

# Making a Law – Step 1: Legislative

Legislation may begin in either chamber. Similar proposals are often introduced in both chambers. (For this example, assume it is first introduced in the House of Representatives.)

- A bill is introduced in the House
  - Bill is referred to the **appropriate committee** or subcommittee
    - ↳ Content specialists on the committee closely examine the bill, and hold hearings.
  - Bills voted on favorably are sent to the **House Rules Committee**.
    - ↳ The House Rules Committee is a very powerful committee
      - ↳ It is dominated by long-serving members from non-competitive districts.
      - ↳ Majority of committee needed to send it to the House floor.
        - ↳ The only way to overturn their 'no' is a petition of 218 House members!  
*\*If it makes it out of the House Rules Committee, the leadership schedules the bill for floor consideration.*
  - The House debates and can amend the bill. House votes. A simple majority is needed to pass

A similar or identical bill is introduced in the Senate.

\*Goes through a nearly identical process, but in the Senate. In vote, a simple majority is needed

- Bills must pass both the House and Senate in identical form before being presented to the President.

This is achieved through one of following:

- One chamber agrees to the other chambers' version of the bill
- Each chamber exchange amendments to the bill and reach agreement.
  - ↳ In other words, amendments to one version of the bill are considered and voted whether or not to be attached to the other version of the bill.
- Each chamber appoints a Conference Committee, which **reconciles** differences and agrees to a conference report.
  - ↳ Each chamber then needs to vote to approve the conference report.

## Making a Law – Step 2: Executive

- The legislation is presented to the President
  - ↳ If the president **signs** the legislation, the bill becomes law
  - ↳ The president may **veto** the bill
    - ↳ The president's veto is typically sustained. Historically, presidents' vetoes have prevailed 96 percent of the time
      - ↳ If the president vetoes the legislation, both chambers of Congress may override the veto with a **two-thirds majority** (67 votes in Senate, 290 in House)
      - ↳ If the president does not sign the legislation into law within 10 days, but does not formally veto it either . . .
        - ↳ If Congress is in session, the measure becomes law.
        - ↳ If Congress is not in session, the measure does not become law (“Pocket Veto”)