



All laws created by the provincial Legislative Assembly start out life as Bills.

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Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

The Making and Passing of Laws

Laws that the people of Manitoba must follow can be made by the federal parliament, the provincial Legislative Assembly or by city councils who enact by-laws. All laws created by the provincial Legislative Assembly start out life as Bills.

What is a Bill?

A Bill is a suggested law. A Bill can change a law already in existence or create a brand new law.

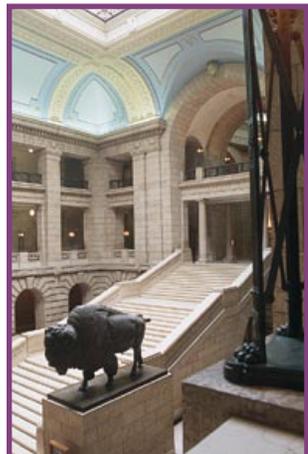
A Bill that is going to affect all of Manitoba is called a Public Bill. This type of Bill is usually introduced by a Minister of the Crown. Before it can become law, it must go through several steps.

What are the Different Stages of a Bill?

Every Bill must go through these steps before it can become a law:

- Introduction and First Reading
- Second Reading
- Committee Stage
- Report Stage
- Concurrence and Third Reading
- Royal Assent

The term "reading" comes from a time when Legislatures did not have paper copies of the Bill for each Member. The Clerk of the House "read" the Bill to all Members. A brief description of each of these stages follows.



Introduction and First Reading

The process starts when the sponsoring MLA presents a motion that "the Bill be now read a first time and passed." MLAs can then decide if they would like the Bill to go on to the other stages. If they decide "yes," then printed copies of the Bill can be provided to all MLAs and the public.

Second Reading Debate

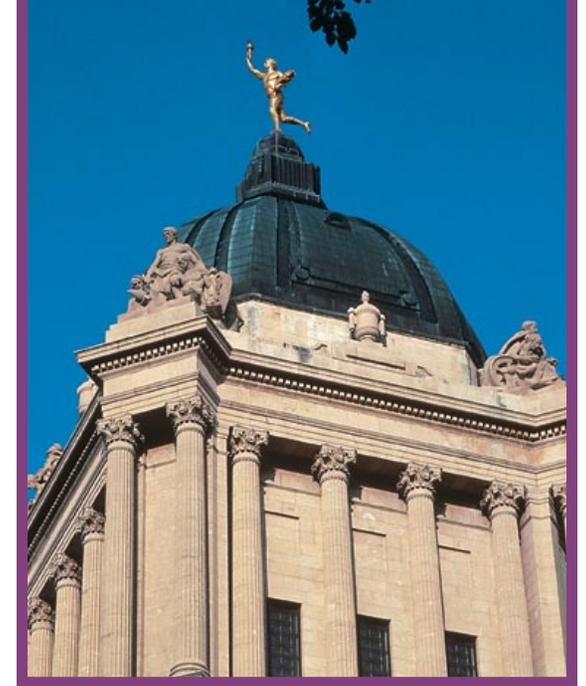
Second Reading stage is considered the most important. It is the time when MLAs can state why they think the Bill is a good one or why it is not. When there are no more Members wishing to speak on the Bill, a vote is held to pass the Second Reading motion. If passed, the Bill is sent off for further discussion to a Standing Committee or to the Committee of the Whole House.

Review by Committee

The Committee Stage can last from one day to several weeks. Members of the public can come to the Committee Meeting and speak for or against the Bill. After the public has made presentations, Members of the Committee go through each separate clause of the Bill. At that point, they can suggest changes. When the Committee has finished its review of the Bill, the Chairperson reports the result of the meeting(s) to the House.

Report Stage

The Report Stage comes next after the Committee has made its report to the House. Report Stage gives Members a second chance to suggest amendments to a Bill. These are called "Report Stage Amendments." When all of the Report Stage Amendments have been taken care of, the sponsor of the Bill moves a "Concurrence and Third Reading motion". This motion indicates that the House concurs or agrees with what the Committee reported and also any Report Stage Amendments that were passed.



Concurrence and Third Reading

This is the last chance an MLA has to speak on a Bill. The debate focuses upon the effect the Bill will have on the people of Manitoba if passed. Adoption of the Concurrence and Third Reading motion is known as "passing" the Bill.

Royal Assent

Royal Assent is a ceremony held in the House after a Bill has received Third Reading. All of the titles of the Bills that received Third Reading are read out loud by a Clerk in the House. The Lieutenant Governor is asked by the Speaker to give "Royal Assent." Bills that have received Royal Assent are called "Acts." The Bill has become a law.

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