

OHIO-WEST VIRGINIA STATE YMCA

Youth in Government Student Manual

Student Legislature

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Student Legislature

Summary of Procedure

How a HI-Y Youth in Government "Bill" Becomes a "Law"

A Bill is a proposed law. Only legislative delegates can introduce Bills into the Student Legislature. A Bill must successfully complete the following steps to become a "law".

- 1. Be rated for position in the Bill Book.**
- 2. Be assigned to a Committee for consideration and passed on to the Floor.**
- 3. Be introduced on the Floor of the House or Senate of its origin and passed.**
- 4. Be signed by the Governor.**

STEP 1 - BILL RATING

Bills are rated on a scale of 1-75 points based on topic interest and importance, research, author's commitment, resources, correct English and Bill form (see How to Write a Bill chapter). Those Bills receiving the highest points are placed first in the Bill Book. Each Bill is given a number for identification and will be considered in its numerical order both in Committee and on the Floor. Before each Legislative Session, the Order of the Day is re-arranged with the highest ranked Bills considered first.

STEP 2 - COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Bills are assigned to a Committee other than the author's. To speak for their Bill, the authors must appear before the Committee hearing their Bill. The purpose of the Legislative Committee in the Student Legislature is to give each Bill a complete hearing and to determine which Bills will be reported out to the House or Senate and to prepare Committee members to take an active part in Floor debate.

