HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW (the basic textbook version)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

INTRODUCED IN HOUSE

Representative introduces the bill in the House.

SENT TO COMMITTEE & SUBCOMMITTEE

Speaker of the House assigns the bill to a committee for review & "markup."

COMMITTEE ACTION

Most bills die here. Committee chair may pigeonhole, table, amend or vote on a bill.

RULES COMMITTEE

If a bill is passed by a committee, it goes here. The Rules Committee sets the rules for debate of the bill, and a date is set for floor action.

FLOOR ACTION: Debate, Amend & VOTE

House debates the bill, and may add amendments. If a majority votes in favor of a bill, it usually ends up going to a Conference Committee.

BILL IS DRAFTED

Members of Congress, the Executive Branch, and even outside groups can draft (write or draw up) bills, but only members of Congress can introduce them to Congress for consideration.

SENATE

VOTE TO OVERRIDE (House and Senate)

If the President vetoes the bill, it can still become law if two thirds of BOTH houses vote to override the veto.

PRESIDENTIAL ACTION: If President signs, it's a law; if he vetoes it, it's not

The President may sign (approve) the bill or veto (reject) it. If approved, it becomes law.

FLOOR ACTION: Vote held on compromise bill in BOTH chambers (House & Senate)

Both the House and Senate must approve changes made by the conference committee. If approved, the bill goes to the President.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE (members from both House and Senate)

If a bill passes BOTH the House AND the Senate, this committee is created to work out the differences between the 2 bills by creating a "compromise bill.,"

INTRODUCED IN SENATE

A Senator introduces the bill, which is sent to a committee for review and "markup."

SENT TO COMMITTEE & SUBCOMMITTEE

The bill is sent to a committee for review & "markup."

COMMITTEE ACTION

Same procedure as in the House. If a majority of the committee votes for a bill, it goes to the whole Senate for debate and a vote. However, the Senate does not have an official Rules Committee.

FLOOR ACTION: Debate, Amend & VOTE

Senate debates the bill, and may add amendments. If a majority votes in favor of a bill, it usually ends up going to a Conference Committee.