

CITIZEN LEGISLATURE

The Indiana General Assembly is composed of 150 men and women representing many occupations. Members of the Senate are elected for four-year terms, but not all at the same time; 25 of the 50 are elected every two years. All 100 members of the House are elected every two years.

Citizen legislators represent their districts, reflecting the varied needs and concerns of Hoosiers across Indiana. Together, legislators discuss their differing views and work collectively to develop public policies which will benefit the entire state.

As your State Senator, I welcome your thoughts and ideas. Please feel free to contact me to relate your views or questions regarding state government either by phone, mail, or e-mail.

Sincerely,



Vi Simpson
Senate Democrat Leader

LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS

Prior to 1970, the legislature met only once during a two-year term. In 1970, Hoosiers voted to allow legislators to determine the length and frequency of their sessions. Now the Indiana General Assembly meets every year. During odd-numbered years, state law requires lawmakers to adjourn by April 29 and during even-numbered years, the legislature must conclude business by March 14. Each chamber determines the number of working days during session. The governor has the power to call a special session at any time.

ELECTION QUALIFICATIONS

To seek election to the State Senate or House, you must be:

- * A United States citizen.
- * A resident of Indiana for at least two years.
- * An inhabitant of your district for one year.
- * Senators must be at least 25 years of age.
- * Representatives must be at least 21 years of age.

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How a Bill
Becomes Law



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Indiana
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How Legislation Becomes Law

The Indiana General Assembly consists of 150 legislators, 100 in the House of Representatives and 50 in the State Senate, chosen by popular election from legislative districts. The Indiana General Assembly has the power and duty of making the state laws which ultimately affect the daily lives of all Hoosiers.



INITIAL STAGE

Various individuals and community groups work together with legislators to enact all types of laws. Usually responding to a need in a community, legislators will have bills drafted by legal specialists and work to move their initiatives through the legislative process.

FIRST READING

Once a bill has been assigned a bill number and introduced, it is assigned to a standing committee in its house of origin. Standing committees cover specific fields of interest such as education, health, and finance.



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SECOND READING

At this stage, bills are considered by the full chamber, and any member may offer changes from the chamber floor. Amendments which are approved are incorporated into legislation.



THIRD READING

The full chamber has an opportunity to speak on the merits of a bill before casting a vote to pass or defeat the final draft. A majority vote sends the legislation to the opposite chamber where the process is repeated.



COMMITTEE HEARING

Committee members debate the merits of each proposed measure during public hearings. Citizens are encouraged to attend these hearings and offer their opinions on pending legislation.

Bills may be changed during this part of the process. After testimony has been received and discussion has taken place, members cast votes on each proposal. Approved proposals are eligible to move on to second reading.

OPPOSITE CHAMBER

Bills which are approved without amendment by the second house proceed to the governor for his review. Bills which have been amended by the opposite chamber must be approved by the house of origin. When agreements cannot be reached, bills are sent to conference committees.



CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Comprised of two members from each chamber and each political party, these committees work out the differences in a bill. Conference committee reports must be approved by both chambers before the legislation may proceed to the governor.

GOVERNOR

Once the governor receives legislation which has been approved by both chambers, he has seven days to sign the bill into law, let it become law without his signature, or veto the bill. A vetoed bill may still become law if 51 Representatives and 26 Senators vote to override the Governor's veto.

