



**MARYLAND
TOURISM
COALITION**



ADVOCACY GUIDE 2026



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Maryland Tourism Coalition Legislative Committee

The Maryland Tourism Coalition (MTC) Legislative Committee is a committee created by the MTC Board of Directors to review, discuss, and act on legislative issues that impact MTC members and the tourism industry as a whole. The committee is comprised of eleven (11) MTC members with voting rights and ex-officio members including the MTC Executive Director, the Director of the Maryland Office of Tourism, and the MTC contracted lobbyist.

Legislative Committee Goals

Influence Public Policy

The Legislative Committee acts as a bridge between the tourism community and policy makers. Through advocacy, MTC can influence legislation, regulations and policies that affect the tourism industry.

Support MTC Members

MTC members face unique challenges, limited resources, and access to policy makers. MTC advocates for the needs of our members so that their voices can be heard on the issues that are important to them.

Connect Members with Government Leaders

The Legislative Committee provides a platform for our members to engage directly with elected officials, government agencies, and community leaders. Through events like Tourism Day and the Summer Soiree, the Committee facilitates dialogue between members and decision makers. Members have the opportunity to express their concerns, offer solutions, and form relationships that can drive change for their businesses and the tourism industry.

Build Coalitions and Partnerships

The Committee seeks out and works with other associations, industries, and businesses, both inside and outside of the tourism industry, to form coalitions and partnerships to address matters that affect MTC members and other businesses. Advocacy coalitions give businesses more strength in numbers and an increased ability to influence the outcomes of key issues. These coalitions allow for resource sharing, information sharing, and increased access to policy makers.

Navigate Regulatory and Legislative Changes

The Committee monitors changes in regulatory and legislative changes to provide information to our membership as to how these changes may affect their businesses. These changes can be complex in nature, and the committee will work to simplify these changes and provide resources to assist businesses in adapting to the changes.



2025 Legislative Committee Members

Voting Members

Matt Libber MD SoccerPlex (Committee Chair)
Susan Jones OC Hotel-Motel-Rest. Association (Board of Directors Chair)
Deb Carter MD Association of Campgrounds
Mia Blom Visit Baltimore
Laura Iversen Watermark Journey
Amada Hof Visit Howard County
Melanie Pursel Worcester County Office of Tourism and Economic Development
Chris Riehl Baltimore Rent-A-Tour
John Stefancik Marine Trades Assoc. of MD
Ashli Workman MD Association of Destination Marketing Organizations
Gigi Windley Kent Narrows Development Foundation

Ex-Officio

Ruth Toomey Maryland Tourism Coalition
Frank Boston Boston Plaut Law Firm
Ari Plaut Boston Plaut Law Firm
Mark Feinroth Boston Plaut Law Firm
Marci Ross MD Office of Tourism

Legislative Committee Meetings

During the time that the Maryland General Assembly is in session, the MTC Legislative Committee meets weekly each Monday at 12:00PM EST via video conferencing services. These meetings are open to all members of MTC to observe and participate. The Committee Chair may invite non-members, members of the legislature or other governing bodies, or other individuals as deemed appropriate to present to the committee on a matter before the committee. Only voting members are eligible to vote on issues before the committee. MTC Legislative Committee meetings will follow Roberts Rules of Parliamentary Procedure. Meeting agendas will be disseminated prior to meetings and minutes will be provided following meetings.

After the end of the General Assembly session each year, the Legislative Committee moves to monthly regular meetings or may call special meetings to address specific topics.

How the Legislative Committee Operates

The Legislative Chair, in consultation with the MTC Lobbyist reviews bills that are introduced in the Legislature for relevance to the tourism industry. Additionally, members of the Committee or the general membership may propose bills for view by the committee. Bills that are reviewed will be present during a committee call. The bill overview will be described to the committee, and a discussion will ensue as to the impact on the tourism industry and our membership. We will



discuss the pros and cons of the bill. A voting member of the committee will make a motion to either oppose the bill or support the bill, with or without amendments. A vote will be taken with the majority of the voting members determining the position of MTC. The committee will collectively decide as to how MTC's position should be expressed, either solely through written testimony or through both written and oral testimony. The Committee Chair will draft all written testimony for MTC. Oral testimony is provided by either the MTC Executive Director, Legislative Chair, or another MTC member based on the specific topic of the bill.

There are bills before the legislature that may have an impact on the tourism industry and/or our members, which MTC does not take a position on. These bills may be issues that have split opinions from our memberships, have tangential impact, have potential to impact our industry is amended, or other reasons why MTC does not take a position. For these bills, MTC may elect to submit an informational only letter to the legislature to provide background or additional information for their deliberative process. Such action will be approved by a vote of the voting members of the committee. Such bills will be listed as 'Monitor' on the Committee Bill Tracking document, and the committee will continue to monitor the bill's progress and may update our status if the bill changes which would require a position from MTC.

Legislative Bill Review Domain and Review Request

The Legislative Committee, while mainly focused on the Maryland Legislature, will review any federal, state, and local bill requested by an MTC member. Request for review will not always result in MTC action and is subject to a vote of the voting members of the committee. MTC member may submit bills for review by the committee at anytime using the online Legislative Committee Review Request Form found on the MTC website or directly at <https://forms.office.com/r/EGus8GS6kZ>

Legislative Committee Confidentiality

Meetings, agendas, minutes and all other documents created by the committee may contain information belonging to the Maryland Tourism Coalition which may be confidential and legally privileged. This information is only for the use of the individual or entity for which it was intended. Disclosure of information and/or documents or its contents is prohibited, except where required by law.



Legislative Events

Tourism Day

Each February, MTC holds Tourism Day in Annapolis. This is an opportunity for members to gather in the State Capitol to meet with legislators in their offices and provide them with important information about the tourism industry and issues that affect their business. Tourism Day concludes with a luncheon where legislators are invited to join us for a presentation about the tourism industry in Maryland and a discussion about the legislative issues for that year's sessions.

