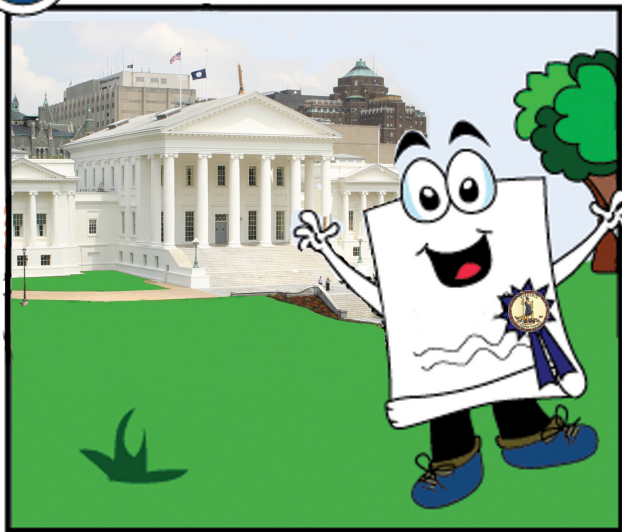




How a Bill Becomes a Law in Virginia

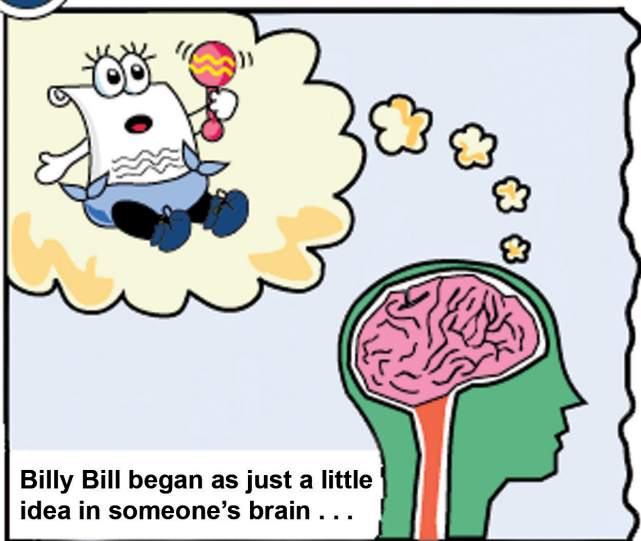


Hundreds of bills enter the legislative process each time the Virginia General Assembly meets. As a Representative Democracy, two groups of elected citizens - 100 Delegates and 40 Senators - study, discuss and vote on bills, and by doing so act for the people of Virginia.

The following steps are the typical process by which a bill becomes a law in Virginia.



Beginning of a Bill . . .

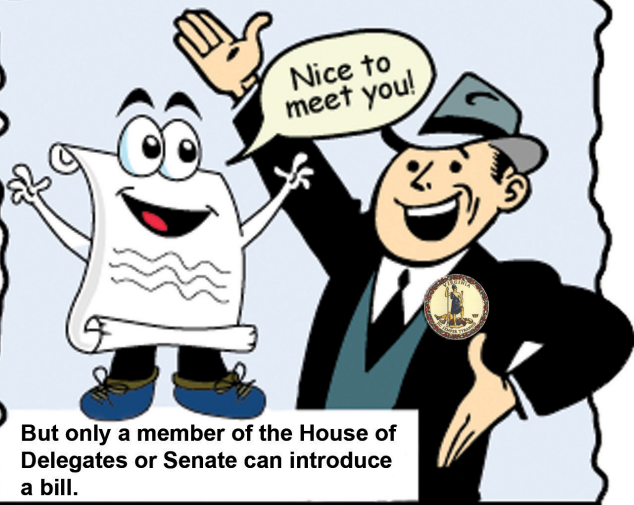


Billy Bill began as just a little idea in someone's brain . . .

- An idea for a bill can come from anyone.
- A bill is an idea for a new law, or an idea to change or do away with an existing law.



Introduce a Bill . . .



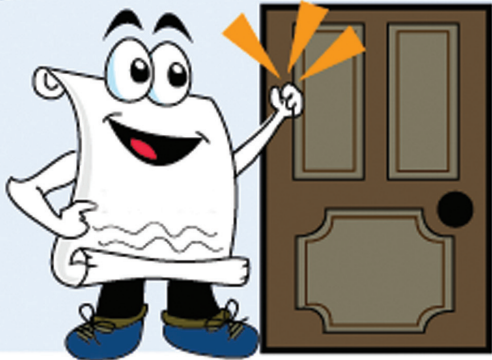
But only a member of the House of Delegates or Senate can introduce a bill.

- A member who introduces a bill is called the bill's patron or sponsor.



Send to Committee . . .

Knock! Knock!



The bill is assigned a number, and then the bill is referred (sent) to the proper committee.

