

WATHA
The Minnesota Legislative Process
August 22, 2024

<https://www.leg.mn.gov/>

Background Information

Legislative activity is over two years
First year is primarily budget and policy – 2025
Second year is bonding and “clean up” - 2026
All House members stand for election in November 2024
At least one special election for a Senator in November 2024
Control of both chambers will be determined by the election



Control of a chamber means the political party in the majority controls what bills get heard and what bills continue to move through the process. “Control” also means setting the committee structure and naming the committee chairs.

The Process

Bills are introduced by at least one member of a chamber.
Bills are prepared with an identical version for each chamber.
Bills that have the best chance of getting attention are introduced in both chambers.

Bills must be heard in at least one committee in each chamber. Many bills are heard in multiple committees. Committee jurisdiction may be over one part, many parts or all of a bill. A bill hearing is not automatic; it must be requested by the chief author. The committee chair decides whether a bill will be heard.

Committee meetings are open to the public and any member of the public can testify for or against a bill or part of a bill. Testimony is also taken from representatives of groups or associations.

Once a bill has been heard in all required committees, it is sent to the floor of a chamber. The person in control of the chamber (House Speaker or Senate Majority Leader) determines when/if the bill will be heard on the floor and when.

Bills can be amended in committee and on the floor.
To reach the governor for signature, a bill must be identical as passed in both chambers.

Committees act between the start of session and most policy committees complete their work sometime in March or April. Committee “deadlines” are established by leadership and usually occur in March. A bill must make it through all policy committees by the first deadline in one chamber to stay alive. The bill must then make it through all policy committees in the second chamber by the second deadline to stay alive. There are exceptions to this “rule.”

Legislative Working Group

More information about the Legislative Working Group can be found at: <https://www.lcc.mn.gov/cichoa/>