

RECORDER'S NOTES
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ELECTION INFORMATION:
KNOW THE FACTS FOR COLORADO!

Have you ever wondered how a law becomes a law in Colorado or how can a law be changed?

The General Assembly is made up of The House of Representatives and the Senate. The General Assembly, stated by the state constitution, is required to meet 120 consecutive days beginning no later than the second Wednesday of January.

All laws in Colorado begin as bills. Before a bill can become law, it must be approved by the House of Representatives, the Senate and the Governor. The General Assembly is who reviews all bills, however, there are other ways to create laws in Colorado other than the General Assembly (the initiative process).

The initiative process:

At the State level a law can also be created through an initiative process where citizens can circulate and sign petitions to place an issue on the ballot so Colorado voters can directly approve or reject an idea. The general assembly also has the right to refer a bill to the voters during a general election. If the voters approve, the bill becomes law, this is what is called a referendum.

The bill is introduced:

An idea for laws can come from anywhere, businesses, school boards, citizens, public interest groups, non-profit organizations, etc. If a legislator is approached with an idea, he or she can make the decision to sponsor that idea and request for a bill to be drafted by the office of legislative legal services. Once the initial sponsor approves the draft bill, the bill is then delivered to either the House or the Senate for its first reading. When a bill is first introduced, it is assigned a bill number and assigned to a committee for public hearing.

First reading (in committee):

Committees usually have a specific issue that they focus on such as education, transportation, or public health. Committees will hold a hearing for the introduction of the bill. The public is allowed to attend to voice his or her support or concerns for the bill. However, only committee members are allowed to make amendments to the bill. The committee can then recommend the bill (with or without amendments), postpone the bill indefinitely, hold the bill for another hearing, or refer the bill to another committee.

Second reading (on the floor):

Once the bill has successfully made it through the first reading (in committee), it then moves onto the second hearing. This second hearing requires the entire chamber to form a committee of the whole, also known as "the C.O.W." This is where members debate the merits of the bill and may offer additional amendments. A voice vote is all that is required for approval. The chairman of the chamber has the final say; however, a member of the chair may request a standing vote for approval of the bill being discussed. Once the bill and all amendments are approved, it is written into a new document called the engrossed bill, which is then placed on the calendar for a third reading.

Third reading (on the floor):

During the third reading of the bill, final debates and recorded vote on the bill occurs. If the bill is approved by a recorded vote, then the engrossed bill including amendments, is then combined into a Reengrossed bill. The Reengrossed bill is then transferred to the other chamber where the same process begins all over again.

If the bill makes it all the way through the third reading, it is now called a rerevised bill. The rerevised bill is then sent back to the first chamber where all amendments are required to be approved. If all amendments are approved, it is then sent to the governor for action. Although, if any amendments are rejected, the sponsor can request a conference committee, which has to be made up of three members from each chamber. The purpose of this conference committee is to iron out the differences between the two chambers and reach an agreement. If they are able to come to an agreement, then it is sent to both chambers.

After passage:

- If both chambers adopt the report, then the bill is sent to the governor for his or her action. The governor then has three options once their office receives the bill.
 1. *The governor can sign the bill into law*
 2. *Veto the bill*
 3. *Let the bill become law without his or her signature*
- A bill will become law without the governor's signature after 10 days if they receive the bill during the legislative session, or after 30 days if they receive it after the General Assembly.
- If the governor vetoes the bill before the General Assembly adjourns, it then goes back to the general assembly for more consideration. If a bill can be approved by two-thirds of the members in each chamber, the veto is then overridden, and the bill becomes a law. Vetoes occurring after the General Assembly's session are final and cannot be overridden.

The Election and Recording Department can be reached at 522-1544 for voter and election questions or recording information. The Motor Vehicle Department can be reached at 522-1158 for license plates/renewals or titling a vehicle. You can also reach our office by email at baconp@logancountyco.gov . **Like us on Facebook at Logan County Elections/MotorVehicle/Recording**