

committee," the bill now returns to the floor of its chamber of origin accompanied by a report of committee action.

**Select Committees.** Bills having a purely local impact are referred to select committees. A select committee is usually composed of a county's delegation in the House or its senators, with other members appointed as necessary to make up the minimum number of three. Counties without home rule keep their select committees busy.

**CONSIDERATION OF COMMITTEE REPORT (2nd READING OF BILL).** After consideration of committee amendments, the bill is then open to amendment from the floor. There, committee action may be reversed, although this happens infrequently. Second reading is completed when the presiding officer orders the bill, with any adopted amendments, printed for third reading.

**FLOOR VOTE ON BILL (3rd READING OF BILL).** No amendments may be presented on third reading. In the chamber of origin, a recorded vote is taken to pass or reject the bill. To pass, the bill must receive a majority vote of the elected membership.

**SECOND CHAMBER.** After passage by the first chamber, the bill is sent to the opposite chamber, has its first reading, and is assigned to a committee for consideration. The procedure followed is identical with that of the first chamber except that amendments may be proposed during second and third readings. If not amended in the second chamber, final passage may occur without reprinting.

If amended in the second chamber, the bill is returned to the chamber of origin so that house may consider the amendments. If the amendments are agreed to, the bill is voted on as amended and action is complete. The bill is reprinted, or "enrolled," to include the added amendments before being submitted to the Governor.

If the amendments are rejected, the amending chamber may be asked to withdraw its amendments. If it refuses, either chamber may request that a conference committee be appointed to resolve the differences between the two chambers.

**CONFERENCE COMMITTEE.** Appointed by the Senate President and the House Speaker, a conference committee consists of three members of each house. The committee sends a report of its recommendations to each chamber which then can adopt or reject it. If the report is adopted, the bill is voted upon for final passage in each house. If the report is rejected by either house, the bill fails.

**CONSENT CALENDAR.** The consent calendar is a list of bills to be read and voted upon as a group (Const., Art. II, sec. 17; Art. III, secs. 27, 28). The Senate and the House of Delegates may adopt a "consent calendar" procedure if members of each house receive reasonable notice of the bills placed on each consent calendar. This procedure expedites the legislative process. In 1988, the Senate revised its rules to place bills and joint resolutions on consent calendars by category as they are voted out of committee (Senate Rule 55). The House of Delegates still retains a Consent Calendars Committee to determine which bills and joint resolutions may be included on consent calendars (House Rules 18 and 55).

**EFFECTIVE DATE OF LAWS.** All bills passed by the General Assembly become law when signed by the Govern-

nor, or when passed over the Governor's veto by three-fifths of the membership of each house. According to the Constitution, laws thus approved take effect on the first day of June after the session in which they were passed, except when a later date is specified in the act, or the bill is declared an emergency measure. For many years, most laws took effect July 1. During the 1992 Session, however, October 1 began to be used as the standard effective date for legislation. Emergency bills, passed by three-fifths of the total number of members of each house, become law immediately upon their approval by the Governor.

All passed bills, except the budget bill and constitutional amendments, must be presented to the Governor within twenty days following adjournment of a session. The Governor may veto such bills within thirty days after presentation. If a passed bill is not vetoed, it becomes law. The budget bill, however, becomes law upon its final passage and cannot be vetoed. Constitutional amendments also cannot be vetoed; they become law only upon their ratification by the voters at the next general election.

**VETOED BILLS.** The power to override a veto rests with the General Assembly. If the Governor vetoes a bill during a regular session, the General Assembly immediately considers the Governor's veto message. If the Governor vetoes a bill presented after the session, the veto message must be considered immediately at the next regular or special session of the legislature. The General Assembly may not override a veto during the first year of a new legislative term since the bill would have been passed by the previous legislature (Const., Art. II, sec. 17). A three-fifths vote of the elected membership of both chambers is necessary to override a veto.

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## LEGISLATIVE ELECTION DISTRICTS

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In Maryland, a legislative election district, commonly called a legislative district, is a geographic area from which voters elect their representatives to the General Assembly. The State Constitution delineates the procedure by which these districts are determined (Const., Art. III, secs. 3, 4, 5).

*Procedure for Establishing Legislative Districts.* The Constitution requires the Governor to initiate the legislative reapportionment process. After each U.S. decennial census and after public hearings, the Governor prepares a plan setting forth legislative district boundaries. This plan must conform to requirements of the Maryland Constitution (Const., Art. III, secs. 2, 3, 4). The Governor presents the plan to the Senate President and the House Speaker. They, in turn, introduce the plan as a joint resolution to the General Assembly by the first day of the regular legislative session in the second year following every census. Prior to the regular session, the Governor may call a special legislative session in which to present the plan.

The General Assembly, following each decennial census, may adopt by joint resolution a legislative district boundary plan. The plan must conform to Constitutional requirements (Const., Art. III, secs. 2, 3, 4). If the General Assembly adopts such a plan by the 45th day after the opening of the regular legislative session (in the second year following