



Advocacy Training

Everything You Want to
Know About the Maryland
General Assembly

(But didn't know who to ask)





The Legislative Session

Overview + Timeline

Maryland's 90 Day Session

- January – April
- Begins on the second Wednesday of January
- Flows like a college semester; slow start, busier middle, scrambling at the end



Session Timeline

January - April

Jan

Bill drafting and
bill introductions

Briefings

Budget submitted
one week after
session begins

Feb

Committee
hearings

Starting to vote
on bills

Mar

Last committee
hearings

Voting on bills

Crossover Date

Hearing bills from
opposite chamber

Apr

Budget approval
by 83rd day

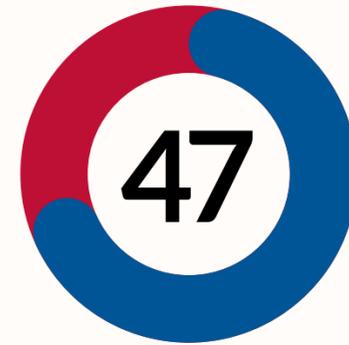
** If no budget is passed,
session will continue but
only to consider budget*

*Sine Die - Final Day
of Session; midnight
on the 90th day*

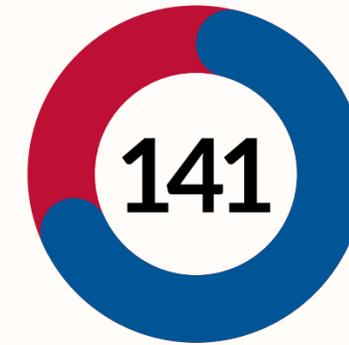


Key Players

Maryland General Assembly



Senators



Delegates

LEADERSHIP ROLES

Senate President

Speaker of the House

President Pro Tem

Speaker Pro Tem

Majority Leader

Majority Leader

Majority Whip

Majority Whip

Minority Leader

Minority Leader

Minority Whip

Minority Whip



Committees

The Legislative Process

- All bills must go through a committee once they're introduced
- A bill must get a favorable report from the committee it's assigned to in order for it to advance
 - *Some bills may be assigned to more than one committee, and would need a favorable report from both committees*



Committee Chairs and Sub-committee Chairs are crucial for a favorable report. Influencing them is essential.



Standing Committees

Senate

Budget & Taxation

Considers legislation relating to State operating and capital budgets (ex: revenue + spending)

Education/Energy/Environment

*Fondly known as EEE, this committee also hears Election-related bills for the Senate.
League Focus

Executive Nominations

Reviews nominations made by the Governor, and makes recommendations to the full Senate based on review

Finance

Considers fiscal matters, including consumer financing, insurance, economic development, utility regulation, labor, and more.

Judicial Proceedings

*Considers bills related to Constitutional Amdts, Criminal+civil law, juvenile justice, law enforcement.
League Focus

Rules

Considers proposals regarding rules, organization, and procedures of the Senate or the General Assembly



Standing Committees

House of Delegates

Appropriations

Reviews legislation relating to State operating and capital budgets, higher education, and more

Economic Matters

Considers bills related to business regulation, commerce, public utilities, labor + employment, and more

Environment+Transportation

Considers bills related to the climate, transit, agriculture, housing, vehicle emissions, infrastructure, and land use

Health + Gov. Affairs

Considers bills related to public health, health insurance, healthcare facilities, healthcare professions, estates + trusts

Judiciary

Considers legislation related to courts and judicial proceedings, public safety, correctional facilities, family law, and more

Rules + Exec Nominations

Considers proposals concerning the rules, organization, and procedures of the House, + reviews gubernatorial nominations

Ways + Means

Considers bills related to children, youth, and families, State + Local taxes, education, Elections, and more



County Delegations

+ Select Committees

- **Local Bills:** bills that only affect certain Counties
- **LWVMD does not weigh in on local bills**
 - Local Leagues may testify on local bills only if there is a relevant League position
- **Example: HB 767**
 - Legislation would have allowed Montgomery County to use Ranked Choice Voting for local elections



Find Your Legislators

Know Your Representatives

Not sure which district you live in, or who your state representatives are? Look up your State Senator and Delegates at

mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Members/District

Scan Me!



