

Name _____

Date _____



How a Bill Becomes a Law

Have you ever wondered how a bill becomes a law? It's a complicated process, but they make it complicated on purpose. You can't just let any old bill become a law! Me? I made it through alive—but just barely. The legislative branch is littered with dead bills. For every law, there are thousands of bills that weren't so lucky.

Let me keep it real, life is hard as a bill.

We hope to become a law and avoid being killed.

We all start as an idea from constituents

Or lobbyists or anyone giving two cents.

Listen close so you know the deal.

If a representative or senator likes you, you become a bill.

My representative picked me, so off I went to DC swiftly,

Let me explain quickly.

I could have been introduced in either house of Congress:

the Senate or House of Representatives, I promise.

I started in the House, committee was first.

Where most bills are killed—I expected the worst.

Both houses are divided into committees

To handle legislative work more efficiently.

Committee held me for weeks—it took patience—

Researching, discussing, changing some of my language.

Thankfully, committee voted to accept me.

But I have to pass the House Rules Committee next. See,

They decide if I reach the floor for a vote.

Now I'm wishing for the Senate where it's one committee, not both.

They discussed rules for debate; I lost hope.

They were leaning towards killing me, but scheduled a vote.

I received the minimum votes, and I survived.

That's 218 out of 435 House members.

There's a million ways to be killed.

It's hard to survive when you're a bill.

Only a few bills make it through,

And those that do become law that's true. (x2)

Back to square one in the Senate, yo, let me spit it.

Days turned to weeks in committee, thought I was finished.

But I was passed onto the floor for a vote,

And on the floor my fears came true, my heart broke.

A filibuster—say it isn't so.

A senator who disliked me threatened to go

On and on and debate endlessly

Until I was tabled or killed, poof, history!

Thankfully, a last minute amendment

Helped me dodge what that senator intended.

51 yea, 49 nay,

Now it's onto the president to live another day.

The president has three options:

Sign me into law, veto me, or do nothing.

A veto would send me back to Congress,

And I don't want to go back if I'm being honest.

They would need a two-thirds majority vote in both houses

To override a veto, so I doubt it.

If the president did nothing, I'd become a law

After 10 days if congress was in session, but if nah?

I'd be dead, a pocket veto,

And you couldn't find me like Nemo.

But on the ninth day, when I was barely alive,

The president signed me. I became a law and survived.

There's a million ways to be killed.

It's hard to survive when you're a bill.

Only a few bills make it through,

And those that do become law that's true. (x2)