How Laws are Made

THE LEGISLATURE
What we’ll cover

Law, as defined in Black’s Law Dictionary, is “a body of rules of action or conduct prescribed by controlling authority and having binding legal force.” Our laws come from our three branches of Government: legislative, executive, and judicial. These webinars will focus on the law-making activities of each branch, the documents that are created during the process, and how they are used by lawyers and legal researchers.

The legislative branch creates laws in the form of statutes. We will look at the process by which bills eventually become public laws and learn about legislative history.
Research Guide

http://libguides.law.uga.edu/fdlp_webinars
Laws are like sausages. It’s better not to see them being made.

"Laws, like sausages, cease to inspire respect in proportion as we know how they are made."

- John Godfrey Saxe

Legislative process
- Trace legislation
- Identify documents
Who and Why

Legislative staffers
Lobbyists
Trade associations
Industry groups
Non-profits
  ◦ Medical
  ◦ Environmental
  ◦ Social justice
  ◦ Religious
Legislative Intent

Why is there a law
What does the law accomplish
Who benefits
Legislative history
Bills & Resolutions

Congress
  ◦ House of Representatives
  ◦ Senate

Bills
  ◦ Public
  ◦ Private – affect only specific individuals or organizations

Resolutions
  ◦ Joint – like bills but deal with more limited matters like constitutional amendment & money measures
  ◦ Concurrent – used to express facts, opinions, principles, or purposes by both House & Senate
  ◦ Simple – considered by only one chamber and usually for procedural matters & rules
First Reading

House
- Dropped into the hopper which is attached to the clerk’s desk
- Assigned a title and number – HR 1
- Short description is read aloud
- Assigned to committee by the Speaker

Senate
- Senator presents bill to one of the clerks at the Presiding Officer’s desk, or
- Presiding officer “recognizes” the senator who then formally presents the bill
- Assigned a title and number – S 1
- Short description is read aloud
- Assigned to committee
Committees

Collect information
Examine alternative
Refine legislation
Committee publications
  ◦ Transcripts
  ◦ Prints
  ◦ Reports
## Actions

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<table>
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<th>Congressional Record</th>
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<td>Floor debates (edited)</td>
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<td>Full texts of some bills</td>
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It’s a Law!

Slip law
- Pub.L. 105-18

Statutes at Large
- 97 Stat. 113

United States Code
How Laws are Made: The Legislature

Questions?

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