



## Legislative Process

John Derner, Department Adjutant

Randy Johnson, Department Legislative Chair

**General Assembly** - Consists of two regular legislative sessions.

- **First session of a General Assembly**
  - Held in odd-numbered years
  - Lasts for approximately 110 calendar days
- **Second Session of a General Assembly**
  - Held in even-numbered years
  - Lasts for approximately 100 calendar days
- 2025 was the First Session of the 91<sup>st</sup> General Assembly
- 2026 will be the Second Session of the 91<sup>st</sup> General Assembly

## House of Representatives

- 2-year terms
- 100 Representatives

## Senate

- 4-year terms
- 50 Senators

## House of Representatives

- Leadership
  - Speaker of the House
  - Speaker Pro Tempore
  - Majority Leader
  - Assistant Majority Leaders
  - Minority Leader
  - Assistant Minority Leaders

## Senate

- Leadership
  - President of the Senate
  - President Pro Tempore
  - Majority Leader
  - Assistant Majority Leaders
  - Minority Leader
  - Assistant Minority Leaders

## How a Bill Becomes a Law

- **Idea** – A legislator decides, or legislators decide to sponsor a bill.
- **Bill Drafting** – The legislator(s) request the bill be drafted by the Legislative Services Agency
- **Introduction** – The bill is sent to the Senate or the House where it is assigned a number and is then sent to the President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House.
- **Committee Assignment** – The President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House refers the bill to a standing committee. A sub-committee, assigned by the standing committee, studies the bill and reports its conclusions to the full committee.
- **Committee Action** – The committee may pass the bill or pass an amended version of the bill. The committee may also send the bill to the floor without recommendation.

## Standing Committees

- Senate – 17 Standing Committees
- House – 20 Standing Committees

## Members of Standing Committees

- Chair – majority party
- Vice Chair – majority party
- Ranking Member – minority party
- Members – more majority than minority

## Sub-Committees

Once a bill is assigned to a committee, the committee chair appoints a subcommittee. The subcommittee is usually composed of three members of the standing committee.

- Chair – majority party
- Vice Chair – majority party
- Ranking Member – minority party

**When The American Legion provides testimony on a bill, it is typically done in a sub-committee meeting.**

## Sub-Committee / Committee

- The sub-committee reviews the bill in detail and reports its conclusions to the full committee.
- The full committee then discusses the subcommittee's conclusions and makes recommendations to the entire chamber.



## How a Bill Becomes a Law (continued)

- **Calendar** – The bill is placed on the calendar, a listing of all bills officially eligible for debate. At this time legislators may file amendments to the bill.
- **Debate**– The bill and any amendments filed are debated by the whole chamber. Amendments must be approved by a simple majority of those legislators voting.
- **Vote** – A constitutional majority, at least 26 Senators or 51 Representatives, must vote “Yes” for the bill to proceed to the second chamber.
- **Second Chamber** – The bill goes through the same process in the second chamber. If it passes in the second chamber without amendment, it is sent to the Governor. If the second chamber amends the bill it must be sent back to the chamber of origin for approval of those amendments. If the chambers cannot come to an agreement on the version of the bill, a conference committee is appointed.

## How a Bill Becomes a Law (continued)

- **Conference Committee** - Composed of Senate and House members representing both the majority and minority parties and both sides of the issue in dispute.
  - If an agreement is reached, it is presented to both chambers in a report, which cannot be amended, that contains the compromise version of the bill.
  - If the report is rejected by either chamber, a second conference committee may be appointed.
  - If no agreement is reached, the bill fails.
  - If the conference committee report is adopted, the chambers again vote on the bill. If the bill is approved, it will be enrolled and sent to the Governor.

## How a Bill Becomes a Law (continued)

- **Governor's Action** – After the bill passes both chambers in identical form, it is sent to the Governor. The Governor may:
  - Sign the bill
  - Veto the bill
  - Take no action on the bill

## How a Bill Becomes a Law (continued)

- **Iowa Law**
  - The bill becomes law:
    - Upon the Governor's signature, or
    - After three days during the session if the Governor takes no action
  - Bills received by the Governor during the last three days of the session
    - Have to be signed or vetoed within 30 days
    - If the Governor takes no action on the bill after the 30-day time period, the bill is considered vetoed.

## 2025 Session Timetable

- **January 13** (second Monday in January) – First day of session
- **February 14** (Friday of the 5<sup>th</sup> week) – Final day for individual Senator or Representative requests of bill drafts to the Legislative Services Agency
- **March 7** (Friday of the 8<sup>th</sup> week) – Final date for House and Senate bills to be reported out of committees (**First Funnel**) – *see notes slides*
- **April 4** (Friday of the 12<sup>th</sup> week) – Final date for Senate bills to be reported out of House committees and House bills out of Senate committees (**Second Funnel**) – *see notes slides*

## 2025 Session Timetable (continued)

- **April 7-11** (13<sup>th</sup> Week) – Senate considers only House bills, House considers only Senate bills – *see notes slides*
- **April 14** (beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> week) – Only specific types of bills are eligible for consideration – *see notes slides*
- **May 2** (110<sup>th</sup> calendar day of the session) – Per diem expenses end

## 2025 Session Timetable (continued)

### Notes

- The March 7 and April 4 committee deadlines do not apply to Appropriations Bills, Ways and Means Bills, Government Oversight Bills, Legalizing Acts, Administrative Rules Review Committee Bills, Committee Bills related to delayed or suspended Administrative Rules, Bills co-sponsored by Majority and Minority Leaders of one House, Conference Committee Reports, Companion Bills sponsored by the Majority Leaders of both Houses after consultation with the respective Minority Leaders, Concurrent or Simple Resolutions, and Joint Resolutions nullifying Administrative Rules.
- The week 10 and 13 limitations do not apply to Concurrent and Simple Resolutions, which may be filed and considered at any time during session.

## 2025 Session Timetable (continued)

### Notes (continued)

- April 14 (beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> week) – Only the following bills are eligible for consideration: Bills passed by both Houses, Appropriations Bills, Ways and Means Bills, Government Oversight Bills, Legalizing Acts, Administrative Rules Review Committee Bills, Committee Bills related to delayed or suspended Administrative Rules, Bills co-sponsored by Majority and Minority Leaders of one House, Conference Committee Reports, Companion Bills sponsored by Senate and House Majority Leaders, Concurrent or Simple Resolutions, Joint Resolutions nullifying Administrative Rules, Bills on the Veto Calendar, Unfinished Business





## Grassroots Lobbying

Randy Johnson, Department Legislative Chair  
John Derner, Department Adjutant

## Let's Talk with Our Legislators



Personal  
Visits

Letters &  
Emails

Phone  
Calls

Legislative  
Forums

**How to form a relationship  
with your legislators**



**Lobbying tips**



**QUESTIONS?**