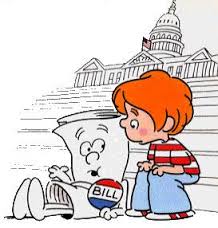
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DOC – How a Bill Becomes a Law

[](http://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=i'm+just+a+bill&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CAcQjRw&url=http%3A%2F%2Fdecodingdyslexiaks.wordpress.com%2F2013%2F01%2F20%2Fim-just-a-bill-schoolhouse-rock%2F&ei=wqFGVJy-K4jLsAS37IHIDQ&bvm=bv.77880786,d.cWc&psig=AFQjCNHwhDgftxjvEEvEebwarN4aOQn9hw&ust=1414001335370779)

**Schoolhouse Rocks: “I’m Just a Bill”**

List the steps for how a bill becomes a law

1. Folks back home have an idea!
2. Called their local congressman.
3. Congressman writes down the idea onto paper and mails it to Congress.
4. Congressman introduces the law to Congress.
5. The idea becomes a bill.
6. The bill remains a bill until Congress makes it a law.

**Comprehension and Critical Thinking: Answer the questions below on a separate sheet of paper.**

1. **Describe the process that a bill goes through in Congress.** There are various steps to the process that a bill goes through in Congress. A bill is first introduced in the Senate or the House of Representatives. A bill is referred to a committee for discussion, debate, and potential amendments after it is introduced. A bill is submitted to the entire House or Senate for discussion and a vote if it is approved by the committee. A bill that has been approved by one chamber of Congress is then forwarded to the other chamber for review. In the second house, the bill might experience a similar course of discussion, deliberation, and modifications. The bill is sent to the President for signing into law if the second house passes it without amendments. A conference committee is, however, formed to find a solution if there are disparities between the two versions of the law. The bill is delivered to the President for signing into law once it has been passed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate and any disagreements have been resolved. The legislation is made into law if the President signs it. The bill can still become law even if the President vetoes it, though, if two-thirds of the House and Senate vote to override the veto. To summarize, a bill must be introduced, referred to a committee, debated and voted on in both chambers of Congress, any disputes must be resolved, and then the law must get presidential approval or veto.
2. **Why is it necessary for a bill to be considered by a committee?** A committee's consideration of a bill is required because of the importance of committees to the legislative process. Committees are in charge of conducting inquiries and hearings to compile pertinent data and viewpoints on a bill. They converse and offer suggestions on how to enhance or change draft legislation. This procedure enables the entire Senate to review a bill in a more thorough and informed manner. Also, committees give members of Congress a place to collaborate, reach an understanding, and pinpoint points of agreement or disagreement on a measure. Last but not least, committees control the volume of legislation filed in Congress by ranking proposals and selecting those that should advance.

1. **Why do you think a conference committee is needed to merge the House and Senate bills?** Because the House of Representatives and the Senate could pass different versions of the same measure, a conference committee is required to combine the House and Senate bills. In order to settle any disputes and produce a final version that both chambers can approve, this committee acts as a mediator. This procedure is necessary to ensure that a bill becomes law since it must be approved by the House and Senate in exactly the same way. Members from both houses make up the conference committee, which works to reconcile any incompatible clauses or modifications. The legislative branch also includes the functions and authority of Congress in the enactment of laws.
2. **Explain the actions that the president can take on a bill.** A measure that has been approved by both the House of Representatives and the Senate is sent to the president to be either signed into law or vetoed. The measure can be made law by the president, at which point it is included into the United States Code. In addition, the president has the choice to veto the measure, which prevents it from becoming law until Congress overrides it with a two-thirds majority in the House and Senate. The bill automatically becomes law if the president does not sign it or veto it within ten days (Sundays excluded). If the president and Congress do not sign a law adjourns within ten days, the president may exercise a pocket veto. As a result, the bill cannot become law.
3. **Why is it important for the president to have final approval over Congressional legislation?** Because it guarantees that the executive branch has a say in the laws that are passed, it is crucial for the President to have ultimate approval over any legislation passed by the Legislature. While both the legislative and executive parts of government are involved in creating and carrying out laws, this aids in balancing the power between them. The President can also use his veto to stop Congress from passing legislation that he thinks are unconstitutional or that would be bad for the nation.
4. **What happens after the president vetoes a bill?** A bill that receives a presidential veto is sent back to the house of congress from whence it originally came. Then, with a two-thirds majority vote in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, Congress can attempt to override the veto. The President's veto is overridden if they are able to secure the necessary votes to pass the legislation. In the event that they are unsuccessful, the bill is dead and Congress must restart the legislative process.
5. **How can citizens become involved in the process of recommending new laws?** By writing letters or emails to their elected representatives in Congress, citizens can participate in the process of suggesting new laws. People can also speak up about potential legislation by attending town hall meetings or other open forums where their representatives will be speaking. In order to advocate for legislation and to bring attention to topics that are important to them, citizens can also sign petitions and take part in advocacy activities.
6. **Citizens’ ideas can inspire bills at the local and state levels, as well as the national level. What suggestions do you have for a bill? Explain.** Establishing a federal minimum wage that is annually increased to reflect inflation is one idea for a bill. This would guarantee that all employees receive a livable wage and that the value of their salaries does not diminish over time as a result of increasing living expenses.