Understanding Maryland's Budget

With Kali Schumitz

Vice President of External Relations
Maryland Center on Economic Policy



How a Bill Becomes a Law

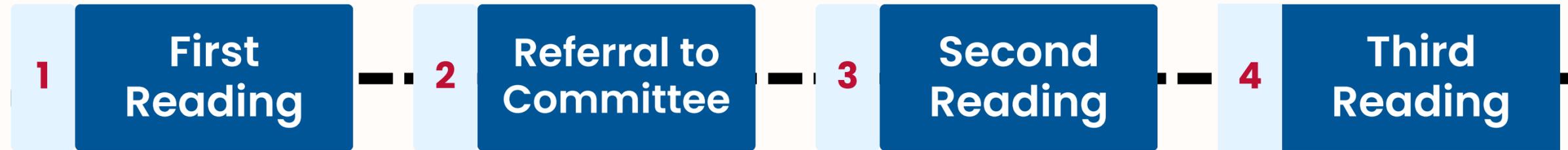
The Legislative Process

Breaking Down Each Step in
Maryland's Legislative Process

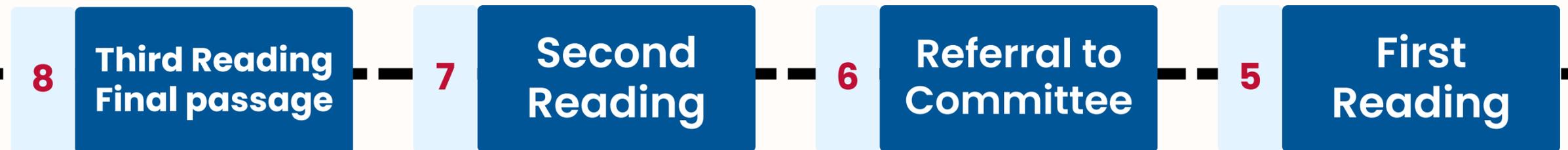


How a Bill Becomes Law

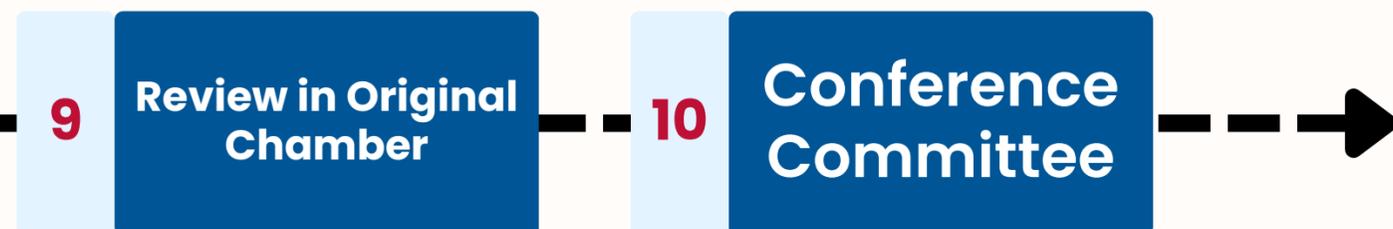
First Chamber



Second Chamber



Return to First Chamber



TO THE GOVERNOR



First Reading

- The Clerk “calls the bill” on the floor by reading the bill number, bill title, and the name of the legislator who introduced it
- The Presiding Officer assigns the bill to a Principle Standing Committee
- The bill is prepared and printed. Copies are distributed to legislators and committee staff, and posted on the MGA website.
- The bill will then be scheduled for a hearing in its assigned committee
 - The full hearing calendar is available on the MGA website



Committee Hearings

- You can testify on a bill either verbally or in writing:
 - Positions: *support, oppose, or provide information*
- Testimony can include suggestions for amendments
- You must sign up in advance to testify
 - May be a time limit for verbal testimony
 - May be a limit on # of people who can testify verbally
 - No limits on written testimony
- *Please Note:* Rules for testimony sign-up process will be announced by the MGA before Session begins.



