

## Test your knowledge

1. What are the three branches of New York's government?
2. How many members are in the New York State Legislature?
3. How many bills are introduced in the state Legislature each year?
4. On average, how many of the bills are acted upon?
5. How many bills can the governor veto each year?
6. How can a veto be overridden?

*(Answers below)*

- Answers:**
1. Executive (governor), Legislative (Senate and Assembly), and Judicial (courts).
  2. There are 63 senators and 150 assembly members.
  3. There are approximately 14,000 pieces of legislation (bills) that are introduced each year.
  4. Of the 14,000 bills introduced each year, only 2,000 are acted upon and of those, 800 are signed into law.
  5. The governor has the power to veto any bill without limitation.
  6. A veto can be overridden by a two-thirds vote in each house (Senate and Assembly).

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# HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW



*Compliments of ...*

Assembly Member

Rebecca A. Seawright



*A message from ...*  
Assembly Member  
**Rebecca A. Seawright**

Dear Neighbor,

As your representative in the state Assembly, my chief responsibility lies in drafting, analyzing and voting on proposed legislation that affects all New Yorkers. I'm honored and humbled that you've entrusted this important duty to me, and know that I'll always fight for you in Albany.

The New York State Legislature relies on full citizen participation in the lawmaking process to ensure that our priorities reflect your interests and concerns. Many laws begin their journey as ideas from people just like you.

I hope you find this brochure helpful in understanding the legislative process. If you have any questions about this or any other issue, please contact my office.

Welcome to the state Legislature.

Sincerely,

Rebecca A. Seawright  
Member of Assembly

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# Where do our laws come from?



## 1. Start with an idea.

You don't have to be an assemblymember, senator or governor to come up with an idea for a new law in New York. Anybody can think up new ways to make New York a better place to live. All you have to do is use your imagination.

## 2. Tell your lawmaker about your idea.

Once you come up with your idea, call, email or write to your state legislators. They'll be happy to let you know if it is possible to make your idea into a law. Your proposed law's journey starts as a "bill," which is introduced in the Legislature. Your bill can have many sponsors or it can have only one sponsor. No matter how many sponsors your bill may have, remember that all bills must pass both houses of the Legislature – the Assembly and the Senate. A bill will usually have a separate Assembly and Senate sponsor.

## 3. A journey through the legislative process.

Before it is passed by the Legislature, various committees, made up of small groups of legislators, will examine and analyze your bill. Once it is approved by the relevant committees, it is put on a calendar so it can be voted on by the full membership of the Assembly or the Senate. In most cases – in both the Senate and the Assembly – a bill needs at least half the members to vote "yes" for it to pass. There are times, however, when a bill needs more than half the members to vote "yes" for it to pass. Your bill must pass both the Assembly and the Senate before the governor can consider it.

## 4. An idea becomes law.

If your bill passes both the Assembly and the Senate, it is then delivered to the governor for his or her signature. Once your bill is delivered to the governor's desk, it must be acted upon within 10 days. The governor can sign the bill into law or, without taking any affirmative action, allow the bill to become law without his/her signature. He or she may also veto or reject the bill. Should the governor veto your bill, don't give up. A veto can be overridden by two-thirds of the legislators in the Assembly and the Senate.