Summer Soiree

The Summer Soiree is held each August in Ocean City in conjunction with the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Annual Convention. This casual event is always for networking with other tourism businesses as well as federal, state, and local officials. This is an opportunity for MTC to show our elected officials what tourism is all about.

Destination Capitol Hill

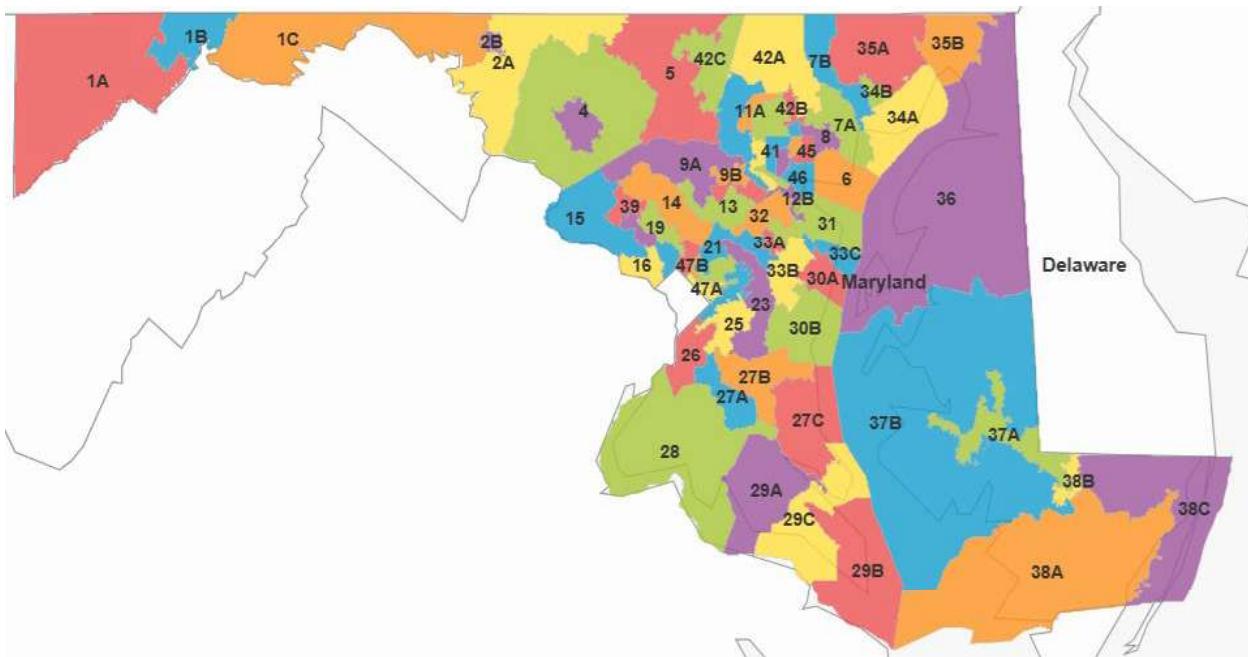
MTC sends a delegation to attend the US Travel Association's Destination Capitol Hill. This event provides two days of meetings and education as well as pre-scheduled meetings with the Maryland Federal delegation to Congress to discuss federal issues that affect the tourism industry in Maryland.

US Travel Power Hour

MTC has partnered with US Travel for small group events with one of Maryland's federal elected officials. These events are invitation only with meetings between the elected official and tourism leadership from their districts.



Maryland Legislative Districts



Find Your State Representative

Use the lookup tool on the Maryland General Assembly website to find your legislator based on your address

- 1) Go to <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Members/District>
- 2) Click Lookup from the center of the page
- 3) Enter the address for either your residence or business based on your specific need

Maryland Executive Branch

Governor	Wes Moore
Lt. Governor	Aruna Miller
Attorney General	Anthony Brown
Comptroller	Brooke Lierman
Sec. of State	Susan Lee
Dept. of Planning	Rebecca Flora
Dept. of Aging	Carmel Roques
Dept. of Agriculture	Kevin Atticks
Dept. of Budget and Management	TBD
Dept. of Commerce	Harry Coker Jr.
Dept. of Disabilities	Carol Beatty



Dept. of Education	Dr. Carey Wright
Dept. of Emergency Management	Russell Strickland
Dept. of the Environment	Serena McIlwain
Dept. of General Services	Atif Chaudhry
Dept. of Health	Meena Seshamani, MD, Ph.D
Dept. Housing and Community Development	Jacob Day
Dept. of Human Services	Rafael Lopez
Dept. of Information Technology	Kaite Olson Savage
Dept. of Juvenile Services	Vincent Schiraldi
Dept. of Labor	Portia Wu, Esq.
Dept. of Natural Resources	Joshua Kurtz
Dept. of Public Safety & Correctional Services	Carolyn Scruggs
MD State Police	Colonel Roland Butler
Dept. of Transportation	Paul Wiedefeld
Dept. of Veterans and Military Families	Anthony Woods
Higher Education Commission	Dr. Sanjay Rai
Adjutant General of MD	Major General Janeen Birckhead
Office of Appointments	Mollie Byron
Dept. of Service and Civic Innovation	Paul Monteiro Jr.
Governor's Office for Children	Carmel Martin

County Government

Use the links below to obtain names and information for county elected officials

Allegany	Harford
Anne Arundel	Howard
Baltimore City	Kent
Baltimore County	Montgomery
Calvert	Prince George's
Caroline	Queen Anne's
Carroll	St Mary's
Cecil	Somerset
Charles	Talbot
Dorchester	Washington
Frederick	Wicomico
Garrett	Worcester