Cmte. Action

- Any time after the hearing, the committee chair may schedule a voting session. Not all bills receive a vote.
- The committee takes a roll call vote on the bill
- Vote Outcomes – Types of Recommendations
 - Favorable
 - Favorable with Amendments
 - Unfavorable
 - Referral to another standing committee
- Voting results will be filed in the committee's office and posted on the General Assembly website



Second Reading

- If a bill receives a favorable committee report, it will be sent back to the full Floor of its original chamber
- The clerk reads the bill title for the second time
- Committee amendments are considered for approval
- *Floor Amendments:* Members may offer amendments for consideration; must be brought to a vote
- Discussion + Debate
 - Debate on second reading may be extensive, especially on major policy issues
 - Once a bill passes second reading in its original chamber, no more amendments can be made by that chamber



Third Reading

- Third reading vote usually occurs two days after second reading
 - No amendments can be offered on third reading
- Majority Vote is needed to pass
 - Constitutional Amendments and Emergency Legislation require 3/5 favorable vote to pass
- After a bill passes third reading, it's sent to the opposite chamber



In the Second Chamber

- When the bill crosses over to the opposite chamber, the process is similar to that of the first chamber. The bill is read on the floor for the first time in the second chamber and is assigned to a committee
- At the committee hearing in the second chamber, testimony will be more restricted than in the bill's original chamber.
 - In some cases, testimony may be restricted to the bill's sponsor, only.
- The committee may vote on the bill and send it to the full chamber floor.
 - Same recommendation options apply as in the first chamber



Second Reading

Second Chamber

- On the floor of the second chamber: the committee report, the committee amendments, and floor amendments (if any) are considered and voted on.
- The bill is scheduled for a third reading vote. Further amendments to the bill may be considered on third readings.
 - The bill must receive a majority vote as favorable in order to pass
- If the second chamber has not amended the bill, it is sent to the Governor for signing.



Amendments

Second Chamber

- If the second chamber amends the bill, it is returned to the committee that originally considered the bill. The committee can vote to either to accept or reject the amendments.
- If the committee accepts the amendments, the bill will be sent to the floor of the original chamber for a vote.
 - The bill must receive a majority vote as favorable in order to pass
- If the bill passes this floor vote, the bill has completed the legislative process and is sent to the Governor.



Conference Committee

Second Chamber Amendments

- If the committee refuses to accept the amendments of the second chamber, they will either:
 - Ask the second chamber to drop their amendments
 - Ask the second chamber to appoint members to a Conference Committee.
- If the bill is sent to a Conference Committee, the Presiding Officer of each chamber will consult with the committee Chairs to appoint three conferees
- At least four of the six members must agree on a proposed version of the bill. In most cases, if agreement cannot be reached, the bill dies.



An Enrolled Bill

Second Chamber Amendments

- If the conference committee can resolve the differences between the Senate and the House, each chamber will vote on the revised bill.
 - If they reject it the bill is considered “dead.”
- Adoption of the conference committee’s recommendation means the bill is considered on third reader and must be approved in each chamber by a majority of the total membership.
- At this point the “enrolled bill” is printed, reflecting any changes made by the second chamber or the conference committee.
 - Revised synopses and fiscal notes are posted on the General Assembly website.



Enactment

Passed Bills

- Bills that pass both chambers are presented to the Governor by the Presiding Officer of the chamber in which they originated.
- All bills must be presented no later than 20 days after adjournment.
- The Governor is required to act on a bill within 30 days of receiving it.
 - Sign or Veto
 - If the Governor does not act within that time, the bill becomes law automatically.
- If a bill is presented to the Governor in the first 83 days of the session, the Governor has only 6 days (not including Sunday) to act before the bill automatically becomes law.



Veto Power

The Governor

- The governor has the power to veto all bills except the Budget bill and Constitutional Amendments.
- Unless the bill was passed within 86 days of the session, vetoed bills are returned to the chamber of origin at the beginning of the next regular or special session of the General Assembly and the legislature may override the veto with a vote of three-fifths of the members of each chamber.