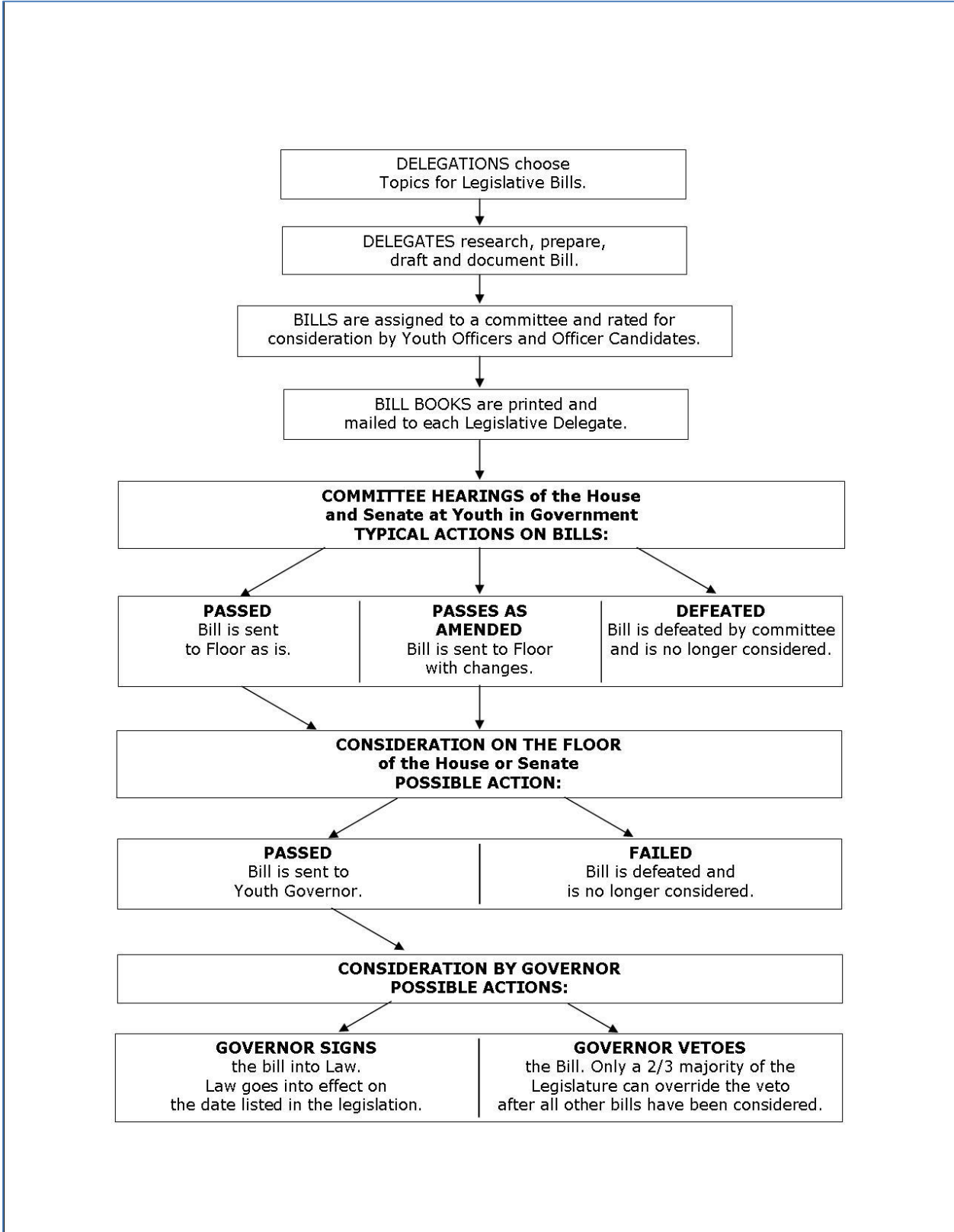
STEP 3 - FLOOR CONSIDERATION

Bills reported out of Committee are scheduled for consideration by the House or Senate. Time may not allow consideration of all Bills referred to the Legislature. Those Bills passed by the House or Senate are sent to the Governor.

STEP 4 - GOVERNOR CONSIDERATION

Bills passed by the House or Senate are sent to the Governor. The Governor may sign or veto the legislation.

How a Bill Becomes Law at the Student Legislature



Committees

**Committees are the first to consider proposed legislation.
Committees accomplish three (3) tasks**

1. Committees decide what legislation is sent to the House or Senate.

Committees give each Bill a complete and respectful hearing including presentations by Authors, Cabinet, and Lobbyists as well as a thorough discussion and debate by all Committee members.

The procedure Committees use is somewhat different than that used by the Legislature. Please read both procedures carefully. Since Committees are smaller groups than a legislature, they do not need all the procedures required by a legislature. Committees are only as formal as needed to effectively get their work done.

Committees work to send good legislation to the floor. If a Bill is a good idea but needs improved, then amend it. Bills rated # 1 - 5 should pass Committee as student Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs, legislative leaders and candidates rated these the best bills to improve our state. There is no reason to kill them in Committee.

2. Committees prepare their members to take the lead on the floor to pass (majority of the members) or defeat (minority of the members) legislation the Committee sends to the floor.

It is the responsibility of the Committee sending legislation to the floor to have all their members take an active role in floor discussion and debate of the Bill.

3. Committees clearly and completely inform members of the Legislature what the Committee found out about the Bill, why it should be passed (majority) and why it should be defeated (minority).

The Majority and Minority Reports inform the Legislature of the content of the Committee's consideration of the Bill, tell the Legislature the answers to any significant questions asked the Authors, give the Legislature any significant information provided by the Authors, Cabinet or Lobbyists, and explain why the Bill should pass (majority) or be defeated (minority).

The time for questions is in Committee. The Legislature has very limited time for questions (actually only three questions) as their time needs to be in considering the Bill . . . discussion, statement of positions, debate.

Committee Members and Chairpersons are Responsible Individually and as a Group to:

Participate

- Every member participates
- Everyone creates a positive atmosphere that encourages involvement by everyone
- Every member helps everyone else do their best
- Every member sits in a different chair beside different people at each committee meeting

Be Prepared

- Know and understand the procedure and use it
- Understand and be informed on the legislation in your Committee before YG

Be Respectful, Extend Courtesy to Everyone

- Show respect for the Committee, the room and its equipment, Authors, Lobbyists, Cabinet, Advisor
- Be informed on the subject of the Bill
- Consider the merits of the Bill, listen with full attention

Bill Authors, Lobbyists and Cabinet

- Ask permission of the Chair to appear before the Committee
- Know when to appear in Committee and be on time
- Respond to questions when asked
- Remember, the final decision on legislation is the Committee's

Advisors

- Advisors are in Committee to help on procedure. Benefit from their knowledge and experience.

Presence of Authors, Cabinet and Lobbyists

- Authors give their testimony before any given by others
- When testimony is complete and Committee questions have been answered these persons may leave or may stay for the Committee's consideration of the Bill. While these persons may not ask to join in the Committee's consideration of the Bill, they may respond to questions if asked by the Committee. Committees would be wise to remember these persons know the most about the proposed legislation and are a valuable source of information on the Bill.
- Authors, Cabinet and Lobbyists who may still be in the Committee leave for Bill's final consideration and the vote.