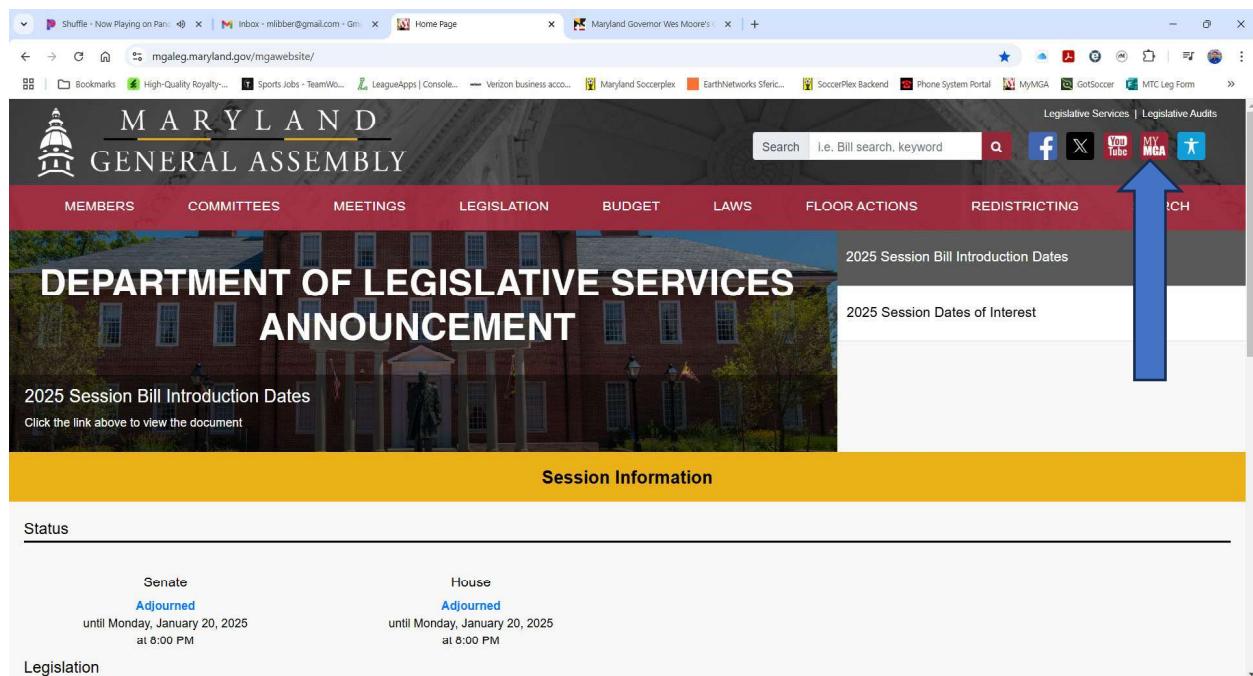
Maryland General Assembly Bill Information

You can track bills introduced in the Maryland General Assembly from the Maryland General Assembly (MGA) website, <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/>. From this website, you can create a MyMGA account (free). The MyMGA Account allows you to track specific legislation, submit testimony for bills, or sign up to testify for hearings. You must have a MyMGA account to upload testimony or signup to testify at hearings.

Sign Up for MyMGA Account

1) Go to <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/>

2) Click the MyMGA Button the upper right corner of the page, and select “Register”



The screenshot shows the Maryland General Assembly website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for MEMBERS, COMMITTEES, MEETINGS, LEGISLATION, BUDGET, LAWS, FLOOR ACTIONS, REDISTRICTING, and a SEARCH button. Below the navigation bar, there is a banner for the 'DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES ANNOUNCEMENT'. The main content area displays '2025 Session Bill Introduction Dates' and '2025 Session Dates of Interest'. A blue arrow points to the 'SEARCH' button in the top right corner of the header.

3) Follow the onscreen instructions

Read Proposed Legislation

All bills introduced during the General Assembly session will be posted to the MGA website, typically the day after they are introduced. To view proposed legislation from the MGA website, click the link for ‘Legislation’ in the top menu. From the left menu select either the Senate or House to view the bills introduced in each house of the General Assembly. These pages will display a chart with 50 bills at a time. The chart will display the Bill Number, Title, Sponsor, Current Status, Committee Assignment, Hearing Date and Time, and the Committee of the opposing house once it crosses over.



If you click the bill number, you will be shown more detailed information about the bill. This will include the additional information on a timeline of where the bill is in the process, all sponsors and co-sponsors, link to Fiscal and Policy Notes, a synopsis of the bill, bill administrative details, history, subjects contained in the bill, and a list of statutes affected by the bill.

The screenshot shows the Maryland General Assembly Legislation page. The top navigation bar includes links for Members, Committees, Meetings, Legislation (which is the active tab), Budget, Laws, Floor Actions, Redistricting, and Search. The main content area displays a bill's progress through the legislative process. The bill number, HB0001, is shown with a yellow icon. A timeline shows the following stages: 1ST READING, REFERRAL TO CMTE, 2ND READING, 3RD READING, 1ST READING, REFERRAL TO CMTE, 2ND READING, 3RD READING, REVIEW IN ORIGINAL CHAMBER, CONF. CMTE (IF NECESSARY), and TO GOVERNOR. The bill is currently at the REFERRAL TO CMTE stage in the Original Chamber. A sidebar on the left lists links for Charts, Senate, House (which is selected), Publications, and About. The right sidebar includes links for Legislative Services and Legislative Audits, as well as social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and MyMGA.

To read the full text of the bill click the bill number to the left of the timeline. This will download a pdf version of the bill.

Creating a Bill Tracking List

You can create a Bill Tracking List to monitor bills of interest to you. To create a list, click the MyMGA button in the top right corner of the page. You will need to sign in if you are not already signed in. Click the “Bill Tracking Lists” option. On the Bill Tracking List page click “Add List” and follow the instructions to create a list.

To add a bill to the list, go to the ‘Bill Information’ page (pictured above) and click the thumb tack icon above the bill number. You will have the option to add that bill to a list that you created. You must create the list before you can save the bill to the list.



How to Interpret Legislation

Legislation is written in legal language as it will be written into the Annotated Code of Maryland, the set of laws that govern the State. The bill may be a new law that does not modify existing law or a modification of an existing law already in the annotated code. Legislative language can at times be confusing for those of us without law degrees.

