

You Can Lobby

You can give your assemblymember ideas for new laws. If you want to do that or if you hear about legislation that affects you, it's time to lobby in Albany. You can help pass or defeat legislation by making sure your legislators know your opinions.

It's important to know the official bill number and its sponsor. That way, legislators will know which legislation you're referring to.

When your bill gets assigned to a committee, write, phone, email or visit the committee chair and other legislators who sit on the committee to give them your position on the bill. Remember, legislators always listen closely to their own constituents. Lobby your legislators and get other constituents to lobby theirs. Even one constituent letter or visit on a bill can have an impact on how a legislator votes.

Just before your bill comes up for a vote on the Assembly floor, organize a writing and calling campaign for or against the bill. If it passes and is sent to the Senate, be prepared to go through the same process there. If it passes the Senate, the bill will go before the governor, who will either sign it into law or veto it. You can influence the governor's action with calls and letters as well.

Remember, the best way for you to effect change is to make your views known and be persistent.

www.nyasassembly.gov

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND YOU

Your State Legislature

In New York State, there are three branches of government: the legislative, comprised of the Senate and Assembly; the executive, headed by the governor; and the judicial, comprised of the courts. This brochure focuses on the legislative branch and examines the process through which a bill becomes a law.

The Assembly, with its 150 members, and the Senate, with its 63 members, make up the New York State Legislature. Members of both houses are up for election every two years.

In the Assembly, the member presiding over the legislative session is known as the Speaker. The Speaker is elected for a two-year term by his or her colleagues. In the Senate, the lieutenant governor presides, but the Senate Majority Leader is the person whose work most closely parallels that of the Speaker of the Assembly. Both the Speaker and the Majority Leader have the power to create committees and appoint legislators to serve on those committees.

Each legislative session begins on the first Wednesday after the first Monday of the new year. The Legislature attends session in Albany until its business for that year is concluded. While session usually ends in June, legislators can be called back to Albany for special legislative sessions, formal meetings, committee work or public hearings year-round.

At the heart of the legislative process is the means by which a bill becomes a law. In the diagram on the reverse page you can trace the key steps of that process. Ideas for bills come from many sources, not just from government agencies or officials. In fact, if you have an idea for a law, you can call your representative and discuss it with him or her.

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A message from ...

Assembly Member

Simcha Eichenstein



A message from ...

