How a Bill is Passed in the Georgia Legislature

1. Legislator sees need for a new law or change in existing law and decides to introduce a bill.

2. Legislator goes to Office of Legislative Counsel. There, attorney advises legislator on legal issues and drafts bill.

3. Legislator files bill with the Clerk of the House or Secretary of the Senate.

4. On legislative day after filing, bills are formally introduced. In chamber, bill is read during period of first readings.

5. Immediately after first reading, presiding officer assigns bill to a standing committee.

6. In the House only, on next legislative day, clerk reads title of bill. Title (second reading) in chamber; although actual bill is known to committee. In Senate, second reading comes after bill is reported favorably from committee.

7. Bill is reported favorably by committee and returned to Clerk or Secretary.

8. Bill considered by committee. Author and other legislators may testify. If controversial, public hearing may be held.

9. Clerk or Secretary prepares a General Calendar of bill favorably reported from committee.

10. The Rules Committee of each house meets and sets bill on General Calendar for next day’s floor consideration.

11. If bill is amended, it goes back to committee of origin for adoption of amendments. If not amended, it is docketed for floor consideration.

12. After debate, main question is called and members vote. If bill passes by majority of total membership of that house, it passes second reading. If bill is defeated, it is sent to the other house.

13. If second house passes bill as it was introduced, it returns to governor for action. If changes are accepted, bill becomes law. If changes are rejected, bill goes back to originating house for consideration of amendments. If amendments are passed, bill goes back to governor for action. If bill is vetoed, it is sent to the other house for action. If bill is defeated or returned, it is sent to the other house for action. If bill is overridden by two-thirds vote of members of each house, bill becomes law.

14. Bill is enrolled and sent to the Governor (if requested). Otherwise, all enrolled bills sent to Governor following adjournment sine die.

15. Governor may sign bill or do nothing, and bill becomes law. Governor may veto bill, which requires two-thirds of members of each house to override.

16. Acts and other laws enacted at the session are printed in the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. Act becomes effective the following July 1, unless a different effective date is provided in act.

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