Below is a description of bill drafting procedures that will assist you in your review and interpretation of the legislation:

- **lower case** indicates existing law.
- **UPPER CASE** indicates new text added to existing law
- **[Brackets]** indicate text deleted from existing law
- **Underlining** indicates new text amendments to the Bill
- **Strike-out** indicates text stricken from the Bill by amendment
- ***Italics*** indicate opposite Legislative Chamber or Conference Committee amendments

NOTE: On legislation that has been considered by both Chambers, several bill drafting procedures may appear in combination; review carefully.

Submitting Testimony and Witness Signup

When you are ready to submit written testimony follow these steps:

1) Sign into your 'MY MGA Account

A screenshot of a web browser displaying the Maryland General Assembly website. The URL in the address bar is 'mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/'. The page features a large image of the Maryland State House. At the top, there are navigation links for 'MEMBERS', 'COMMITTEES', 'MEETINGS', 'LEGISLATION', 'BUDGET', 'LAWS', and 'FLOOR ACTIONS'. A dropdown menu for 'MyMGA' is open on the right, showing options like 'Bill Tracking Lists', 'Witness Signup', 'FAQ', 'Change P...', 'Edit Account', 'Cancel Acc...', and 'Sign Out'. A large blue arrow points upwards from the bottom of the page towards this dropdown menu. The main content area includes sections for '2025 Session B' and '2025 Session Dates'. At the bottom, there are 'Senate' and 'House' status updates, both showing 'Adjourned' until Monday, January 20, 2025, at 8:00 PM. A status bar at the very bottom of the browser window shows the URL 'https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/MyMGA/tracking/WitnessSignup/'.

