

## How Laws are Passed in Congress

Following is the typical way legislation is enacted into law, although not every bill will follow this exact route. Laws governing taxes, for instance, must always originate in the House. Most bills never become law – they either never make it out of committee, or they are stopped by a Senate filibuster, delay, lack of votes, dissention between the houses, or they are killed by a presidential veto.

Most legislation begins as similar proposals in both houses.



After a bill is introduced by a Senator or Representative, it is assigned to the appropriate committee, according to subject area, for mark-up. Here it is studied and rewritten. Hearings are held to solicit both public and special-interest views.

During mark-up, the committee considers the specific language of a bill and may amend or change it. If the bill is passed by the committee, it goes to the floor for general debate and action.

Once both the House and Senate pass a bill, a conference committee made up of both Senators and Representatives works out any differences between the House-passed and Senate-passed versions.

The final conference version must be approved by both houses; then the bill goes to the President to be signed into law. The President may veto the bill; in that case, a two-thirds vote in both the House and Senate is required to override the veto and for the bill to become law



President signs the bill into law.