How a Bill Becomes a Law

1. Legislator sees need for a new law or changes in existing law and decides to introduce a bill.

2. Legislator goes to Office of Legislative Counsel. There, attorney advises legislator on legal issues and drafts bill.

3. On legislative day after filing, bill is formally introduced. In chamber, bill’s title is read during period of first readings.

4. Immediately after first reading, presiding officer assigns bill to a standing committee.

5. In the House only, on next legislative day, clerk reads bill’s title (second reading) in chamber, although actual bill is now in committee. In Senate, second reading comes after bill is reported favorably from committee.

6. Clerk or secretary prepares a general calendar of bills favorably reported from committee.

7. Bill is reported favorably by committee and returned to clerk or secretary.

8. Bill considered by committee. Author and other legislators may testify if controversial, public hearings may be held.

9. The Rules Committee of each chamber meets and from bills on general calendar prepares a rules calendar for the next day’s floor consideration.

10. Presiding officer calls up bills from the rules calendar for floor consideration.

11. Once presiding officer calls bill up from rules calendar, clerk or secretary reads bill’s title (third reading). Bill is now ready for floor debate, amendments, and voting.

12. After debate, main question is called and members vote. If bill is approved by majority of total membership of that chamber, it is sent to the other chamber.

13. If second chamber passes bill, it is returned to chamber where bill was introduced. If changes are accepted, ... If first chamber rejects changes and second chamber insists, a conference committee may be appointed. If committee report is accepted by both chambers, ...

14. Bill is enrolled and sent to the governor (if requested). Otherwise, all enrolled bills sent to governor following adjournment sine die.

15. Governor may sign bill or do nothing, and bill becomes law. Governor may veto bill, which requires two-thirds of members of each chamber to override.

16. Acts and other laws enacted during the session are printed in the Georgia Laws series. Also, act is incorporated into the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. Act becomes effective the following July 1, unless a different effective date is provided in act.