

Committee Bills

A committee bill is a bill that originates in committee and is introduced to the Legislature by the committee.

Sources of authority to report out a committee bill

- **Joint order.** A joint order that has been passed by both chambers may authorize or direct a committee to report out a bill (typically on a designated subject).
- **Law.** A provision of law (Public Law or Resolve) may authorize a committee to report out a bill.
- **Joint Rule.** Under Joint Rule 353, as adopted by the 130th Legislature, a committee of jurisdiction may report out a bill to implement recommendations of a Legislative study or other study required by law.

Process to report out a committee bill

A majority vote is required to report out a committee bill. There are two key approaches to reporting out a committee bill:

1. **Report out for Reference Back.** This is the typical approach. In this approach, the committee votes to report out a committee bill for the purpose of having it printed as an LD and referred back to the committee for public hearing and work session. The vote to report out the bill is a procedural vote, not a final recommendation on the substance of the bill. If a committee wishes, it can include language in the bill summary indicating that the committee is not taking any position on the bill and is only reporting out the bill out to have it printed and referred back to committee; this language is optional and entirely up to the committee (see next page for sample).
2. **Report out with Final Recommendation.** Alternatively, a committee may vote to report out a committee bill for the purpose of sending it to the floor with a final recommendation on the substance of the bill. In this case, the committee conducts its work on the bill as a proposal or draft bill (rather than a printed LD). After being reported out, the bill is not referred back to committee but is directly taken up on the floor. There are several things for the committee to consider regarding this approach.
 - a) Processing a bill in committee as a proposal or draft bill can sometimes be confusing for the public, since there will not be an LD that the public can find in the Legislature's online bill status system until after the committee has reported it out.
 - b) If the committee wishes to hold a public hearing on a proposal or draft bill, it needs to obtain the express written approval of the Presiding Officers.
 - c) If a committee bill is reported out to the floor with a final recommendation and there is a divided report, the majority report will be printed as the LD and any minority report (other than ONTP) will be drafted as an amendment to the bill.

When a committee bill goes to the floor

When a committee bill is reported out, it is introduced in the chamber where the law or joint order that enabled the committee to report the bill out originated. If the typical approach is used (the committee bill is reported out for reference back to committee), the bill goes through the reference process in the House and Senate and generally is referred back to the committee. If the alternative approach is used (the committee bill is reported out with a final recommendation), the bill is directly taken up for action by the House and Senate.

SAMPLE SUMMARY

COMMITTEE BILL REPORTED OUT FOR REFERENCE BACK (COMMITTEE IS NOT TAKING POSITION ON SUBSTANCE OF THE BILL)

SUMMARY

This bill is reported out by the Joint Standing Committee on [*committee name*] pursuant to [*authority for legislation*].

The committee has not taken a position on the substance of this bill. By reporting this bill out the committee is not suggesting and does not intend to suggest that it agrees or disagrees with any aspect this bill. The committee is reporting the bill out for the sole purpose of having a bill printed that can be referred to the committee for an appropriate public hearing and subsequent processing in the normal course. The committee is taking this action to ensure clarity and transparency in the legislative review of the proposals contained in the bill.