on the 4th day must deliver a veto message to the chamber of origin or the bill becomes law.

A bill becomes law 90 days after the end of the legislative session in which it was passed. A bill can become law immediately if the Legislature, by a 2/3 vote of each chamber, declares that an emergency exists. An emergency law takes effect on the date the Governor signs it unless otherwise specified in its text. If a bill is vetoed, it will become law if the Legislature overrides the veto by a 2/3 vote of those members present and voting of both chambers

Maine Law