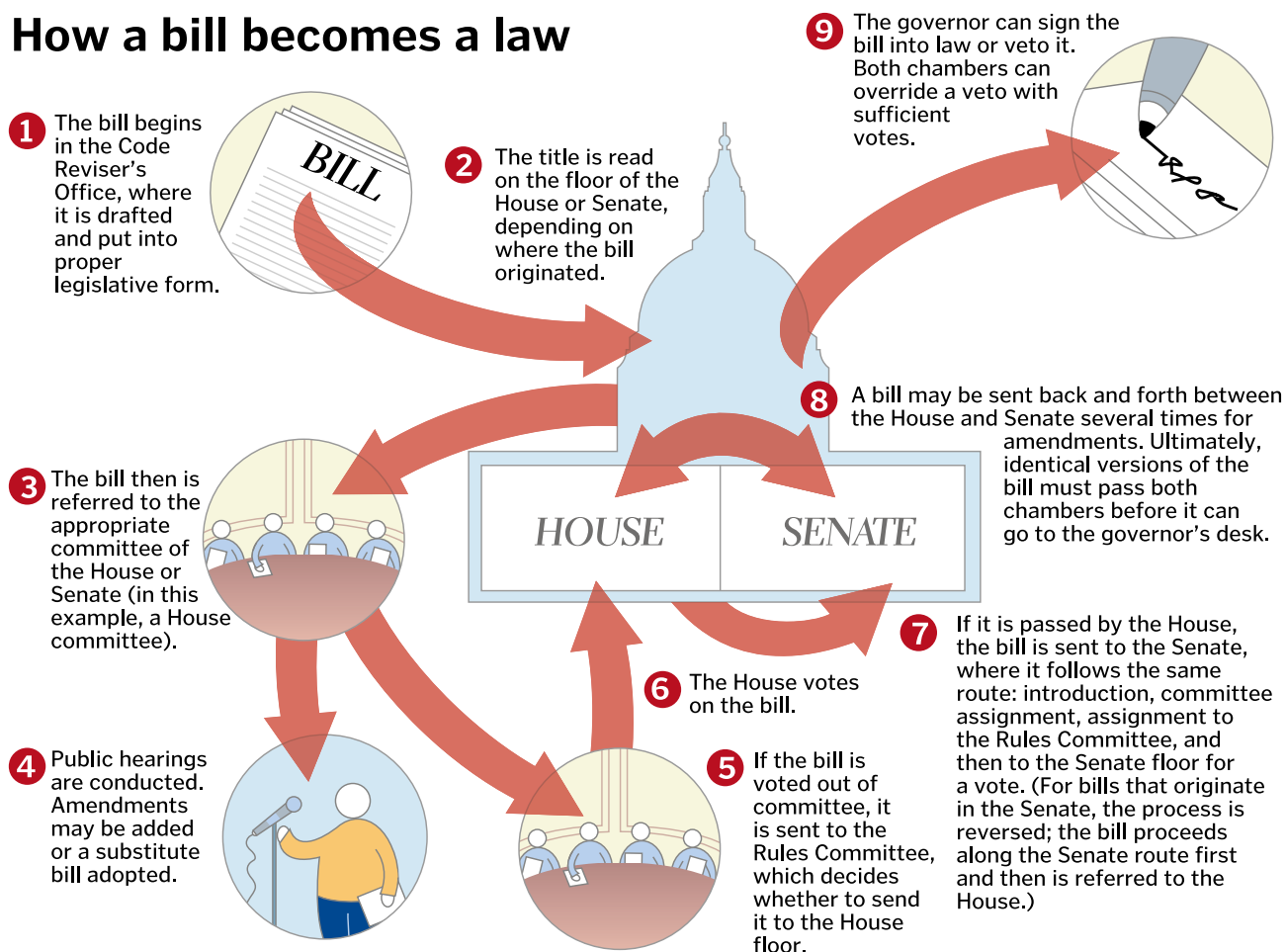


# HOW TO GET INVOLVED

## How a bill becomes a law



## How to track a bill

The keys to keeping track of a bill as it moves through the Legislature are knowing the bill number and paying close attention to the bill's progress. Here are tips on successfully tracking a bill's status:

- Go to [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov) and click on "Bill Information." The site lets you search by bill number or keyword. You also can view floor activity reports for the House and Senate.
- Call the Legislative Information Center (Bill Room) at 360-786-7573.
- Be prepared to tell the clerks as many specifics about the bill as possible. There could be several bills dealing with the same issue. Write down bill numbers and keep them for future reference.
- Clerks at the Legislative Hotline (800-562-6000) can give you up-to-date reports on the status of bills. You also can call the hot line to record brief messages for lawmakers and the governor.
- On campus, public access terminals are in the lobby of the Pritchard Building and on the second, third and fourth floors in the O'Brien Building.

## Phone numbers and Web sites

<b>Legislative Information Center (Bill Room)</b>	<b>360-786-7573</b> <a href="http://www.leg.wa.gov">www.leg.wa.gov</a>
<b>Legislative Hotline</b>	<b>800-562-6000</b> During session: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. M-F, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday During interim: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. M-F
<b>Chief Clerk of the House</b>	<b>360-786-7750</b>
<b>Secretary of the Senate</b>	<b>360-786-7550</b>
<b>Governor's Office</b>	<b>360-902-4111</b> <a href="http://www.governor.wa.gov">www.governor.wa.gov</a>
<b>State agencies</b>	<a href="http://access.wa.gov">http://access.wa.gov</a>

## How to testify about a bill

Legislators are eager to hear testimony from the public on bills under consideration in committee. A few keys to effective testimony:

- **Be prompt.** Arrive at least 10 minutes before the hearing.
- **Do your homework.** Make sure you have the latest copy of the bill and any amendments. If you have suggestions for alterations to the bill, provide them, in writing, to committee clerks.
- **Sign in.** Testimony sheets are posted near the entrance to the hearing rooms. Each bill has a separate sign-in sheet. Find the bill you are interested in and provide your name, address and telephone number in the appropriate places.
- **For or against?** You will be asked to note whether you support or oppose the bill. Many committee leaders take testimony alternately from proponents and opponents.
- **Be concise.** When your name is called, move to the table with the microphone. State your case. Speak clearly and be concise. Don't ramble or stray from the topic at hand. If the agenda is full, people testifying often are limited to three minutes.
- **Don't read your testimony,** but give written copies of it to the committee clerk. Be prepared to answer questions. Be polite.



## Tours

State Capitol Visitor Services offers tours during the legislative session for individuals and groups. Mansion tours are available most Wednesdays; advance reservations are required. To schedule a tour, call the State Capitol Tour office at 360-902-8880. Campus events, rallies, protest marches and performances must be scheduled through Capitol Visitor Services at 360-902-8881. For information on tourism in Olympia and the state, call the Visitor Information Center at 360-586-3460.

## How to deal with state lawmakers

Despite hectic schedules, legislators generally find time to read a quick message or return a call. Some tips on getting your voice heard:

### In general:

- **Be specific.** If you want a reply, ask for one.
- **Be brief.** Time is a precious commodity during the session.
- **Be polite.** Rudeness won't help win over a legislator.
- **Opinions:** Base yours on facts.
- **Help them out.** Be willing to answer questions or provide more information if asked.

### For a personal visit:

- **Schedule** an appointment.
- **Be prompt** but be willing to wait.
- **Watch for a District Day,** time set aside by lawmakers to meet with constituents.
- **Attend legislators' town hall meetings** and voice your opinions.

### When writing:

- **Address:** Send letters to: Sen./Rep. (person's name) State Legislature, Olympia, WA 98504
- **State your case** and refer to any proposed legislation by bill number.
- **If you want** the lawmaker to vote "yes" or "no" on a specific bill, say so. If you want a reply, request one.

### When phoning:

- **Legislators' phone numbers** are listed in this section.
- **Call them directly,** but be willing to talk to an administrative assistant; it's often hard to catch lawmakers.
- **If you want** to relay a brief message, call the toll-free Legislative Hotline at 800-562-6000. A message will be promptly delivered to the lawmaker's office.

