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How A BILL BECOMES A LAW

Types of Bills + Resolutions -

- Private = Individuals or Places only affecting a small group -
- Public Bills = General issues affecting the entire nation -

Resolutions

- Simple = matters affecting only 1 House
 - Internal matter
 - ∅ go to other house or president
 - ∅ Power of Law
- Joint Resolution
 - Passed by both Houses / signed by President = force of Law -
 - Fixes a previous Law -
 - Constitutional Amendments
- Concurrent Resolution
 - Requires action of Both houses. ∅ intended to be a law -
 - Used to express the opinion of Congress over certain Actions
 - Used to Adjourn
 - ∅ Pres. Signature -

Riders

- Something attached to a bill on an entirely different subject
- easy to get that 1 thing passed b/c it's attached to something popular -
- Sometimes done to only help their constituents
- "Christmas tree" Bills -

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Why so few Bills become law

- < 10% Bills become Law.
- Process is long + complicated
 - 100+ steps to pass a law.
 - Stalled, Killed, held.
 - Law makers must be willing to bargain + negotiate to gain strong support.
- Law makers introduce Bills they know don't have a chance so they go on the record as "having tried".

Introducing the Bill

- Ideas come from citizens, interest groups, president, + Executive agencies.
- Only lawmakers - may introduce the Bill

House

- Drop bill into wooden "Hopper" / Box.

Senate

- Presiding officer recognizes the senator who formally introduces the Bill.

- Given titles - Beginning with "H" or "S"

Committee Action

- Sent to Comm. to "Study" the Bill
 - may be sent to sub comm.
 - may be "pigeonhold." or Killed
 - May be rejected, re-written, Amended, adopted

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- Committee members/staff are considered experts in the area.

Committee Hearings

- Gather information/opinions from experts in the field.
- may influence public opinion about the Bill.
- Most of the Bill is influenced here in Committee.

Markup Session

- Committee meets to decide what changes need to be made.
- Changes require a majority vote.

Reporting a Bill

- When changes have been made Committee makes a final vote to either ~~kill~~ or report the Bill. (Send it to the full house or Senate for action).
- The Report explains the Bill.

Floor Action

- Debate = must follow each House's Rules.

Debating & Amending

- Only a few lawmakers take part.
- Bill has already been argued in Comm.
- Amendments may be added.
- House may use a closed rule = no Amendment.

- Amendments may slow a bill or kill the bill.
- Amendments may only be made if a majority agrees.

Voting on Bills.

- Quorum must be present
- majority vote required.

Types of Voting.

- 1- Voice Vote = "Aye" / "No"
- 2- Standing =
- 3- Roll Call
- 4- Recorded vote = electronically displayed/voted

~~Final Step in Passing a Law.~~

~~Conference Committee action when members of both original committees meet to discuss both sides~~

Final Step in Passing a Law

- Conference Committee Action
 - when 1 house does not accept the version of the other house & few versions are created the Bill needs to be combined to 1 Bill.
 - members from the original House/Senate serve on this committee.
 - work out the differences in the Bill
 - Create a Conference Report & moves to the Floor of each House for action

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- Presidential Actions on Bill
 - After Both Houses have approved the final Bill.
 - Sent to the President must take action on the Bill in 10 days - or it becomes law w/o his signature - If Congress is in session - if not in session, it's killed.

Vetoing Bill.

- Pres. Refuses to sign the Bill & sends it back to Congress.

Congressional override of veto.

- 2/3 vote in each house.

