

How to Lobby the Utah Legislature (during a pandemic)*



How a Bill Becomes a Law

- 1) A Bill is Created:** A lawmaker submits a bill request to a group of staff attorneys who review existing law and write the bill. The bill is given a number and the lawmaker becomes the “sponsor.” The attorneys attach a “fiscal note,” which estimates how much the bill will cost or save, although sometimes the fiscal note is added later in the process.
- 2) The Bill is Introduced:** The bill is introduced into the House or the Senate depending on the sponsoring lawmaker and is referred to the Rules Committee—a group that acts like a traffic cop for all bills entering the legislature. Occasionally, the Rules Committee will hold a bill to stop it from being heard by a committee.
- 3) The Bill Receives Standing Committee Review and Public Input:** The Rules Committee sends the bill to a standing committee such as “House Judiciary Committee.” The standing committee, in a public meeting, reviews the bill and receives testimony from the sponsor, experts, and the public—including via virtual testimony over the Internet. The committee may amend (change), hold, table (take no action), substitute, or recommend (pass) the bill.
- 4) The Bill Is Returned to the Floor.** If the committee votes to recommend (pass) the bill, it goes to the floor of either the House or Senate for more debate. These sessions are open to the public, although testimony is not allowed.
- 5) The Bill is Debated on the Floor.** The bill is reviewed in a floor debate, where it can be amended or substituted. It can also be held (circled) to wait for text changes or more votes. For a bill to pass a floor vote in the House of Representatives, it must receive at least 38 votes. The bill must receive at least 15 votes in the Senate to pass.
- 6) The Bill Passes Both Houses in the Legislature.** After the bill has passed successfully through the committee process and floor vote in both chambers, it is signed by both presiding officers (the Senate President and the Speaker of the House) and sent to the governor for signature or veto.