

HIGH-LEVEL OVERVIEW OF THE LAWMAKING PROCESS

Youth Advocacy 101

What is a bill? A bill is a proposed law that is formally introduced in a governmental body for consideration. It can be a new law or a change to an existing one. Proposed laws can come from various sources, including individual lawmakers, government departments, committees or even community groups.

THE BILL IS INTRODUCED TO CONGRESS

A bill can be introduced in either chamber of Congress (House or Senate) by a representative or senator who sponsors it.



THE BILL IS ASSIGNED TO A COMMITTEE



Once a bill is introduced, it is assigned to a committee whose members will research, discuss and make changes to the bill.

THE FIRST CHAMBER (HOUSE OR SENATE) VOTES ON THE BILL

The bill is then presented to that chamber to be voted on.



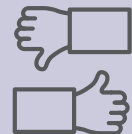
CROSSOVER



If the bill passes one body of Congress, it goes to the other body to go through a similar process of research, discussion, changes and voting.

THE SECOND CHAMBER (HOUSE OR SENATE) VOTES ON THE BILL

Once both bodies vote to accept a bill, they must work out any differences between the two versions. They vote again, and, if it passes, they present it to the president.



PRESIDENT SIGNS THE BILL INTO LAW



The president then considers the bill. The president can approve the bill and sign it into law or not approve (veto) a bill.

This handout describes how a bill becomes a federal law. Before participating in local advocacy, take the time to learn how laws are made by your town, city, county, state or tribal government.