2025 Session B

2025 Session Dates

Senate

Adjourned

until Monday, January 20, 2025

at 8:00 PM

House

Adjourned

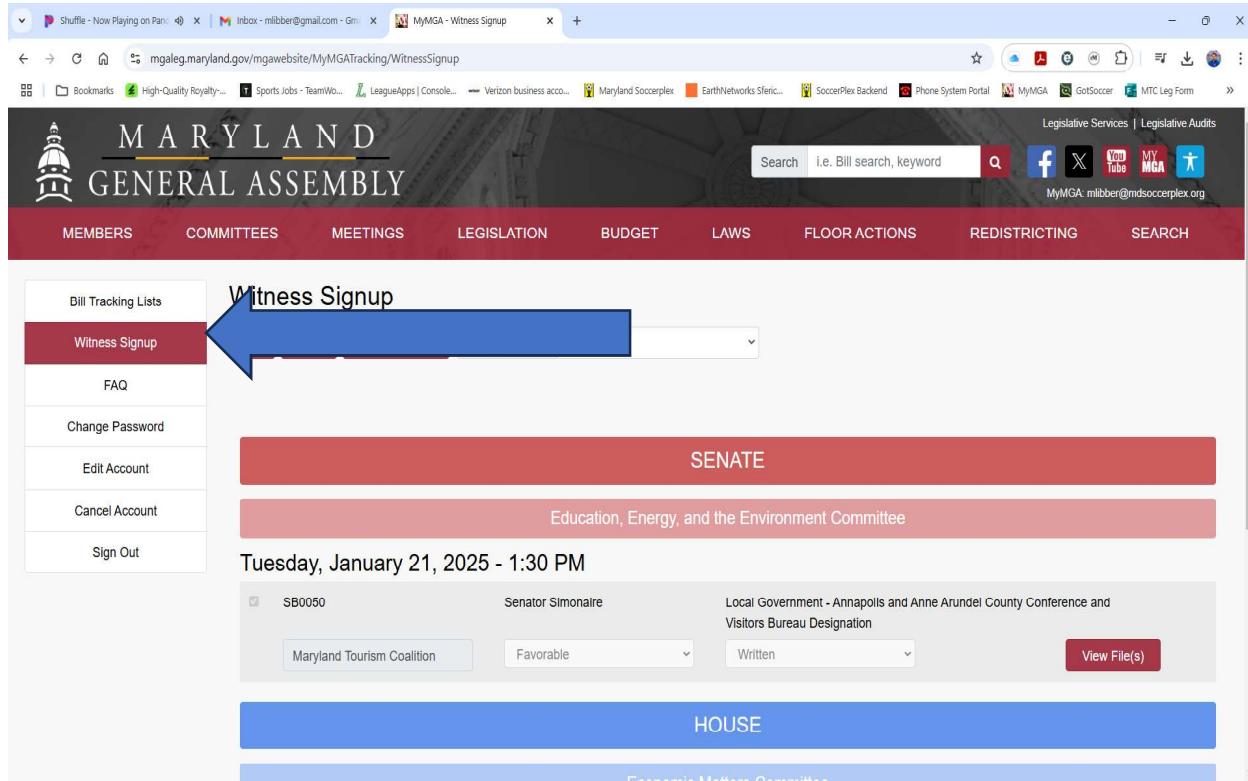
until Monday, January 20, 2025

at 8:00 PM



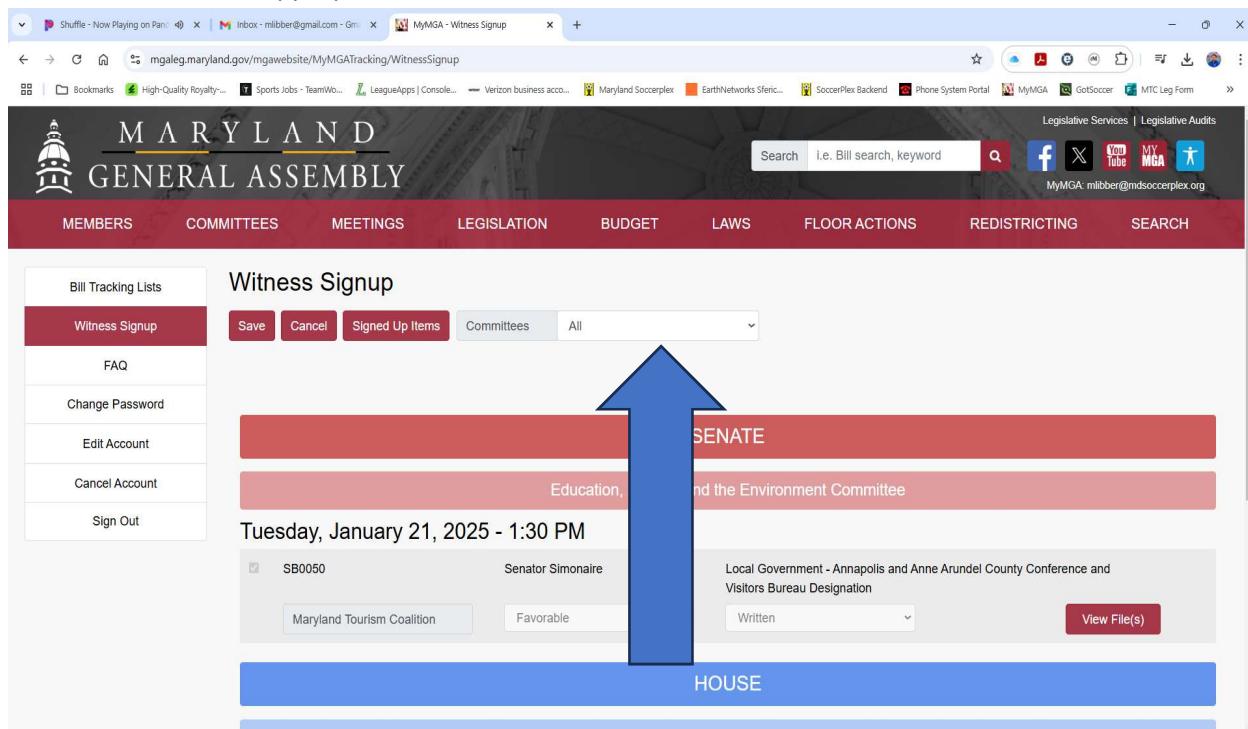
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2) After signing in, click on witness signup.



The screenshot shows the Maryland General Assembly website. The sidebar on the left has a 'Witness Signup' button highlighted with a blue arrow. The main content area shows a 'Witness Signup' section for the 'SENATE' on 'Tuesday, January 21, 2025 - 1:30 PM'. It lists a bill (SB0050) with Senator Simonaire, categorized under 'Local Government - Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Conference and Visitors Bureau Designation'. The status is 'Favorable' and 'Written'. A 'View File(s)' button is also present. Below this is a 'HOUSE' section.

3) Scroll down to the appropriate Committee.



The screenshot shows the same Maryland General Assembly website as the previous one, but with a large blue arrow pointing upwards from the bottom of the page towards the 'Witness Signup' button in the sidebar. The main content area is identical to the previous screenshot, showing the 'SENATE' and 'HOUSE' sections for the witness signup.



4) Click on box to the left of Bill Number for the bill for which you wish to provide testimony,

- fill in organization box
- fill in your position
- click on the desired testimony option
- upload PDF file to the right of testimony box
- then hit the SAVE icon in the top left of the page

Testimony and Witness Sign Up Timelines

In 2025 both the House and Senate adopted the same rules for witness sign and testimony submission. Sign up will open two (2) business days prior to the Hearing. The sign up will be open from 8:00 AM – until 6:00 PM on that given day. Committees may also adopt rules that limit the number of witnesses for a given bill. Bills that were introduced in the 2024 Session may be limited to “Sponsor Only” or “Sponsor and 2 Favorable and 2 Unfavorable” witnesses only. If you sign up to be a witness, you will receive an email 24 hours in advance of the hearing notifying you if you were selected to be a witness for that hearing.

	Monday Hearing	Tuesday Hearing	Wednesday Hearing	Thursday Hearing	Friday Hearing
Witness and Written Testimony Sign Up Period	Thursday from 8AM-6PM	Friday from 8AM-6PM	Monday from 8AM-6PM	Tuesday from 8AM-6PM	Wednesday from 8AM- 6PM

Witness and Testimony Guidelines

Oral Testimony

- Although witnesses are strongly encouraged to provide in-person oral testimony, to include as many citizens as possible in the legislative process, up to 14 members of the public may provide virtual oral testimony via Zoom per bill.
- Committees may limit oral testimony based on the number of bills being heard and the number of witnesses signed up to testify. If that situation arises, committees will notify witnesses.
- For bills the committee heard and voted out unanimously during the 2024 Maryland General Assembly, committees will only hear oral testimony from the bill sponsor.
- For any other bills that the committees heard during the 2024 Maryland General Assembly, committees will hear from two proponents and two opponents.
- Witnesses must designate whether they will testify in person or by Zoom. Witnesses may not change their oral testimony designation (virtual or in-person) after the signup system closes, even if they are not selected for virtual testimony.
- Witness testimony via pre-recorded video will not be allowed.



- Late witness sign-ups will not be allowed, but late written testimony may be sent to the committee up until the time of the hearing.
- Witness testimony will be timed. Witnesses should plan to conclude their testimony at the two-minute (2:00) mark, but the allotted time will be at the discretion of the committee chair.
- Witnesses who provide in-person oral testimony will be called to testify before witnesses provide testimony via Zoom. Any changes to this format will be at the discretion of the committee chair.
- Witnesses who wish to share an audio-visual presentation with the committee are strongly encouraged to upload the presentation as written testimony. For witnesses providing in-person testimony, showing the audio-visual presentation during the bill hearing will be at the discretion of the committee chair. Please check with the committee manager for each committee's policy. Witnesses providing testimony via Zoom will not be permitted to show an audio-visual presentation during their testimony.
- Typically, committee members will ask questions after the conclusion of a witness's testimony. However, any changes to this format are at the discretion of the committee chair.

