How an Idea Becomes a Law | CPD

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First, an idea is developed. A legislator draws from many sources in deciding what should be introduced in the Legislature as a bill. Major sources of ideas come from constituents, government agencies, special interest groups, lobbyists, the governor and other legislators.

The idea is submitted to the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel, a nonpartisan legislative staff office, in the form of a bill request. The assigned bill drafting attorney reviews existing law, researches the issues and prepares the bill in proper technical form. The bill is given a number. A fiscal review is conducted and a “Fiscal Note” is attached. The bill is also reviewed for statutory or constitutional concerns.

Then the bill is introduced into the Legislature and referred to the Rules committee. The Rules committee recommends to the presiding officer the standing committee to which the bill should be referred. The standing committee, in an open meeting, reviews the bill and receives public testimony. The committee may amend, hold, table, substitute or make favorable recommendations on the bill.

Following the committee hearing, the bill is returned to the full house with a committee report. The committee reports the bill out favorably, favorably with amendments, substituted, or that the bill has been tabled.

The bill is debated in open session. During floor debate, the bill can be amended or substituted. It can be held (circled). For a bill to pass the Utah House of Representatives, it must receive at least 38 votes. The bill must receive at least 15 votes in the Utah Senate to pass.

After the bill has gone through both houses, it is signed by the Senate President and the Speaker of the House. The Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel prepares the bill in final form. This is called the “enrolled” bill. The enrolled bill is sent to the governor, who can either sign the bill, veto it or allow it to become law without a signature. A bill enacted by the Legislature is effective 60 days following adjournment of the session, unless another date is specified in the bill.

On Wednesday: Communicate your views.