

The Flow of Legislation Through the Committee Process

The Bill is printed and Legislature determines committee of reference

After a bill is printed, it is distributed to members of the Legislature and made available to the public. The bill appears on the House or Senate calendar ("LD" number, title and suggested Committee of Reference).

Both Houses of the Legislature must agree on the Committee of Reference before a bill is referred to a Committee.

If it's a "House Bill"...

If it's a "Senate Bill"...

A bill is a "House Bill" if the sponsor is a member of the House.

in the House first, then in the Senate

in the Senate first, then in the House

A bill is a "Senate Bill" if the sponsor of the bill is a member of the Senate.

Bill goes to Committee...

The bill is "in Committee" when referencing is complete and the Committee clerk takes physical possession of the bill.

A Public Hearing is scheduled & advertised

With few exceptions, every bill gets a public hearing. The time, date and location of each public hearing are advertised in the weekend editions of newspapers in Portland, Lewiston and Bangor. Unless a waiver is obtained from both presiding officers, hearings must be advertised two weekends in advance of the hearing date.

A Public Hearing is held...

Protocols for public hearings vary somewhat among Committees. Committees typically hear numerous bills in one day; hearing rooms are often crowded.

Work Session(s) are held...

Work sessions are the Committee's opportunity to deliberate on and discuss the bill. Advanced public notice of a work session must be provided. Protocols for work sessions vary somewhat among Committees, but permission from the Committee is required for members of the audience to participate in the discussion..

When a Committee finishes discussing a bill, the Chairs entertain motions and conduct the Committee vote(s) according to applicable rules of order. A quorum (7 members including at least one Senator) is required to vote.

The Committee Votes...

A unanimous report?

A divided report?

If the Committee vote is not unanimous, one or more minority reports are required.

Unless the Committee's report is a unanimous "Ought Not to Pass", some form of amendment is usually required, even if it's just adding a fiscal note to the bill. The Committee Analyst ensures that the Committee amendment is properly drafted and prepared.

Finalizing the Report(s)

Bill "reported out" of Committee...

When the Committee's amendment(s) are complete, the Committee Clerk delivers the report(s) in their signed jackets to the House (if it's a House Bill) or to the Senate (if it's a Senate Bill). Once a bill is "reported out of Committee" the Committee may take no further action on it unless it is re-referred to the committee by both bodies.