Zoom Instructions

- Zoom links will ONLY be sent to witnesses selected to testify who chose "virtual oral" or "virtual both" when they signed up to testify on a bill.
- Zoom links will be sent from noreply@mlis.state.md.us by 12:00 p.m. on the day of the scheduled bill hearing.
- If a witness is NOT selected to testify, the witness will receive an email from noreply@mlis.state.md.us to inform the witness they were not selected.
- The Zoom link is confidential and should not be shared.
- Witnesses must log into Zoom with their first and last names, so committee staff are able to quickly identify the user and admit them into the meeting at the appropriate time. Witnesses who do not log into Zoom with their first and last name may miss their opportunity to testify.
- Zoom witnesses should follow the hearings via the MGA website to know when the bill they are testifying to is going to be called by the committee chair and should log into Zoom when the bill before their bill is called.
- When testifying, witnesses must have their camera on.
- After the committee chair indicates that there are no further questions, the witness should exit the Zoom meeting, or they will be logged out by committee staff.

Written Testimony

- Any written testimony submitted to a committee is public testimony and therefore accessible to the public and cannot be removed.
- Written testimony MUST be in a PDF format to be uploaded.
- Accommodations



- For Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requests, please contact the committee directly.
- For an MGA sign language interpretation request, please request sign language interpretation at least 5 – 7 businesses days in advance of the event by filling out the following form: Request Sign Language Interpretation Form. The committee will attempt to arrange interpreters on shorter notice but cannot guarantee availability; interpreters are not generally available on an emergency or short-notice basis.

Voting

- The committee voting schedule is at the discretion of the committee chair and will depend on the workload of the committee.
- Voting sessions and voting lists will be available in the MGA hearing schedule 24 hours in advance of a voting session, when feasible.
- All voting sessions will be live streamed via the MGA website, when feasible.
- Committees will publish the outcome of a voting session in the MGA hearing schedule within 24 hours after a voting session and on the bill page on the MGA website after the committee issues its voting report.



Written Testimony Example

(Should be written on an organization letterhead if sent on behalf of a company, association, organization, etc.)

January 17, 2025

The Honorable C.T. Wilson, Chair
House Economic Matters Committee

Re: House Bill 29 - Electronic Payment Transactions - Interchange Fees - Calculation and Use of Data

Position: ***Oppose***

Dear Chair Wilson and Vice Chair Crosby,

On behalf of **(insert organization)**, I am writing to express our **opposition** to House Bill 29. **(Insert City or County)** is one of Maryland's most popular tourist destinations, and the success of our tourism industry is directly tied to the convenience and efficiency of the electronic payment systems that visitors and residents rely on every day. We strongly believe that the provisions outlined in House Bill 29 that require a separation of nearly every electronic payment transaction into multiple parts could negatively affect not only the tourism sector but also the broader economy.

In 2024, over _____ million people visited **(Insert Jurisdiction Name)**, generating significant economic impact for our local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, shops, and attractions. The majority of these visitors use credit cards for their travel-related purchases, including booking accommodations, dining, and enjoying local experiences. These transactions help support local jobs and contribute directly to the economic vitality of our community.

The credit card reward programs, such as airline miles and travel points, are an important incentive for consumers to visit our area. For many, these rewards make travel more affordable and convenient, and, as a result, they drive visitor spending here in **(Insert Jurisdiction Name)** and the surrounding areas. In fact, the loyalty programs tied to credit cards and travel-related purchases encourage repeat visits and help bring in new visitors, all of which is critical to the continued growth of our tourism sector.

Requiring the separation of electronic payment transactions into multiple parts, as proposed in HB 29, introduces unnecessary complexity and risk. These changes could disrupt the smooth operation of our existing payment systems, potentially deterring visitors from using their credit cards as they normally would. For all these reasons, we respectfully request an **unfavorable** report and thank you for your dedicated support to the tourism industry.

Kind Regards,
(Signature)

Your Name
Title

Contact Information (if you wish to share this, as your testimony will become public record)



Addressing Public Figures

Elected officials bear the “Honorable” address. Cabinet members are appointed and therefore do not bear the “Honorable” address.

Note: Former officeholders and secretaries retain their honorifics after serving. Refer to them by the last office or position they held.

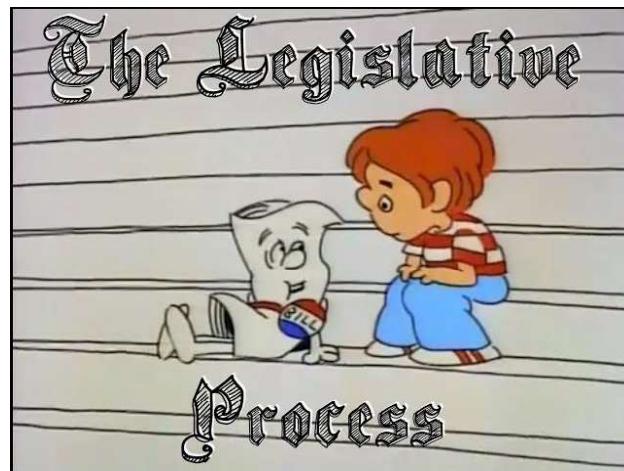
Position	In Writing	Salutation	In Conversation
Governor	The Honorable (Full Name) Lt. Governor of Maryland	Dear Governor (last name)	Governor (last name)
Lt. Governor	The Honorable (Full Name) Governor of Maryland	Dear Lt. Governor (last name)	Lt. Governor (last name)
Attorney General	Attorney General, State of Maryland	Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. Attorney General (last name)	Attorney General (last name)
Cabinet Secretary	Mr./Mrs./Ms. (Full Name) Secretary of (department)	Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. Secretary (last name)	Secretary (last name)
US Senator	The Honorable Senator (Full Name) of Maryland	Dear Senator (last name)	Senator (last name)
Congressman	The Honorable Representative (Full Name) of Maryland	Dear Congressman/Congresswoman (last name)	Congressman/ Congresswoman (last name)
State Senator	The Honorable (Full Name) Maryland Senator	Dear Senator (last name)	Senator (last name)
State Delegate	The Honorable (Full Name)	Dear Delegate (last name)	Delegate (last name)
Mayor	The Honorable (Full Name) Mayor of (City Name)	Dear Mayor (last name)	Mayor (last name)
County Executive	The Honorable (Full Name) County Executive of (County Name)	Dear County Executive (last name)	County Executive (last name)
County/City Council	The Honorable (Full Name)	Dear Councilman/Councilwoman (last name)	Councilman/ Councilwoman (last name)



The Legislative Process

After the [Department of Legislative Services](#) drafts legislation in the form of a bill or a joint resolution, the sponsor files it ("drops it into the hopper") with the Secretary of the Senate or the Chief Clerk of the House of Delegates. The bill or resolution is numbered, stamped for approval and codification by the Department of Legislative Services, and printed for first reading (Senate Rule 26; House Rule 26). Senate bills or resolutions appear on white paper and those for the House on blue paper.

