# **HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW**

All laws first begin as ideas or as a problem that needs to be solved. These ideas can become drafted legislation known as a bill. Once a bill passes, it can become a law. The process of a bill becoming a law can be quick, but more often, is quite long and may take months or years. The infographic below shows what happens at the federal level. However, the same general steps apply at the state level.

### DRAFTING OF THE BILL

A member of Congress, either a Senator or Representative, drafts a bill to solve a particular problem.

## THE BILL BECOMES LAW!

# PRESIDENTIAL CONSIDERATION

The President has 10 days to sign a bill into law or veto it. Congress can override a presidential veto with a 2/3 majority vote in both chambers.

### **RESOLVING DIFFERENCES**

A bill can only be sent to the President if identical versions have been passed by both chambers. This can require sending the bill back and forth between the chambers until differences are resolved or forming a conference committee made up of members from each chamber. If the conference committee reaches a compromise, they submit a conference report to each chamber. The conference report must be approved by both the House and Senate for the bill to move forward.

# FLOOR CONSIDERATION

During floor consideration, members of Congress discuss the bill and vote on it. This is another opportunity for the public to express their views on the legislation. Each chamber has rules on the processes, debate timeframes and voting requirements for the bill to advance. If the bill passes, it moves to the other chamber where it repeats the whole process.

### **BILL INTRODUCTION**

The bill is introduced in the Senate or House of Representatives or both, assigned a number, and referred to one or multiple committees.

### COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

The committee members can hold hearings and/or markups during which they review the bill and may make changes. The committee can collect information and testimony from the public, such as experts, opponents, and supporters.

# REPORTING OUT OF COMMITTEE

The committee(s) must approve the bill by majority vote to send it to the entire House or Senate. If approved, the bill is put on a calendar and each chamber has rules outlining how the bill advances to being considered.

