

KFTC GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2019

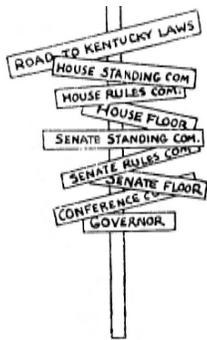
ORGANIZING ACADEMY

How a Bill Becomes a Law in Kentucky

① The first step is to start with an idea. Many ideas come from legislators, but the public may also suggest new laws and even write proposed legislation.



② When people have an idea for a new law, they must find a legislator willing to act as its sponsor in the General Assembly. Every bill must have a sponsor, and a bill can have several cosponsors. Similar bills can have sponsors in both the House and the Senate.



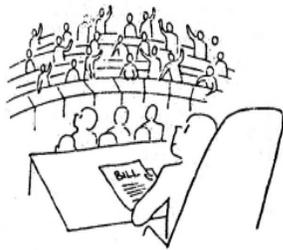
⑤ Many, but not all, bills have a hearing before a standing committee and are approved or not approved by a majority vote of committee members. A bill may be amended or completely rewritten by the committee. The committee chairperson sometimes chooses not to bring up a bill as a way to kill it. Committee hearings are open to the public, and interested parties may testify for or against a bill at the discretion of the chairperson.



③ The legislator asks the Legislative Research Commission (LRC) to put the idea into legal language, or to draft a bill. The LRC may do any necessary research, note any projected fiscal impact, and make sure the idea does not conflict with any existing laws.

⑥ After approval by a standing committee, the bill goes to the Rules Committee, which may refer it to the full membership (floor) or send it back to another standing committee for further consideration (a tactic sometimes used to kill a bill). The Rules Committee has a lot of power.

④ Next, the bill is introduced into the General Assembly, either in the House or the Senate, depending on whether the sponsor is a representative or senator (all revenue measures must originate in the House). The bill first goes to the Committee on Committees, which assigns it to a standing committee. Some bills may be pre-filed in the interim between legislative sessions but may only be passed while the legislature is in session.



⑧ At any step in the process, a bill may be modified or amended. If different versions of the same bill pass each chamber, a conference committee made up of senators and representatives is formed to reach a compromise. A compromise bill must pass both chambers again. If it does, it is sent to the governor. A final bill may look a lot different than how it was first introduced.

⑨ The governor has 10 days to sign a bill or it becomes law automatically. The governor may veto a bill if he or she opposes it.

⑦ If a bill gets through the Rules Committee, it is sent to the House or Senate floor, where it is supposed to be read and voted on. Amendments can be and often are proposed on the floor. Sometimes legislative leaders refuse to allow a bill or amendments to be voted on. If a bill receives a majority vote, it is sent to the other legislative chamber, where it must go through a similar process of hearings and votes.

⑩ The legislature may override a veto if at least 50 percent of the members in both chambers vote to do so. New laws take effect 90 days after the legislature adjourns unless a bill passed with an emergency clause, whereby it takes effect immediately.