Inform the Authors

- The Committee tells the Authors the vote on the Bill by giving them a completed Form Z.

What is Done with Similar Bills?

- Bills on the same topic are often presented. Committees consider them separately on their own merits.

Scheduling Committee Time

- 1. Committees meet for the total time assigned each session.**
- 2. The Committee's time in each session is managed to accomplish three (3) things:**
 - a. To consider Bills and determine those to be sent to the floor;**
 - b. To prepare complete reports to the Legislature on the Committee's consideration of each Bill sent to the floor including information learned during the testimony, answers to significant questions, and why the Committee wants the Bill passed by the Legislature (majority) or defeated (minority);**
 - c. To prepare every Committee member to participate in the Legislature's consideration of Bills sent to the House or Senate. Committees are to go on the floor with their**

members ready to get the Bill passed (majority) or defeated (minority).

- 3. Bills are assigned a time (session) so Authors, Cabinet and Lobbyists know when to appear in Committee. The assigned Bill times cannot be changed. If Authors, Lobbyists or Cabinet are unable to appear before Committee at that time, the Bill will be considered without them.**
- 4. Bills not completed in the session they are assigned, may be carried over to the next Committee session.**
- 5. Committees may not go ahead in the schedule to consider Bills scheduled for a later session of the Committee.**
- 6. By the end of the final Committee, all Bills have had a complete hearing by their Committee.**

Committee Procedure

- 1. The Chair welcomes everyone to the meeting and introduces anyone there to give testimony.**
- 2. The Clerk (or Vice Chair) reads the Bill.**
- 3. The Authors present their Bill, explain why it is important for the state and should be passed, and answer any questions the Committee may have.**
- 4. Lobbyists and Governor's Cabinet testify on the Bill and answer questions.**
- 5. The Committee discusses the Bill, asks any questions to the Bill experts - Authors, Cabinet, Lobbyists - debates.**

Chairpersons may find it helpful to hold their comments until later in the discussion so that other Committee members voice their views.

- 6. Amendments to strengthen and/or clarify the Bill are made at any time in the discussion. Amendments cannot change the intent of the Bill.**
- 7. The Committee discusses, questions and debates to reach its decision. Committee members support legislation they believe is best for the people of the state. Legislation is not sent to the floor**

just because it will be a good debate. Legislatures exist to make serious decisions, not to entertain their members.

8. When the discussion/debate is complete, take the vote. A simple majority is required. The presiding person (Chair) does not vote except to break a tie.

9. After the vote, the Committee

- Prepares accurate and complete reports (majority and minority) for the Legislature that also give reasons the Committee wants the Bill passed (majority) or defeated (minority).
- Prepares Committee members to fully participate in the floor consideration of the Bill.
- Be certain that each Committee member has a role for the debate on the floor. Assign a point, pro and con, etc. so every member participates on the floor.

Possible Motions in Committee

1. To recommend a Bill without amendments out of Committee to the House or Senate, a member says, "I move this Bill reported to pass." If passed, the Bill goes to the House or Senate of its origin.

2. To amend a Bill, the motion is, "I move the following amendment . . . "

The author of the amendment gives it in writing to the Clerk (or Vice Chair) who reads the amendment. If adopted, the Clerk reads the amended Bill to be sure it is accurate. The amendment is then attached to the Bill and the Bill is considered in Committee as amended.

Amendments may not change the intent or meaning of the Bill. While authors do not have to agree to the amendment, they are to be informed of the amendment.

Riders to Bills are not permitted.

3. To recommend an amended Bill for passage, the motion is, "I move that this Bill be passed, as amended."

Committee Chairpersons

Senate Chairs have been appointed by and are responsible to the President of the Senate and House Chairs the Speaker of the House. Chairs who do not carry out their responsibilities may be removed by their President or Speaker.

Vice Chairs are appointed by the President and Speaker. In Committees without a Vice Chair, the Chair may appoint a committee member to serve as Vice Chair.

Bill partners are not to be Chairs as they both would leave the Committee to testify on their Bill.

