

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

we speak NYC

The City Council passes laws. These laws affect the quality of our lives in New York City.

One example is New York City Local Law 30. This law requires New York City agencies to provide important documents in up to 10 languages.

The law also requires City agencies to offer free interpretation on the telephone in at least 100 languages.

The law helps people get important information and services! Before a law is passed, it is called a Bill.

What's a Bill?

Usually, a bill is a piece of paper that says how much money you owe for something. But, in the City Council, "bill" has a different meaning. In the City Council, a bill is an idea for a new law. The City Council Members vote on bills. If a bill passes, it can become a law.

1 Step 1. Introducing a Bill

In NYC, any City Council Member or the Public Advocate can "introduce" a bill to the Council. To introduce a bill means to propose a bill to become a law.

2 Step 2. Committee Work

The Council has committees (groups) that focus on different topics: education, health care, communication, housing, safety and others. A bill about education goes to the committee that focuses on education issues. They discuss the bill and work on it to make it better, then the bill goes to a hearing for discussion by the public.

3 Step 3. Public Hearings

A public hearing is a meeting of people who are interested in a bill. Anyone can go to a public hearing. In a public hearing, you can give your opinion and make suggestions for a bill. Bills can change after people give their opinions in a public hearing.

4 Step 4. Voting

Next, the Council Members vote on the bill. Each Council Member can vote yes or no to the bill. If the majority (50 percent or more) vote yes, the bill can become a law.

5 Step 5. The Mayor's Decision

Wait! If a bill passes in the City Council, it is not a law yet! The Mayor has to sign the bill first. If the Mayor approves the bill, he signs it and it becomes a law. But if the Mayor decides not to sign it, he vetoes it. That means he rejects it.

6 Step 6. A Vetoes Bill

Hold on! If the Mayor vetoes a bill, the bill can still become a law! After a veto, the bill goes back to the City Council and the Council Members vote again.

7 Step 7. The Bill Becomes Law!

After a veto, if 66 percent or more of the City Council Members vote yes, the bill becomes a law.