Bill Tracking

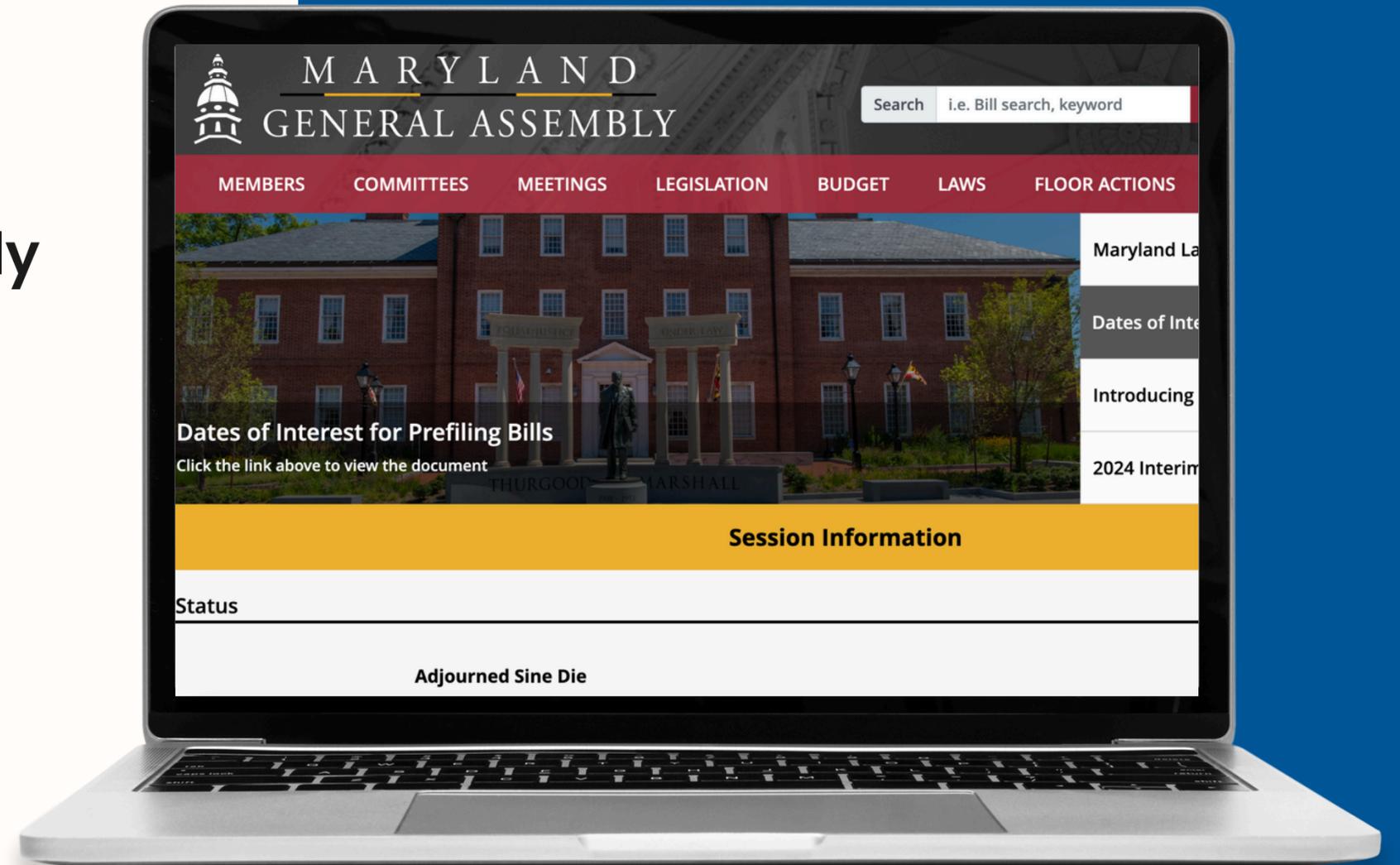
The MGA Website

Visit the Maryland General Assembly website to:

- See what bills are introduced
- Track a bill's progress
- Find the bill hearing schedule
- Sign up for testimony



mgaleg.maryland.gov



Making an Impact

Advocacy + Action



Making an Impact

Advocacy + Action

Become an Advocate

Join one of LWVMD's Advocacy Teams - any level of participation is welcome!

Stay Informed

Explore LWVMD's Action Blog, read LWVMD email blasts, and subscribe to Maryland Matters and the Maryland Reporter

Respond to Action Alerts

Call or email your legislators - your voice as a constituent goes a long way!



LWVMD Advocacy

Become an Advocate

LWVMD Advocates may:

- Identify + help prioritize bills of interest
- Meet w/ Legislators or their staff
- Do research for testimony
- Write testimony
- Testify verbally in a hearing
- Help draft Action Alerts
- Write articles for our Action Blog



LWVMD Advocates receive training and work in teams based on shared policy interests



Join Us on November 21st

How to Be An LWVMD Advocate

- Advocacy + policy areas
- Bill tracking
- How to write testimony
- Talking to your legislators
- What to do when you receive an Action Alert

And so much more!



Resources

 www.lwvmd.org

 <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite>

 [2026 Session Important Dates](#)