The Constitution of Maryland requires that before any bill becomes law, it must be read on three different days in each legislative chamber, for a total of six readings. A bill may not be read for the third time in its 'House of Origin' until it has been reprinted. The Constitution also specifies that a bill must be passed in each house by a majority vote of the total membership, and the final vote on third reading in each house must be recorded.



Introduction of the Bill (1st Reading of Bill)

A bill may be introduced throughout the ninety days of a legislative session, but the later a bill is introduced, the more difficult its passage becomes. Any Senate bill introduced after the 24th calendar day of a session must be referred to the [Senate Rules Committee](#), cannot be required to be returned to the floor except by a two-thirds vote of the membership, and may not be petitioned from the Rules Committee (Senate Rule 32). A House bill introduced after the 31st calendar day must be referred to the [House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee](#), requires a two-thirds vote to be returned to the floor, and cannot be petitioned from the Rules and Executive Nominations Committee (House Rule 32). For a bill to be introduced during the last 35 days of a session, the rules must be suspended by a two-thirds vote ([Const., Art. III, sec. 27](#)). Except for the annual budget bill and bills creating or amending State debts, a House bill that crosses over to the Senate after the 76th day of session is subject to the same restrictions as is a bill introduced after the 24th day.



COMMITTEES

The committee system of the General Assembly is a vital part of the legislative process. After introduction, a bill is assigned to a standing committee for review.

Senate Standing Committees	House Standing Committees
Budget & Taxation Committee	Appropriations Committee
Education, Energy & the Environment Committee	Economic Matters Committee
Executive Nominations Committee	Environment & Transportation Committee
Finance Committee	Health & Government Operations Committee
Judicial Proceedings Committee	Judiciary Committee
Rules Committee	Labor, Elections, and Government
	Rules & Executive Nominations Committee
	Ways & Means Committee

Rules of each house require that every bill or joint resolution, with one exception, be referred to a standing committee after first reading (Senate Rule 33; House Rule 33). Standing committees are defined as those committees set forth in the Rules of the Senate or the Rules of the House of Delegates (Code State Government Article, sec. 2-101(f)). Their primary function is to consider all bills, or draft laws, referred to them by the Senate President or House Speaker. To review proposed legislation, the Senate has four standing committees, and the House has six such committees (Senate Rule 18; House Rule 18).

At the beginning of each session, the [Senate President](#) and [House Speaker](#) name the chairs, vice-chairs, and members of standing committees. A senator or delegate may not be appointed to more than one standing committee whose main function is to consider legislation. The Senate or House of Delegates may suspend rules in order to consider a bill or resolution without referring it to a standing committee as long as each member receives a copy of the bill or resolution to be so considered (Senate Rule 33(f); House Rule 33(f)).

The fate of most legislative proposals is determined within the standing committee to which they are assigned. Committees hold a public hearing on each bill or joint resolution assigned to them. During session, the [Department of Legislative Services](#) issues a weekly [hearing schedule](#) so that those interested may testify for or against proposed legislation. The Department of Legislative Services prepares a fiscal and policy analysis for each bill, and these fiscal and policy notes are considered during committee deliberations. To gauge a bill's economic impact on small business, the [Department of Legislative Services](#) (since 1997) also prepares an economic analysis and rating for each proposal introduced by a member of the General Assembly.

At the committee hearing, testimony usually is heard from the bill's sponsor and other proponents and opponents of the bill. Testimony and further consideration may result in amendments to the



bill made by the committee. The final vote of the committee is recorded by member, and may be favorable (with or without amendment), unfavorable, or without recommendation. Having been "voted out of committee," the bill now returns to the floor of its chamber of origin accompanied by a report of committee action.

Select Committees or Delegations. Bills having a purely local impact are referred to select committees or delegations. A select committee usually is composed of a county's delegation in the House or its senators, with other members appointed as necessary to make up the minimum number of three. Counties without home rule keep their select committees busy.

Consideration of the Committee Report (2nd Reading of the Bill)

After consideration of committee amendments, the bill is then open to amendment from the floor. There, committee action may be reversed, although this happens infrequently. Second reading is completed when the presiding officer orders the bill, with any adopted amendments, printed for third reading.

Floor Vote on the Bill (3rd Reading of the Bill)

No amendments may be presented on third reading. In the chamber of origin, a recorded vote is taken to pass or reject the bill. To pass, the bill must receive a majority vote of the elected membership.

Second Chamber

After passage by the first chamber, the bill is sent to the opposite chamber, has its first reading, and is assigned to a committee for consideration. The procedure followed is identical with that of the first chamber except that amendments may be proposed during second and third readings. If not amended in the second chamber, final passage may occur without reprinting.

If amended in the second chamber, the bill is returned to the chamber of origin so that house may consider the amendments. If the amendments are agreed to, the bill is voted on as amended and action is complete. The bill is reprinted, or "enrolled," to include the added amendments before being submitted to the Governor.

If the amendments are rejected, the amending chamber may be asked to withdraw its amendments. If it refuses, either chamber may request that a conference committee be appointed to resolve the differences between the two chambers.

Conference Committee

Appointed by the Senate President and the House Speaker, a conference committee consists of three members of each house. The committee sends a report of its recommendations to each chamber which then can adopt or reject it. If the report is adopted, the bill is voted upon for final passage in each house. If the report is rejected by either house, the bill fails.



