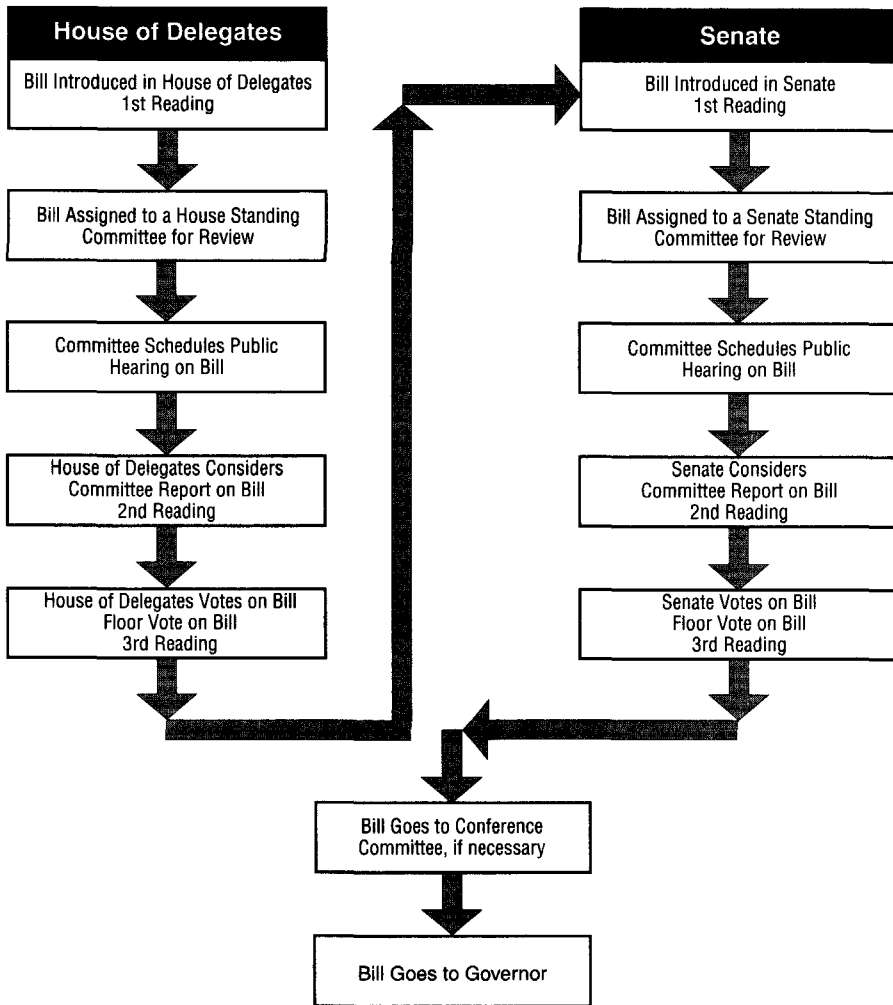


THE PROGRESS OF A HOUSE OF DELEGATES BILL



chairs, and the members of standing committees. A senator or delegate may not be appointed to more than one standing committee whose main function is to consider legislation. The Senate or House of Delegates may suspend rules in order to consider a bill or resolution without referring it to a standing committee as long as each member receives a copy of the bill or resolution to be so considered (Senate Rule 33(f); House Rule 33(f)).

The fate of most legislative proposals is determined in committee. Committees hold a public hearing on each bill or joint resolution assigned to them. During session, the Department of Legislative Reference publishes a weekly hearing schedule so that those interested may testify for or against proposed legislation. The Department of Fiscal Services prepares a fiscal analysis for each bill, and

these fiscal notes are considered during committee deliberations. To gauge a bill's economic impact on small business, the Department of Fiscal Services, beginning in 1997, also will prepare an economic analysis and rating for each proposal introduced by a member of the General Assembly.

At the committee hearing, testimony usually is heard from the bill's sponsor and other proponents and opponents of the bill. Testimony and further consideration may result in amendments to the bill made by the committee. The final vote of the committee is recorded by member, and may be favorable (with or without amendment), unfavorable, or without recommendation. Having been "voted out of committee," the bill now returns to the floor of its chamber of origin accompanied by a report of committee action.