



It begins with an IDEA

Community groups and individuals work with legislators to propose laws they think would aid their communities. Legislators then draft the proposals into bills with the help of legal specialists, and work to move the initiatives through the legislative process.

FIRST READING

Once a bill has received a bill number and has been introduced, it is assigned to a standing committee in its house of origin. Standing committees cover specific fields of interest such as education, health, and finance.

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Committee members debate the merits of each proposed bill during public hearings. Citizens are encouraged to attend these hearings and offer opinions on pending legislation. Bills may be altered during this part of the process. After testimony has been received and discussion has taken place, committee members vote on each proposal. Approved proposals are eligible to proceed to the chamber floor for second reading.

SECOND READING

At this stage of the legislative process, bills are considered by the full Senate or House chamber (in its house of origin). Any member may offer amendments from the chamber floor. Amendments that are approved are incorporated into the legislation.

THIRD READING

Each member has an opportunity to speak on the merits of a bill before casting a vote to approve or defeat the final draft. A majority vote sends the legislation to the opposite chamber, where the process is repeated.

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OPPOSITE CHAMBER



CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

Conference committees are comprised of four members: two from each chamber and each political party. These committees negotiate the differences in a bill and develop compromise language. Committee reports must be approved by both chambers before the legislation can proceed to the governor.

GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE

Once the governor receives legislation that has been approved by both chambers, he or she has seven days to sign the bill into law, let it become law without a signature or veto the bill. A vetoed bill may still become law if 51 representatives and 26 senators vote to override the governor's veto.

BE A PART OF THE PROCESS

Openness is the strength of our democracy. You can help your legislators be more effective for your community by contacting them about the issues that are important to you and your family. Your feedback ensures these issues receive the attention they deserve at the Statehouse.

THE BRIEFING ROOM Senate Democrats
Blog site INSENDEMS.WORDPRESS.COM

The Indiana General Assembly is composed of 150 men and women representing a variety of occupations. Indiana has a part-time citizen legislature, so legislators spend part of their time in Indianapolis and the other part at home in their communities as professionals in jobs such as teachers, police officers, attorneys and farmers. They are elected to represent the needs and concerns of Hoosiers across Indiana.

The Indiana General Assembly meets every year. During odd-numbered years, when the state budget is crafted, state law requires lawmakers adjourn by April 29. During even-numbered years, the state legislature must conclude the people's business by March 14.

Members of the Senate are elected for four year terms, but not all at the same time; 25 of the 50 senators are elected every two years. All 100 members of the House are elected every two years.

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HOW BILLS BECOME LAWS

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