Responsibilities of the Chair

At the First Meeting

- See that members can see each other
- Do introductions and "get acquainted" activities (avoid use of candy, food, or drinks as a get acquainted). Include the Committee Advisor in the get acquainted.
- Explain the purpose of the Committee and how it works (review previous pages) and do a practice Bill to give everyone experience in the procedure.
- Review the schedule, explain the order of Bills and how the Committee's time is used.

The Chair and all Members are Responsible for the Care and Protection of their Committee Room

- Explain the use of the Committee room is a privilege given by the actual Committee Chairperson and review how we are to care for the room (no candy, food or drinks; do not move papers or materials left by Legislators, avoid playing with microphones, clean up after each session, etc.

The Chair

- Acts and speaks in a way that helps everyone in the Committee succeed, involves everyone and gives Authors, Lobbyists and Cabinet a respectful experience.
- Represents the Committee to the Bill Coordinator. The Chair *picks up the Committee folder* from the Bill Coordinator before each Committee

meeting and *returns the folder* to the Bill Coordinator immediately after the meeting and *verbally tells the Coordinator the action taken on each bill*.

- Has the Clerk or Vice Chair take attendance at each meeting.
- Manages time so the three tasks of the Committee are accomplished.
- Has the Committee meet for the total time and does not dismiss early.
- Considers Bills in numerical order as listed inside the front cover of the Committee Folder. Once a Bill is considered, draw a line through the Bill number.
- Manages amendment made in Committee. Amendments are made in writing and, if passed, attached to the Bill by paper clip. Do not write on the original Bill. Amendments note the line(s) being altered. Note on the Bill Disposition sheet the Bill is amended and if passed and, if passed, passed as amended. Amendments cannot change the intent of the Bill.
- Completes the Committee portion of the Bill Disposition sheet.
- Assures that the Majority and Minority reports are written to accurately inform the Legislature on what the Committee learned about the Bill, why the Committee took the action it did and the Committee's reasons for the Legislature to pass (majority) or defeat (minority) the Bill.
- Prepares all Committee members to actively participate in floor debate on Bills the Committee reports out to the Legislature.
- Leads the Committee member participation in floor debate.

Responsibilities of Committee Advisors

Committee Advisors assist with procedure and the Committee process. They may be asked for advice before, during or after Committee sessions. Chairs are to meet with the Committee Advisor after each session to get their observations and suggestions.

Advisors do not comment on the content or idea of legislation nor are they to influence voting on issues.

Advisors may have a few minutes at the end of each committee to engage the group in a review of how the committee did and what would make the next meeting even more successful.

Committee Procedure

Before Each Committee Meeting

Chairman picks up Committee Folder from Bill Coordinator

Procedure for Committee

Welcome

- ❖ Order of the Day
- ❖ Vice Chair or Clerk takes attendance
- ❖ Introduce Guests
 - * Bill Authors (If the Authors are not there, send someone for them)
 - * Lobbyist

Questions and Discussion on the Bill – Questions may be asked of Bill Authors, Lobbyists and Governor’s Cabinet – As well as Debates

Amendments may be made during this time.

- ❖ May not change the intent of the Bill
- ❖ It is strongly suggested Authors are present during amendments and approve of the amendment, as well
- ❖ Remember to fill out the Bill Form
- ❖ Once an amendment is made, the discussion is on the amendment until voted on
- ❖ If an amendment is adopted, attach the amendment form to the bill

Once the Vote is taken

- * Prepare the Committee portion of the of the Bill Disposition Report (attached to the Bill)
- * Have the Z form delivered by page or Committee member to the Authors with the Committee decision.
- * If the Bill is passed, prepare the Majority and Minority Reports
- * If the Bill is passed, the Chairman leads members in preparing all members to take an active role in the floor session consideration of the Bill.

At the end of the Committee Meeting entertain a motion for adjournment

Once adjourned, the Chairman meets with Committee Advisor to compare notes on what went well and what can be done to make the next Committee Meetings more effective.

Chairman takes Committee Folder back to the Bill Coordinator and explains the Committee’s action on the Bill(s) the Committee considered.

