

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

START
HERE

CONCEPT

A lawmaker submits an idea or bill language to the Bill Drafting Commission where it is drafted into formal language. **ACTION:** Big I NY works with our agent members to identify problems to be solved and develops legislative language. Agents contact prospective sponsors and explain the issue and the need for a solution.

INTRODUCTION

Once drafted, the bill is introduced and given a bill number. Bills can be introduced in the Senate, Assembly, or both houses concurrently.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT

The bill is “referred” to the committee with jurisdiction over the appropriate subject matter. For many of our bills, this is the Insurance Committee. **ACTION:** Agents contact committee members and urge them to support the bill.

BILL SENT TO GOVERNOR

Once a bill has passed both houses, the bill may now be sent to the governor. This can be instantaneous or can take as long as several months. Typically, a bill is not sent to the governor until they “call” for it. During this time the Governor’s staff reviews the passed bills. **ACTION:** Agents contact the governor and urge them to sign or veto the bill.

CONSIDERATION BY OTHER HOUSE

Once a bill has passed one chamber, it must complete the same process (introduction, committee vote, floor vote) in the other house. Often bills will be introduced in both houses concurrently (referred to as “same-as” bills) and advanced concurrently to speed the process.

FLOOR VOTE

Once the bill has cleared all relevant committees, it must pass a floor vote by the full chamber (Senate or Assembly). To be voted on, the bill must be placed on the “active list” by the legislative leader (Senate Majority Leader or Assembly Speaker). Once a bill is brought for a vote, legislators will debate the bill before voting. **ACTION:** Agents contact legislative leaders and urge them to put the bill on the active list. Contact rank and file members and urge them to vote in support of the bill.

COMMITTEE ACTION

If there is enough support, the bill will be scheduled for a committee vote. If the bill fails this vote, it is “dead” for the session. If it passes, it will either be reported to another committee (if the bill affects multiple jurisdictions) or reported to the floor. **ACTION:** agents contact committee members and urge them to vote in support of the bill.

CHAPTER AMENDMENTS

If the governor objects to certain parts of a bill, they may negotiate with the legislature to create “chapter amendments.” These are changes to the bill that parties agree will be made once the bill is signed into law.

EXECUTIVE ACTION

Once called, the governor must sign or veto the bill within 10 days. If no action is taken within this time, the bill is automatically approved (“pocket approval”). If the legislature is out of session and no action is taken, the bill is automatically vetoed (“pocket veto”).

LEGISLATIVE OVERRIDE

The legislature can override the governor’s action by a two-thirds majority in both houses.

LEGAL CHALLENGE

Once a law is enacted, its constitutionality can be challenged in court. The courts may uphold the law or invalidate it in part or entirely.

BIG I
NEW YORK