Consent Calendar

The consent calendar is a list of bills to be read and voted upon as a group ([Const., Art. II, sec. 17; Art. III, secs. 27, 28](#)). The Senate and the House of Delegates may adopt a "consent calendar" procedure if members of each house receive reasonable notice of the bills placed on each consent calendar. This procedure expedites the legislative process. In 1988, the Senate revised its rules to place bills and joint resolutions on consent calendars by category as they are voted out of committee (Senate Rule 55). The House of Delegates still retains a [Consent Calendars Committee](#) to determine which bills and joint resolutions may be included on consent calendars (House Rules 18 and 55).

Effective Date of Laws

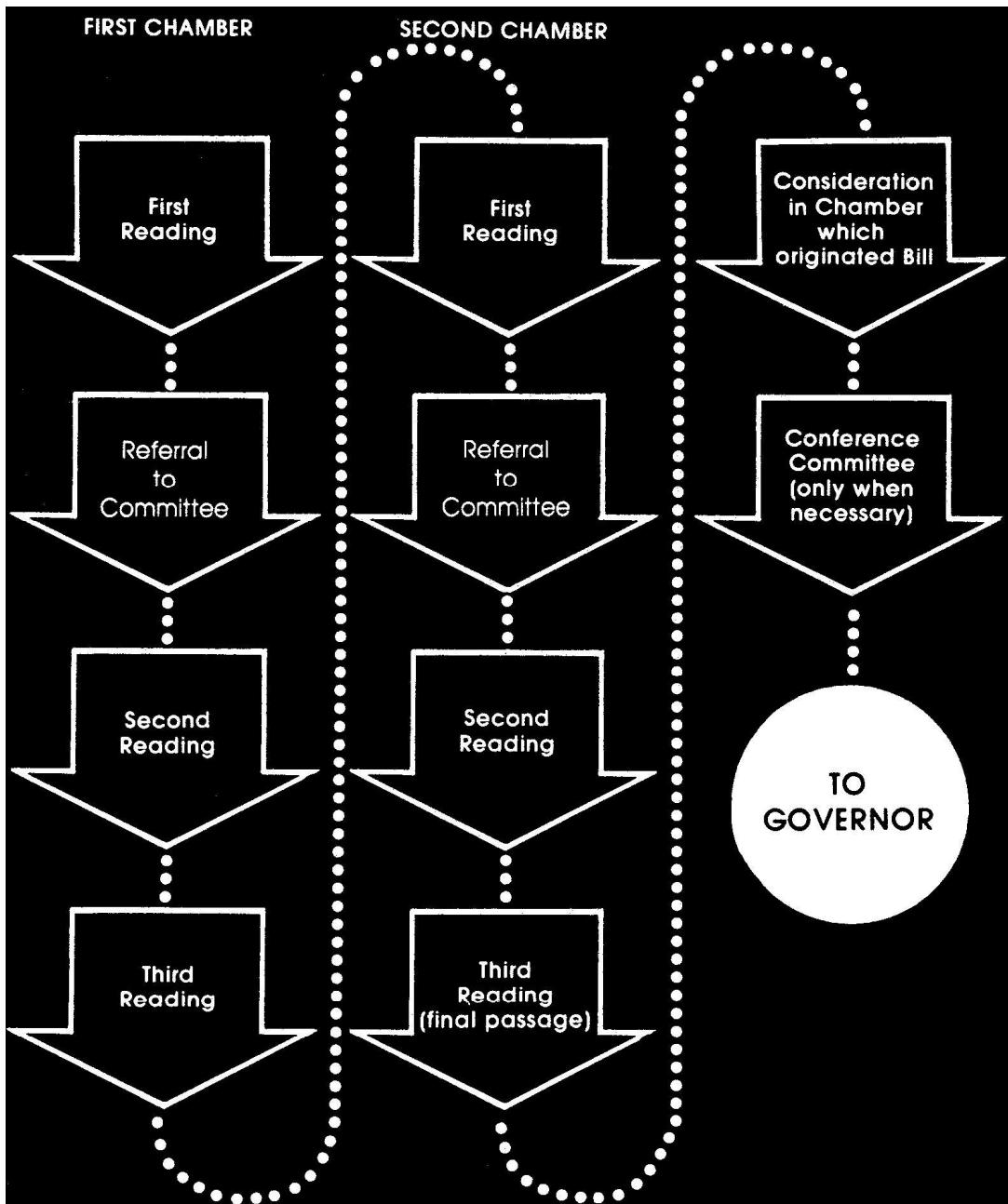
All bills passed by the General Assembly become law when signed by the Governor, or when passed over the Governor's veto by three-fifths of the membership of each house. According to the Constitution, laws thus approved take effect on the first day of June after the session in which they were passed, except when a later date is specified in the act, or the bill is declared an emergency measure. For many years, most laws took effect July 1. During the 1992 Session, however, October 1 began to be used as the standard effective date for legislation, coinciding with the start of the federal government's fiscal year. Emergency bills, passed by three-fifths of the total number of members of each house, become law immediately upon their approval by the Governor.

All passed bills, except the budget bill and constitutional amendments, must be presented to the Governor within twenty days following adjournment of a session. The Governor may veto such bills within thirty days after presentation. If a passed bill is not vetoed, it becomes law. The budget bill, however, becomes law upon its final passage and cannot be vetoed. Constitutional amendments also cannot be vetoed; they become law only upon their ratification by the voters at the next general election.

Vetoed Bills

The power to override a veto rests with the General Assembly. If the Governor vetoes a bill during a regular session, the General Assembly immediately considers the Governor's veto message. If the Governor vetoes a bill presented after the session, the veto message must be considered immediately at the next regular or special session of the legislature. The General Assembly may not override a veto during the first year of a new legislative term since the bill would have been passed by the previous legislature ([Const., Art. II, sec. 17](#)). A three-fifths vote of the elected membership of both chambers is necessary to override a veto.

The Progress of a Bill Diagram



*Courtesy of the Department of Legislative Services