### Enactment of Bills in the Connecticut State Legislature

Prior to the opening of the odd-year session and for a limited time thereafter (as specified in the joint rules), members and members-elect of the General Assembly may file proposed bills and resolutions in the house in which they serve. In even-year sessions, individual legislators may introduce only those proposed bills and resolutions that are of a fiscal nature. Standing committees may introduce bills on any topic in any regular session of the General Assembly.

Proposed bills are not written in full statutory language. Rather, they state briefly (usually in a single paragraph), the substance of the proposed legislation in informal, non-statutory language. Only a committee may introduce bills written in formal statutory language. Proposed bills may be jointly sponsored by Senators and Representatives, and any member may co-sponsor a proposed bill originating in either house by requesting the Clerk to add his name to the list of sponsors.

The member presents the proposed bill to the Clerk of the House or Senate who assigns it a number. First reading of a proposed bill or resolution is by title and reference to a committee or by acceptance by the house of a printed list, distributed to the members, of the bills and resolutions with their numbers, sponsors, and titles, and the committees to that they have been referred. It is then recorded in the Journal by number and title, with a brief statement of purpose, and is sent to the other house for concurrent reference.

The committee separates the proposed bills referred to it into subject categories and, after providing legislators with time to express their views on these proposed bills, prepares fully drafted bills on those subjects on which it feels bills should be drafted. These become "committee" bills drafted in formal statutory language. A committee may also choose to draft a bill on a wholly new subject. Such bills are called "raised" bills. Committee bills and raised bills are also sent to both houses for a first reading, and then referred to their original committee for consideration.

### Public Hearing

The staff of the committee to which the bill is assigned sends notice of the date and place of a public hearing to the member who introduced any proposed bill upon which the committee bill that is being heard is based. Upon request, such notices are also provided to other interested persons. Hearing notices are also published in the Bulletin.

### Committee Action

After the public hearing, the committee meets to decide upon its action on the bill. Notice of such meeting is published in the Bulletin and all meetings are open to the public. The committee has several options: (1) A "favorable" report which indicates that a majority of the committee favors the bill and recommends its passage; (2) a "favorable substitute," that is a bill amended by the committee before it is favorably reported; (3) a vote to reject, or to "box," the bill; (4) an "unfavorable" report, which indicates that a majority of the committee opposes the bill and recommends its rejection. A committee may also vote a "change of reference" or a "favorable change of reference" to another committee. As the General Assembly seldom accepts or rejects a bill contrary to a committee's recommendation, it is important for any member interested in its passage or rejection to secure substantial backing and to present convincing arguments on the matter to the committee. The rules permit the members of a committee from each house to act separately in reporting bills to their respective houses. Such a provision may be necessary when the House is controlled by one party and the Senate by another.

### The Bill in the House and Senate

Upon a favorable vote, the bill must be first reviewed by the Legislative Commissioners' Office and approved by a Legislative Commissioner before being sent to the house in which it was introduced. The Legislative Commissioners then deliver the bill to the Clerk of the House or Senate, as the case may be, who, under the order of business, "Reports of Committees," presents the report to the particular house. Without discussion, the bill is read the second time (by title only) and laid on the table. Each favorably reported bill is printed and receives a file number distinct
from the original bill number. No further action on the bill can be taken until the second day succeeding the day on which it is placed in the files which are provided for the purpose on the desk of each member. Bills are placed on the Calendar by title, file number, and bill number in the order in which they are received from committee. Bills that are ready for action (that is, which have been in the files of the members for two days) are marked with an "XX" on the Calendar. They are taken up in the order in which they appear on the Calendar. The third and final reading of the bill is ordinarily by title only, but any member may request that it be read in full. Following the reading of the bill, a member of the committee that reported it explains the committee's reasons for so doing, and a general debate on the bill is in order. There may be a consent calendar on which bills, designated by the majority and minority leaders of the house in which they are pending, may be placed and passed on motion without debate. Any member may move for removal of a bill from the consent calendar and, when so removed, the bill is considered on the regular calendar.

Amendments must be in typewritten form and may be offered by members at any time prior to final passage. They are prepared in the Legislative Commissioners' Office at the request of a member. If a bill is amended on third reading, other than to correct clerical errors or mistakes as to forms or dates, a Legislative Commissioner must approve the amendment. The bill, as amended, must be reprinted and returned in its new form to the members' files before it can be passed.

**Passage and Engrossment**

After a bill has passed on the third reading, it is held for one day for a motion to reconsider, which can only be made by a member on the prevailing side of the vote. If not reconsidered, the bill is transmitted to the other house. If the other house amends the bill, it comes back to the first house for concurrence in the amendments. If the amendments are not concurred in, a conference committee may be appointed to resolve the differences. When passed by both houses, the bill is delivered to the Legislative Commissioners' Office for engrossing and supervision of printing in its final form. A Legislative Commissioner, the Clerk of the Senate and the Clerk of the House then signs the engrossed bill, and the bill is transmitted by the Clerks to the Secretary of the State who presents it to the Governor for his approval or veto.

**Action by the Governor**

If the Governor receives the bill while the legislature is in session, he has five calendar days, exclusive of Sundays and holidays, in which to sign it or return it to the house in which it originated with a statement of his objections. In the latter case, the bill may be reconsidered and, if passed by at least two-thirds of the members of each house of the General Assembly, it becomes law. If the Governor does not sign or veto the bill within five calendar days after the same has been presented to him, Sundays and holidays excepted, it automatically becomes law unless the General Assembly has adjourned the regular or special session. If the regular or special session has adjourned, the bill becomes law unless the Governor, within fifteen calendar days after it has been presented to him, transmits it to the Secretary of the State with his objections. In such case, the bill does not become law unless it is reconsidered and re-passed by the General Assembly by at least two-thirds of the members of each house of the General Assembly at the time of its reconvening, for its constitutionally mandated session, to reconsider such vetoes. Veto Session If the Governor vetoes any bill or bills after the General Assembly has adjourned, the Secretary of the State must reconvene the General Assembly on the second Monday after the last day on which the Governor is either authorized to transmit or has transmitted every bill to the Secretary with his objections (Section 15 of Article IV of the State Constitution), provided if such Monday falls on a legal holiday the General Assembly is reconvened on the next following day. The reconvened session is for the sole purpose of reconsidering and, if the General Assembly so desires, re-passing such bills. The General Assembly must adjourn sine die not later than three days following its reconvening.

**Transcripts Of Proceedings**

A verbatim typewritten record is prepared of all debates on the floor of the Senate and House and of all testimony at public hearings. Transcripts of floor debate and public hearing testimony from previous sessions are available in the legislative reference section of the State Library.