The Flow of Legislation through the Committee Process

The Bill is printed and the Legislature determines the committee of reference

When the **bill is printed**, it is assigned a L.D. number and a committee of reference is suggested by the Clerk of the House and Secretary of Senate. The bill is then placed on either the House or Senate calendar.

House Bill: a bill with a member of the House as the primary sponsor

Reference vote first in House then the Senate

Senate Bill: a bill with a member of the Senate as the primary sponsor

Reference vote first in Senate then the House

The bill is sent to committee

The bill is "in committee" when the committee clerk takes physical possession of the bill.

A public hearing is scheduled and advertised

Although not a requirement, nearly every bill is **scheduled for a public hearing**. The time, date and location of the hearing are advertised on the Legislature's website and in the weekend editions of newspapers in Portland, Lewiston and Bangor. Unless waived by the presiding officers, hearings must be advertised two weekends in advance.

A public hearing is held

During the hearing, the committee receives testimony from and may ask questions of the sponsor(s), lobbyists, relevant agencies and members of the public. Sometimes committees conduct joint public hearings on two or more closely related bills.

Work sessions are held

During work sessions, the committee receives information from its analyst, discusses the bill and may vote on it. Permission is generally required for non-members to participate in the work session. Advance public notice of a work session must be provided, although a committee may vote to enter a work session on the same day as the bill's advertised public hearing.

The committee votes

Voting options:

- ONTP: the bill "ought not to pass"
- OTP: the bill "ought to pass" as written
- OTP-A: the bill "ought to pass as amended" - sometimes the only change is the addition of a required fiscal note

Reports are finalized and reviewed for fiscal impact

The committee analyst ensures that each committee amendment is properly drafted, analyzed by the Office of Fiscal and Program Review for fiscal impact (and potential drafting of a fiscal note) and reviewed by the committee. The committee may reconsider its vote at any meeting before the bill is reported out of committee.

The bill is "reported out" of committee

When the committee's reports are complete, the committee clerk delivers the reports in their signed jackets to the House (if it is a House Bill) or the Senate (if it is a Senate Bill). After the bill is "**reported out**" **of committee**, the committee may take no further action on it unless it is committed back to the committee by both chambers.

The bill returns to chambers for further consideration

For further information on the progress of a bill after it is reported out of committee, please see the Legislator's Handbook, available on the OPLA website.

Prepared by nonpartisan committee staff (January 2023)