- The House of Delegates has 14 committees and the Senate has 11 committees.
- Visit the website
<http://lis.virginia.gov>
to see the committee lists.



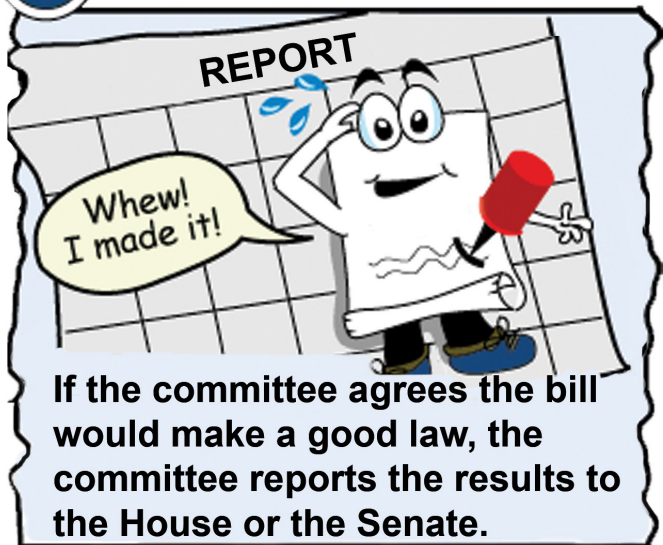
Committee Studies Bill . . .



- If the House of Delegates Education Committee or Senate Education and Health Committee consider a bill for students to attend school on Saturday, what would you tell them if you were for or against the bill?



Bill is Reported . . .

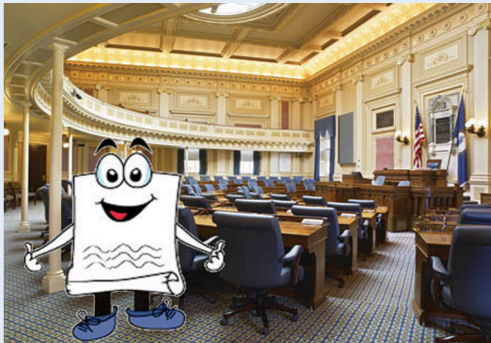


If the committee agrees the bill would make a good law, the committee reports the results to the House or the Senate.

- The committee may suggest amendments (changes) to the bill.
- After listening to all information the committee votes if the bill will make a good law.



Floor Actions . . .

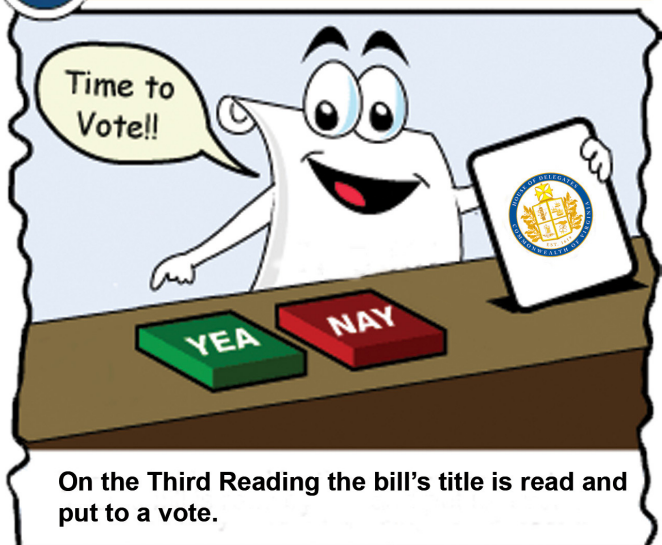


The bill is returned to the chamber (House or Senate) it was introduced in and read or printed in the Calendar (agenda) three times.

- Just like school, members follow rules when speaking.
- First Reading: A bill is read by the Clerk or printed in the calendar.
- Second Reading: A bill may be amended and debated.



Vote on the Bill . . .

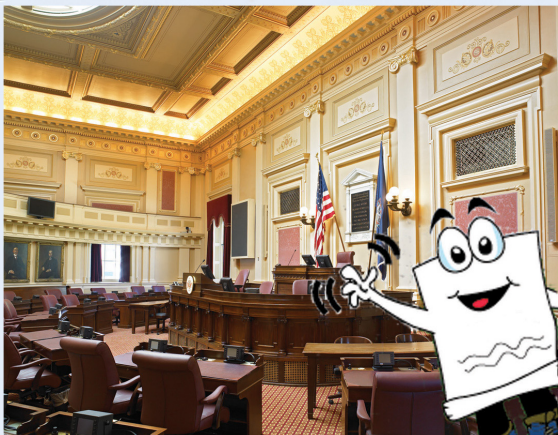


On the Third Reading the bill's title is read and put to a vote.

- Third Reading: Members vote to pass or not pass the bill.



