

How a Bill Becomes a Law in Arkansas

- A concerned citizen contacts his/her Senator or Representative.
- After a bill is drafted, it can be introduced by any member of the House or Senate. More than one legislator can sponsor a bill. The bill is filed with the Bill Clerk, who assigns the bill a number.
- The bill is then introduced and read in the House or the Senate for the first and usually a second time (a bill must be read three times before final passage).
- After reading, the bill is assigned to the appropriate Committee.
- The Committee schedules the bill to be read at a public meeting where legislators and anyone interested can speak for or against the bill. The committee can also add amendments to a bill.
- The committee then votes on the bill. The committee can vote one of four ways: do pass, do pass as amended, do not pass, or without recommendation.
- If a bill is amended, the bill is engrossed to include the amendment.
- When a bill comes out of committee, it is placed on the calendar for a third reading. At the third reading, the Reading clerk reads the title of the bill for the third and final time.
- Vote: Most bills are adopted by a simple majority. Appropriation bills require a 3/4 vote. Initiated acts may be amended or repealed by a 2/3 vote of both houses.
- If the Bill fails, it dies on the floor.
- If the bill passes, it is sent to the opposite chamber and repeats the process that it followed in the previous chamber.
- When bills are passed by both houses, the enrolled bill is certified by the presiding officer of each house and sent to the Governor.
- The Governor must sign, veto, or refer the bill back to its house of origin with his objections within 5 days. The bill may be passed over the Governor's veto by a simple majority vote of both houses. A bill not signed or returned within 5 days of session must be signed or vetoed by the Governor within 20 days of adjournment of the general assembly or it becomes law without his signature.
- All acts are given a number and filed with the Secretary of State.

Online Resources

Traveler's Guide to Arkansas:
www.soskids.arkansas.gov

Arkansas Secretary of State:
www.sos.arkansas.gov

Butler Center for Arkansas Studies:
www.butlercenter.org

Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids:
<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/index.html>

National Constitution Center:
www.constitutioncenter.org