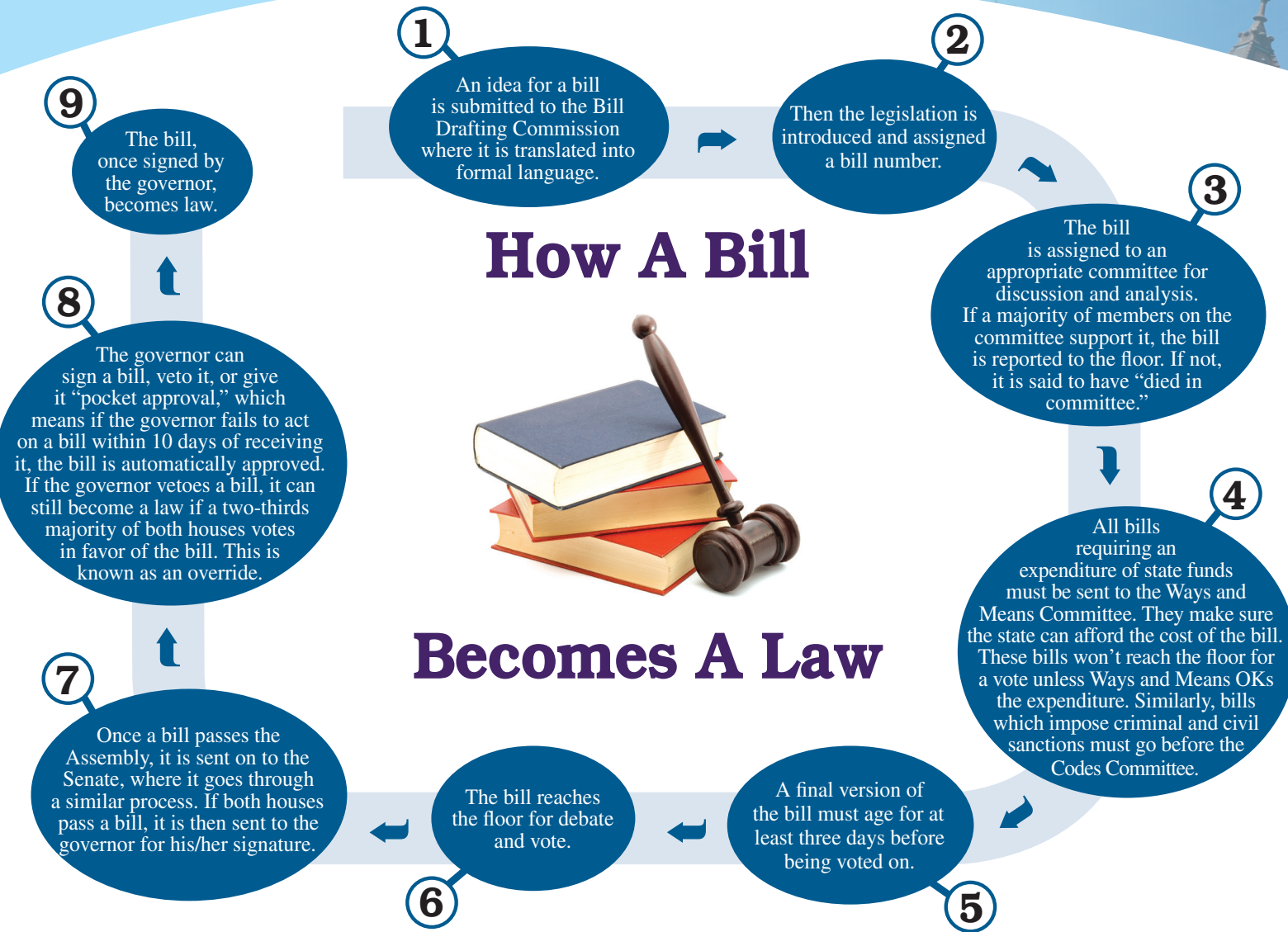
Assembly Member

**Simcha
Eichenstein**

This brochure includes a brief description of the legislative process and gives an overview of how a bill becomes a law.

Knowledgeable and informed voters are essential to our democracy. By following the news, knowing the issues and contacting your elected representatives, you can make a significant contribution to the legislative process.

As your elected representative in the New York State Assembly, I welcome your comments and suggestions. We have been entrusted with a great legacy – representative government. I hope you will take advantage of the many ways in which you can be an active participant in your state government.



The Committee System

It is important to understand the role of committees in the state Legislature, for it is through the committee system that work in both houses is accomplished. You can think of the committee system as a screening process during which smaller groups of legislators closely scrutinize bills. The committees analyze the merits of the legislation, hold hearings for public input and vote on whether it should be advanced for a vote on the Assembly floor.

Within the committees are subcommittees, which are established to study specific aspects of larger issues being reviewed by the full committee.

Bills are assigned to committees based on the subject they address. For example, a bill that affects senior citizens would be sent to the Aging Committee, while a bill affecting consumers would go to the Consumer Affairs and Protection Committee.

Each member of the Assembly is appointed to serve on three to five committees.

Committees meet on a regular basis to discuss the bills referred to them. You can attend a committee meeting to actually see how the process works, as these meetings are open to the public. If you’d like to find out when and where a particular committee is meeting or what’s on its agenda, you can visit www.nyassembly.gov or call the Assembly’s Public Information Office at 518-455-4218.

Legislative sessions, where the bills are voted on and debated by the entire house, are also open to the public. The Assembly Public Information Office can tell you when the Legislature is in session if you plan to visit. You can also check the Assembly’s website at www.nyassembly.gov and click the Public Information banner.