

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW IN THE IOWA LEGISLATURE

Having a basic understanding of the Legislative process is a critical element in any successful advocacy effort. The lowa Legislature has two separate but equal chambers; the lowa Senate and the lowa House of Representatives. There are 100 House members and 50 Senate members. lowa House members serve two year terms and lowa Senate members serve four year terms.

A legislative Session is two years long with the first year of the cycle being longer than the second year. The second year of the cycle always occurs during an election year. The Legislative Session timetable always begins on the second Monday in January. Sessions typically end sometime in April.

Thousands of bills and amendments are drafted and filed each year. Only a fraction of the proposals, something like 1 in 10 ever make it through the entire process to become law. Below is a summarized process:

Bills **originate** from being sponsored by a Senator or Representative or by a Senate or House Committee. The Governor may also have a bill drafted but it must be sponsored by a committee chair.

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Ideas for bills come from constituents, businesses, government agencies, interest groups, etc.



The **bill** is sent to the **Governor** for his or her approval or veto.

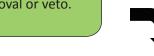


The **bill must pass both chambers**,
House and Senate, in

the identical form.



Bills must be approved by a subcommittee and full committee process prior to debate on the House or Senate floor. Any legislator can file an amendment to any bill once it gets to the floor.



Bills normally become law on July 1 following their approval, unless another date is specified in the bill.

Rules, procedures and deadlines keep the process moving during the Legislative Session.





The **bill is submitted** and assigned a number. The bill's number, title and sponsor's name is read to the Senate or House.

The President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House assigns the bill to a committee for review. A system of Policy Committees and Appropriations (budget) committees debate bills and amendments.