

Bills

A bill is the form used for most legislation, whether permanent or temporary, general or special, public or private.

The form of a House bill is as follows:

A BILL For the establishment, etc. [as the title may be].

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, etc.

The enacting clause was prescribed by law in 1871 and is identical in all bills, whether they originate in the House of Representatives or in the Senate.

Bills may originate in either the House of Representatives or the Senate with one notable exception. [Article I, Section 7](#), of the Constitution provides that all bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives but that the Senate may propose, or concur with, amendments. By tradition, general appropriation bills also originate in the House of Representatives.

There are two types of bills-public and private. A public bill is one that affects the public generally. A bill that affects a specified individual or a private entity rather than the population at large is called a private bill. A typical private bill is used for relief in matters such as immigration and naturalization and claims against the United States.

A bill originating in the House of Representatives is designated by "H.R." followed by a number that it retains throughout all its parliamentary stages. The letters signify "House of Representatives" and not, as is sometimes incorrectly assumed, "House resolution." A Senate bill is designated by "S." followed by its number. The term "companion bill" is used to describe a bill introduced in one House of Congress that is similar or identical to a bill introduced in the other House of Congress.

A bill that has been agreed to in identical form by both bodies becomes the law of the land only after-

1. Presidential approval; or
2. failure by the President to return it with objections to the House in which it originated within 10 days (Sundays excepted) while Congress is in session; or
3. the overriding of a presidential veto by a two-thirds vote in each House.

Such a bill does not become law without the President's signature if Congress by their final adjournment prevent its return with objections. This is known as a "pocket veto." For a discussion of presidential action on legislation, see [Part XVIII](#).

Source: <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/lawsmade.bysec/formsofaction.html#>