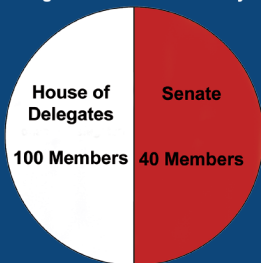
Refer to Senate . . .



If a bill passes in the House of Delegates, it goes through a similar process in the Senate.

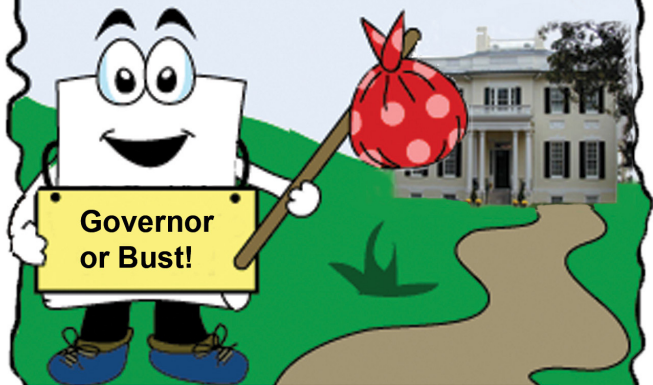
- To make sure laws are created democratically, the House of Delegates and the Senate share responsibility for making and passing laws.

Virginia General Assembly





Governor's Action . . .



If the bill passes both chambers, it goes to the Governor for approval.

The Governor has four choices . . .

- The bill must pass with the same wording in the House of Delegates and the Senate before it can go to the Governor.



. . . Signs the Bill.



If the bill passes in both chambers, and the Governor approves it, the bill becomes a law!

- Well that was easy!
But remember, it's a long road to get here and this may not have been the Governor's first choice



... Changes the Bill.



The Governor returns the bill with changes (amendments). If the House of Delegates and Senate approve changes, the bill becomes law.

- The House of Delegates and the Senate must both agree to the changes or the bill will not become a law.



... Vetoes the Bill.

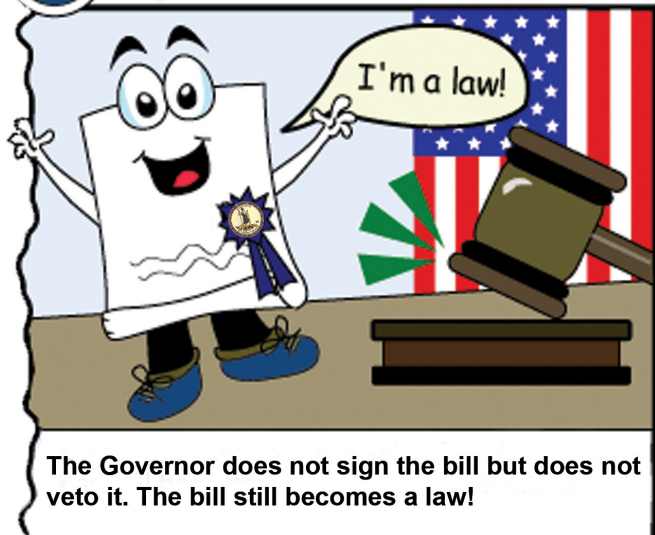


The Governor vetoes (does not approve) the bill. The House of Delegates and Senate may overrule the veto by a two-thirds vote of both chambers.

- If the House of Delegates and the Senate do not overrule (override) the bill, it will not become a law.

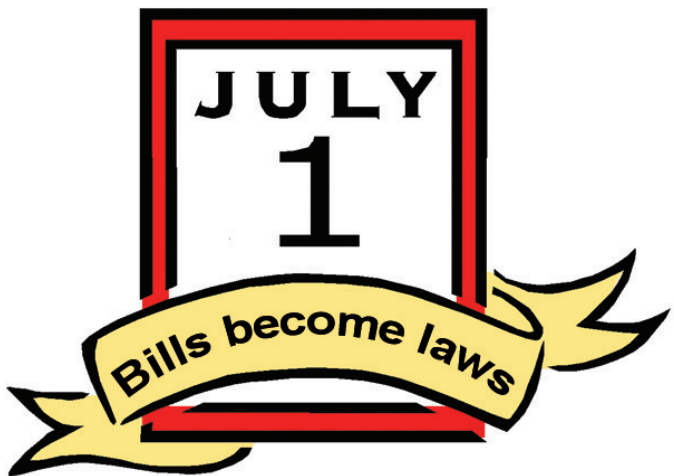


... No Action.



The Governor does not sign the bill but does not veto it. The bill still becomes a law!

- This very rarely happens!
- In fact, some Governor's have not done this.



- Bills that become laws during the Regular Session, which is 30 days in odd years and 60 days in even years, take effect on July 1st.

Congratulations!!!!

You learned how a bill
becomes a law
in Virginia.

What ideas
would you like to
become laws?

