



New to the State Capitol? Here's what you need to know.

The Louisiana Legislature works in the Louisiana State Capitol building in Baton Rouge. Every year they have a **session**, which is the period where they are actively making laws. In even-numbered years, there are no more than 60 legislative days; in odd-numbered years, there are no more than 45 legislative days.

The Legislature is made up of:

The **House of Representatives**, which is a group of **105 Representatives** from every House District in the state; AND

The **Senate**, which is a group of **39 Senators** from every Senate District in the state.

The Representatives and Senators are called **legislators**. Every citizen of the state (**constituent**) has one Representative and one Senator that is supposed to pass or deny bills based on what their constituents want them to do.

A **bill** is a draft document that aims to change or create a new law under the state constitution.

People like us can draft a bill and then find a legislator, called a **bill sponsor or author**, to present it to the entire House or Senate, which is called **filing a bill**.

Then the **House Clerk** (House bills) or **Senate Secretary** (Senate bills) brings the bill to a specific **committee**, which is a group of legislators who takes an initial vote on a bill before it goes to the Senate and/or House Floor. People like us can speak about our experiences at these **committee hearings**. We can fill out **green cards** to speak or show support of the bill, or **red cards** to speak or show opposition to it.

Then the bill goes to either the **House or Senate Floor**, which is where the entire House or Senate votes on the bill. The bill generally requires the vote of a **majority** of elected members (total number of seats including vacancies). If it passes, it then goes back into a committee on the side it didn't originate on (e.g. if it starts as a House bill, after passing the House Floor it goes back to the Senate committee). People like us cannot speak at Floor hearings.

If the bill makes it past both the House and Senate Floor, it is **adopted**, or given final approval for an amendment, motion or resolution. An **amendment** is a modification of a bill or resolution by adding or deleting information/language, or by changing words.

The Governor can then either sign or veto the bill. If it's signed (or becomes a law due to his/her inaction) it becomes an **Act**. If it's vetoed, the bill does not become law unless the Legislature then votes again to override the Governor's action, which requires $\frac{2}{3}$ of each side's vote.