

Steps for Making a Bill in North Carolina

Provided by John Fisher

Steps for Making a Bill in the North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA)

1. **Bill Idea:** A concerned citizen, group, organization, state agency, or legislator suggests legislation.
2. **Bill Drafting:** A legislator works with the NCGA Bill Drafting Division to write up the proposed law.
3. **Bill Introduction:** The legislator files the bill with the Principal Clerk of their chamber (House or Senate). In the House, this filing constitutes introduction. In the Senate, the bill is formally introduced on the next legislative day.
4. **First Reading:** The bill is read for the first time in the chamber where it was introduced. Most bills pass this stage automatically.
5. **Committee Assignment:** The bill is assigned to a relevant committee by the chamber's leader.
6. **Committee Consideration:** The committee discusses the bill, may make amendments, and decides whether to approve it.
7. **Second and Third Readings:** If approved by the committee, the bill is scheduled for debate and voting by the full chamber. It must pass both second and third readings to move forward.
8. **Crossover:** If the bill passes, it "crosses over" to the other chamber where steps 4-7 are repeated.
9. **Concurrence:** If the second chamber makes changes, the original chamber must agree to these changes. If they don't agree, a conference committee may be formed to resolve differences.
10. **Enrollment and Ratification:** The final version of the bill is prepared and signed by both chamber leaders.
11. **Governor's Action:** For most public bills, the Governor can sign the bill, veto it, or take no action (which allows the bill to become law after 10 days, or 30 days if the General Assembly has adjourned).
Note on Leadership Control:
The Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate have significant control over whether a bill is brought up for a vote. They can influence the process in three key ways:
 12. They decide which committee receives the bill.
 13. They appoint committee chairs who control whether bills get hearings or votes in committee.

14. They control the scheduling of bills for debate and voting on the chamber floor.
These leaders can effectively “kill” a bill by not allowing it to proceed through these steps, preventing it from ever reaching a full vote in their respective chambers