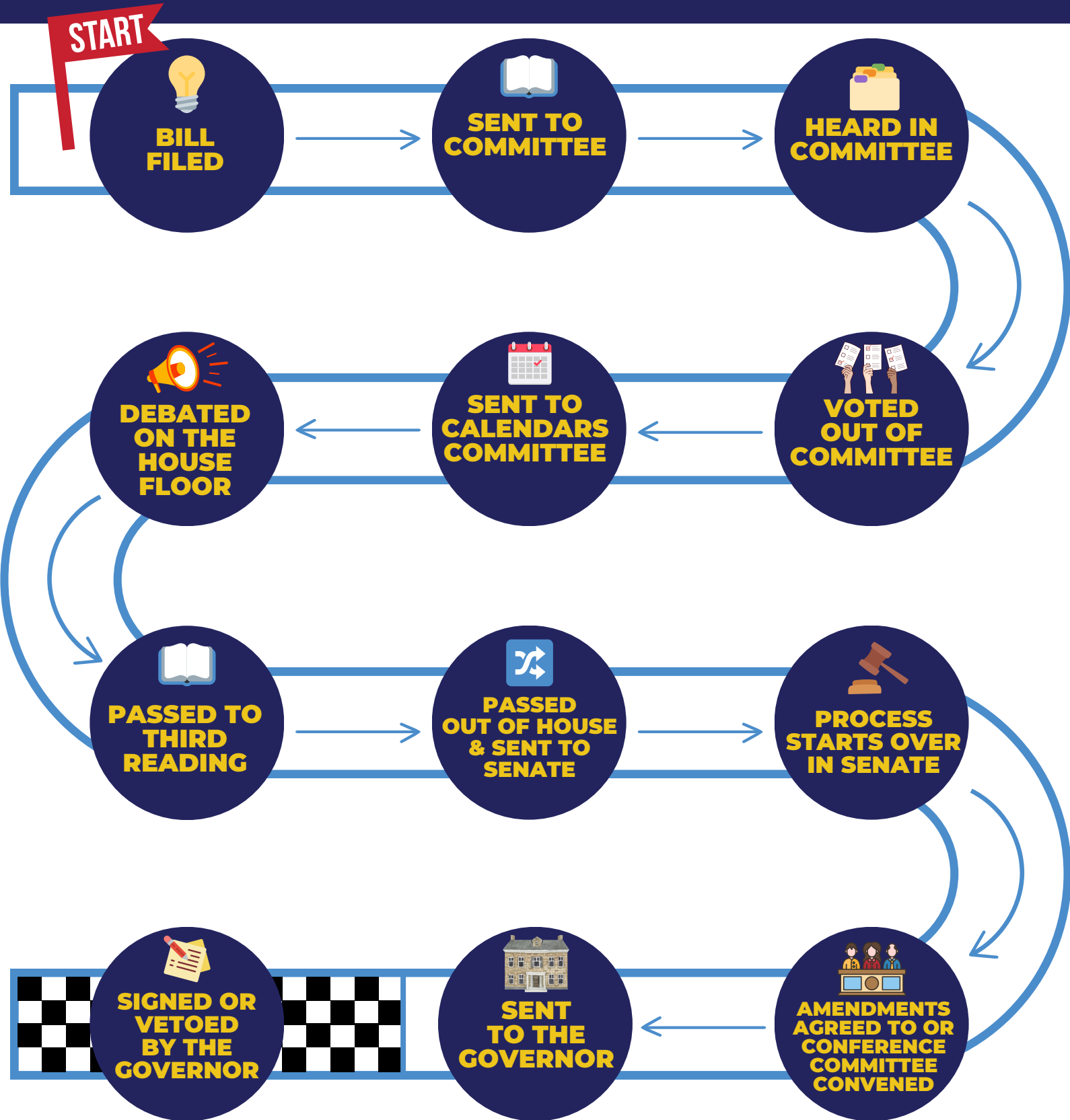


TEXAS AFL★CIO HOW A BILL BECOMES A STATE LAW



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1. BILLS ARE FILED



2. REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

The bill is sent to the relevant committee. A bill concerning labor unions, for instance, would likely be sent to the House Committee on Trade, Workforce, and Economic Development.



3. HEARD IN COMMITTEE

The committee chair chooses what bills get heard and when. These hearings permit public testimony from outside groups and individuals. Those testifying may choose to be: for (in support), against (in opposition), or on (neutral). In the House, notice of a public committee hearing must be posted at least five days before the meeting for the majority of session.



4. VOTED OUT OF COMMITTEE

When a bill is voted out of committee, the committee prepares a report that includes the committee's vote on the bill, to which calendar committee the bill will be sent, a bill analysis, a fiscal note, and impact statement (if required), and the text of the bill, either its original text or the committee's substitute, amending the original bill.



5. SENT TO HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CALENDARS OR HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL & CONSENT CALENDAR

The House Committee on Calendars determines which bills will be added to the Daily House Calendar to be considered by the full House. Although a bill may be sent to this committee, it does not mean that it will be added to a calendar – this is a common way for a bill to die during the legislative process. A bill may also be sent to the House Committee on Local & Consent Calendars, but must 1) be local in nature and only impact a specific community (additional rules apply) or 2) have statewide impact and have passed out of a committee unanimously with the recommendation to be considered on the Local & Consent Calendar.



6. DEBATED ON THE HOUSE FLOOR

The first time a bill is debated on the House floor is called the “second reading.” This is when members debate the bill and propose amendments, which are passed with a simple majority of present and voting members. Each amendment is voted on separately.

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7. PASSED TO THIRD READING

After members debate the bill and vote on amendments, the bill is passed to what's called "third reading". This is the final reading of the bill before final passage in the House. While the bill can be amended during third reading, it requires a two-thirds majority.

8. PASSED OUT OF THE HOUSE

After the bill is read a third time, Members vote on its final passage. A House Bill (H.B.) or Senate Bill (S.B.) is passed with a simple majority of present and voting members. House Concurrent Resolutions (HCRs), or Senate Concurrent Resolutions (SCRs), require two-thirds of Members present.

9. SENT TO SENATE

The whole process begins again in the Senate. The bill is referred to a committee, debated and amended on the Senate floor, and sent back to the House.

10. CONFERENCE COMMITTEE CONVENED

If the Senate amends a bill and the House does not "concur" (agree) with the changes, a Conference Committee is formed with five members from each chamber to reconcile the differences between the different versions of the bill. A report with final version must be signed by a majority of the conference committee members in each chamber and then must be passed by both chambers for the bill to pass. If the committee can't come to an agreement or either chamber rejects the report, the bill dies. The author can discharge the committee and concur with the other chamber's changes to keep the bill moving.

11. SENT TO THE GOVERNOR

If the bill is unchanged when it gets back to its originating chamber, the originating chamber agrees with the amendments, or the chambers accept the Conference Committee's changes, the bill is "enrolled" (a fancy way of saying passed) and sent to the Governor's desk to be signed.

12. SIGNED OR VETOED BY THE GOVERNOR

Once the bill reaches the governor's desk, it may be signed or vetoed by the governor within 10 or 20 days depending on when it reaches the governor. If neither happens, the bill becomes law as if the governor signs it. If the governor vetoes a bill while the Legislature is still in session, the bill gets sent back to the originating chamber. A two-thirds majority is required to override a veto.