

How to Follow a Bill in the Minnesota Legislature

What is the process for introducing a bill?

Any member can introduce a bill. There is no limit to the number of bills and resolutions a member can introduce. However, there are limits to the number of co-authors. In the House, there can only be 35 authors; in the Senate, the limit is five. Once a bill is introduced in either house, the chief author may find someone to carry the companion bill in the other body. A companion bill is usually identical when introduced, though that may change. In the House, the Speaker of the House assigns each bill and numbered resolution to one of the standing committees. The Chief Clerk of the House then assigns each House File a number, which will identify the bill in its travels. The Senate has traditionally used a somewhat different path to introduction. Bills and resolutions are given a number by the Secretary of the Senate's Office and assigned to a committee by the Senate President.

Once introduced, a bill must travel through the committee process. If it is a House bill, it would go through the necessary policy committee and if it has financial implications, a finance committee. Then it is ready to go to the floor. A bill receives three readings before members debate it and take a final vote. Many bills never make it that far. Of the 3,500 bills introduced in the House and Senate each year, only about 15 percent actually become law. If the bill is a Senate bill, the measure follows a parallel procedure through the Senate.

Once a bill has passed on the House floor, the bill must travel to the Senate. If it is a Senate bill, it must also go to the House after passage by the full Senate. Once the bill is approved by both bodies, it goes to the governor for his approval. If he signs the bill, it becomes law.

[How a bill becomes law in Minnesota](http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/howbill.asp) (<http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/howbill.asp>) combines information from the various offices of the Minnesota Legislature on the process of lawmaking in Minnesota.

Find a bill and its status using a Web-based form

Search for bills by bill number, author, chief author, statutory citation, and by keyword in the bill's description.

- [House](https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor/pages/search_status/status_search.php?body=House) bill status
(https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor/pages/search_status/status_search.php?body=House)
- [Senate](https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor/pages/search_status/status_search.php?body=Senate) bill status
(https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor/pages/search_status/status_search.php?body=Senate)

Bill status information includes the companion bill number, authors, a short description of the bill, a list of actions taken on the bill to date, and a link to the full text of the bill.

Note: The searching feature does not search the full text of individual bills, just the short descriptions. To search within the text of a bill, use the 'find' feature of your browser.

Follow legislation through the process

- **What items will be discussed on the floor today (Daily orders of business)**
 - [House](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/cco/orders/orders.htm) (http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/cco/orders/orders.htm)
 - [Senate](http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/orders/index.php#header) (http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/orders/index.php#header)
- **What items will be discussed at committee meetings today and this week (Schedules)**
 - [House Weekly Schedules](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/hinfosched.asp) (http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/hinfosched.asp)
 - [Senate Weekly Schedules](http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/schedule/schedule_list.php#header) (http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/schedule/schedule_list.php#header)
- **Summary of what happened on the floor for a particular day (Journals)**
 - [House](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/cco/journals/journl.htm) (http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/cco/journals/journl.htm)
 - [Senate](http://www.senate.mn/journals/index.php#current) (http://www.senate.mn/journals/index.php#current)
 - You can also use the journals to find out how each legislator voted.
- **Summary of activity during a particular week**
 - House -- [Session Weekly](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/Pubsarchive.htm) (http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/Pubsarchive.htm)
 - Senate -- [Senate Briefly](http://www.senate.mn/briefly/) (http://www.senate.mn/briefly/)
 - These publications include overviews of committee hearings.
- **Bill summaries**
 - [House](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/billsum.asp) (http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/billsum.asp) -- Staff from the [House Research Department](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/hrd.htm) (http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/hrd.htm), the nonpartisan research and legal services office for the House of Representatives, summarize significant and/or lengthy bills.
 - [Senate](http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/departments/scr/billsumm/) (http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/departments/scr/billsumm/) -- Staff from [Senate Counsel and Research](http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/departments/office_bio.php?office_id=1007#header) (http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/departments/office_bio.php?office_id=1007#header) the nonpartisan research and legal services office for the Minnesota Senate, summarize selected bills.
- **Committee information**
 - Some [House committees](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/comm/commemlist.asp) (http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/comm/commemlist.asp) and [Senate committees](http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/committees/) (http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/committees/) have websites.

Find out when a bill has been signed or vetoed

[Chapters and Resolutions](http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/bills/chapters.asp?ls_year=83&session_number=0)

(http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/bills/chapters.asp?ls_year=83&session_number=0) -- A list of all bills passed and sent to the Governor, including dates when they are signed or vetoed.

The Legislative Library maintains lists of [bills vetoed since 1939](http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/Vetoes/Vetoes.asp)

(http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/Vetoes/Vetoes.asp)

Still having trouble finding the information you need?

- For House bills, call or email [House Index](mailto:house.index@house.leg.state.mn.us) (house.index@house.leg.state.mn.us or 651-296-6646)
- For Senate bills, call or email [Senate Information](mailto:seninfo@senate.leg.state.mn.us) (seninfo@senate.leg.state.mn.us or 651-296-2887 or 1-888-234-1112)