

Floor Action

Dear Reader:

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We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Reference Number: MTAS-994

Much the same procedure takes place on the floor of the two houses as in committees. The floor calendar is published in advance. Lobbyists do their work. At the time for hearing the bill, the sponsor will be recognized to explain the bill and answer questions. Any amendments that have been added to the bill in committee also must be approved by the entire House or Senate. The rules provide that the chair (or designee) of the committee that added the amendments must explain them. Usually, the chair designates the sponsor of the bill to explain these amendments. They also may be proposed from the floor. Amendments are voted on before the bill. To pass on third consideration, the bill must receive the votes of a majority of all members to which each House is entitled (50 in the House of Representatives and 17 in the Senate).

Bills must pass both houses in identical form. The process described above for committee action and floor action doesn't occur simultaneously in both houses. A bill may work its way through the Senate weeks or even months before consideration in the House. Often, by the time a bill has passed the first House, all concerned parties have been heard, agreements have been reached, and necessary amendments have been made. Thus, the amended version of the bill passes one House while an unamended or different version might get to the floor of the second. When this happens, the version that passed in the first House is substituted for the version still on the floor of the second House. The sponsor in the second House motions to "substitute and conform" the bill to the one that has already passed. The motion to substitute and conform generally is approved, and the same version of the bill passes both houses.

Sometimes, however, different amendments are added to a bill in the committees or on the floors of the two houses. If two different versions do pass the two houses, each must approve amendments added by the other. On rare occasions where the two houses cannot agree, a Conference Committee, composed of members of both houses, may be created to reconcile differences. The recommendations of the Conference Committee also must be approved by the two houses. Once the bill is passed in identical form by both houses, it is engrossed and signed by the speakers of the House and Senate and sent to the governor for consideration.

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