At 1st meeting of the Committee

- * Introductions of everyone including Committee Advisor
- * Get acquainted
- * Review Committee procedure (pages 10 - 13, Bill Book)
- * Practice using one or more practice bills found in the Bill Book

The Vice Chair or Committee Clerk reads the Bill

Author’s Opening Statements

Governor’s Cabinet and then Lobbyists Testimony on the bill and answer questions

Authors may leave anytime after their closing statements. They do leave before the Bill’s final consideration and committee vote.

The Committee discusses questions and debates in their caucus to reach its decision.

Urge them to support and pass legislation they believe is best for the people of the state...not just because it will be a good debate. Legislatures exist to make serious decisions, not to entertain their members. Chairperson may find it helpful to hold their comments until later in the discussion so that other Committee members voice their views.

Vote

Floor Procedure

Before Each Floor Session

Clerk picks up "Calendar" at the Bill Coordinators' Office.
The "Calendar" becomes the "Order of the Day" and cannot be changed.

At 1st Session

- * Review Committee procedure (pages 15 - 19, Bill Book)
- * Practice using one or more practice bills found in the Bill Book
- * Then, begin with the first bill assigned in the Calendar

Procedure for Floor

Call to Order

- ❖ Opening of each session, the Presiding Officer uses the gavel and states, "By the authority vested in me, I declare the House (Senate) in session"
- ❖ Call upon the Chaplain to deliver his/her message
- ❖ Call upon the Clerk to read the "Order of the Day"

The Presiding Officer says, "We are now ready for the third reading of the Bill".

After the Clerk reads the Bill. Clerk reads the number, author, title, the full text of the Bill, and any amendments approved by the Committee.

Move to Questions and Debate.
Try to limit the number of questions to 3.
Get as much debate going as possible

Presiding Officer then asks for the Committee's Majority and Minority Reports

Presiding Officer says, "The question is shall the Bill pass?" The Authors then give their opening statement(s).

Presiding Officer is responsible to manage the time for the consideration of each Bill. After you feel the Bill has been debated sufficiently then move on to the **Authors closing statements.**

Voting

If the majority favors the Bill, the Presiding Officer says, "I declare this Bill passes." If the majority is opposed, the Presiding Officer says, "I declare this Bill failed of passage."

Presiding officer will then say, "The question is, shall the Bill pass?" All those in favor of the Bill, please stand." A count is made recorded by the Clerk.

The Presiding Officer then says, "Those opposed to passage of the Bill, please stand." Again, a count is made and recorded.

After a Bill is declared passed, the Clerk will read the Bill by number and title in the event any change should be made to the title. The Presiding Officer will then say, "Without Objection, the title is agreed to." The Presiding Officer then moves on to the next order of business.

Amendments on the Floor are allowed. Members wanting to amend the Bill currently on the floor must obtain an amendment form to write their amendment on and send it to the Clerk. It is then the members' responsibility to seek recognition from the Presiding Officer once the amendment has reached the Clerk's desk. Only then can any action be taken on the amendment. Once the member is recognized by the Presiding Officer and the Clerk reads the amendment from this time on until a vote is taken on the amendment, all remarks and questions are directed to the amendment and the amendment authors, not the Bill as a whole. Following the vote, the debate returns to the Bill.

Once a Bill is declared passed the Clerk is to fill out the Bill Disposition Record, sign it, and have the Presiding Officer also sign. At the end of the Floor Session the Clerk takes the "Calendar" folder back to the Bill Coordinators office.

A Note to Bill Authors

Please remember that our purpose at Youth in Government is to adopt legislation that will benefit our state. Our time is limited, opinions among delegates vary, and very few proposals will be sent to the Governor. The Governor may sign or veto legislation. In our democracy the Executive is one of the three branches of government. Each branch is part of a system of “checks and balances.” As part of this system, the Governor may veto even popular legislation if, in the Governor’s judgment, it is not good for our state.

Participate in Youth in Government to do your best. Doing your best needs to be the “reward” you seek. The most to expect for your legislation is a complete hearing in Committee. Your Bill may be heard on the Floor and a few Bills will be sent to the Governor. The Governor may sign some of them. If you Bill is defeated in Committee, the Legislature, or is vetoed, be prepared to take that decision with good grace and not develop a personal vendetta against legislators or the Governor. Realize your Bill had its chance and now others are to have their chance.

Work to do your best and to help others do their best too!