

# How a Bill Becomes a Law in Texas

The Texas Legislature has a 31-member Senate and a 150-member House of Representatives. It meets the first 140 days of each odd numbered year. Every nonprofit should be engaging in advocacy for its policy priorities, but knowing when and where to start can be difficult. This flowchart provides basic information on how policy moves through the Texas legislature and opportunities for nonprofits to educate and engage with policy makers.

## How a Bill Moves Through the Texas House of Representatives

A bill is filed, reviewed, and sent to a committee.

The committee can do one of three things:

Vote for it  
Without Change

Amend it  
and Vote

Vote it Down/  
Take No Action

If the committee favorably votes on the bill, it first goes to the Calendars Committee to be scheduled for debate by the full House of Representatives.

*Advocacy Tip:* It helps to know who sits on the Calendars Committee to have a good understanding of when bills are moving through the process and being scheduled.

If scheduled, the bill goes to the full House of Representatives for debate and a vote.

If the bill passes the House, it moves on to the Senate (or if already approved by the Senate, to the governor).

If the same language of the bill is passed by the House and Senate, it goes to the Governor to sign, veto, or allow the bill to become a law without signature.

*Advocacy Tip:* Explaining the problem and how the bill solves the problem is often the most important part of an advocate's role. At any of these stages, nonprofit staff and volunteers can talk passionately about how a law can solve a problem or address an on-going issue of concern.

## How a Bill Moves Through the Texas Senate

A bill is filed, reviewed, and sent to a committee.

*Advocacy Tip:* Remember that the staff for an elected official's office appreciate being informed about issues important to constituents.

The committee can do one of three things:

Vote for it  
Without Change

Amend it  
and Vote

Vote it Down/  
Take No Action

If the vote is favorable, 3/5ths of the Senate must then decide to bring the bill forward to the full floor.

If scheduled, the bill goes to the full Senate for debate and a vote.