

## Test your knowledge

1. What are the three branches of New York's government?
2. How many members are in the New York State Legislature?
3. How many bills are introduced in the state Legislature each year?
4. On average, how many of the bills that are introduced are acted upon?
5. How many bills can the governor veto each year?
6. How can a veto be overridden?

*(Answers below)*

- Answers:**
1. Executive (governor), Legislative (Senate and Assembly), and Judicial (courts).
  2. There are 63 senators and 150 assembly members.
  3. There are approximately 14,000 pieces of legislation (bills) that are introduced each year.
  4. Of the 14,000 bills introduced each year, only 2,000 are acted upon and of those, 800 are signed into law.
  5. The governor has the power to veto any bill he or she chooses, without limitation.
  6. A veto can be overridden with a vote in support of the bill by two-thirds of the membership from each house (Senate and Assembly).

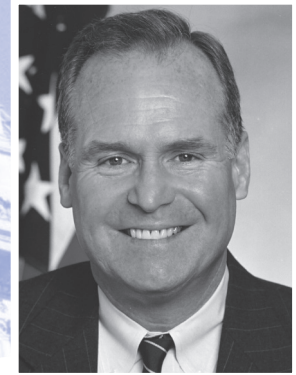
[www.assembly.state.ny.us](http://www.assembly.state.ny.us)

# HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW



*A message from...*

Assemblyman  
**Michael J. Fitzpatrick**



Dear Neighbor,

As your representative in the state Assembly, my chief responsibility – and that of my colleagues – lies in drafting, analyzing and voting on proposals that affect all New Yorkers. Considering proposed new laws is one of the most important roles in my everyday responsibilities.

The New York State Legislature is unique in that it truly allows for full citizen participation in the lawmaking process. Thousands of laws are the result of ideas from people just like you. That is why it is important that all New Yorkers understand the process of how a bill becomes a law.

I hope you find this brochure helpful in understanding the process that begins with an idea and ends up a new law. If you have any questions about the legislative process or any other issue, please call my office.

Welcome to the state Legislature.

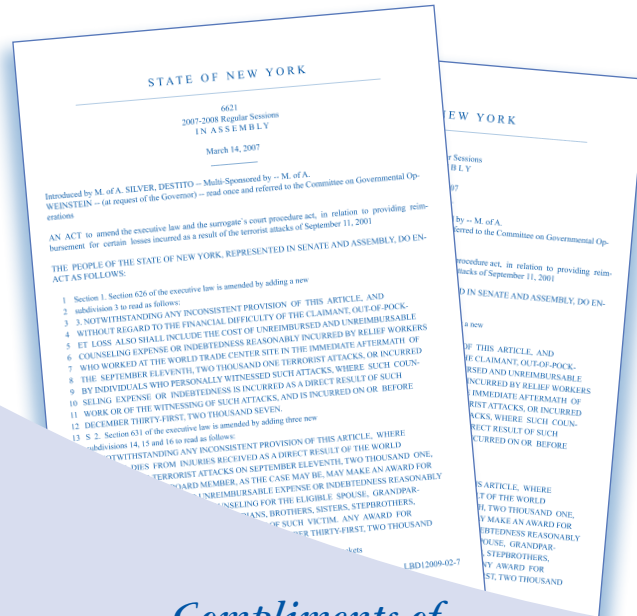
Sincerely,

Michael J. Fitzpatrick  
Member of Assembly

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*Compliments of ...*

Assemblyman  
**Michael J. Fitzpatrick**

# Where do our laws come from?

## 1. Start with an idea.



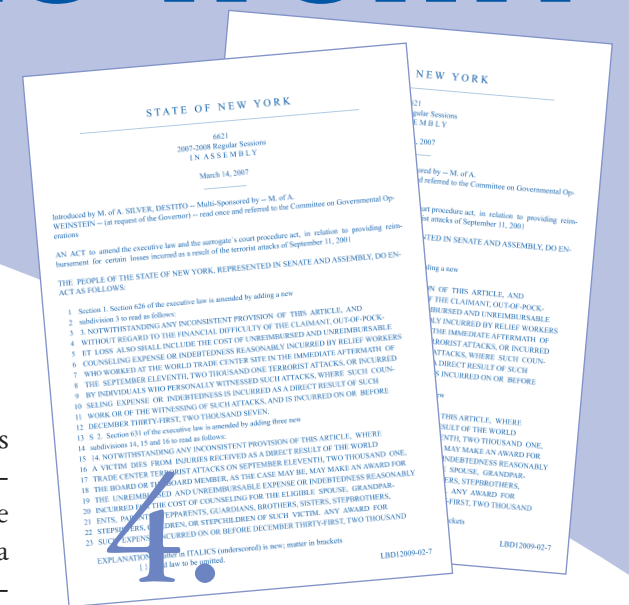
You don't have to be an elected state assemblymember, senator or even governor to come up with an idea for a new law in New York. Anybody – you, me or your friends – can think up new ways to make New York a better place to live. All you have to do is use your imagination.

## 2. Tell your local lawmaker about your idea.

Once you come up with your idea, call, email or write your local state legislators. They'll be happy to let you know if it is possible to make your idea into a law. Your proposed law's journey starts as a "bill," which is introduced in the Legislature. Your bill can have many sponsors or it can have only one sponsor. No matter how many sponsors your bill may have, remember that all bills must pass both houses of the Legislature – the Assembly and the Senate. A bill will usually have a separate Assembly and Senate sponsor.

## 3. A journey through the legislative process.

Before it is passed by the Legislature, various committees, made up of small groups of legislators, will examine and analyze your bill. Once it is approved by the committees, it is put on a calendar so it can be voted on by the full membership of the Assembly or the Senate. In most cases – in both the Senate and the Assembly – a bill needs at least half the members to vote "yes" for it to pass. There are times, however, when a bill needs more than half the members to vote "yes" for it to pass. Your bill must pass both the Assembly and the Senate before the governor can consider it.



## An idea becomes law.

If your bill passes both the Assembly and the Senate, it is then delivered to the governor for his or her signature. Once your bill is delivered to the governor's desk, it must be acted upon within 10 days. The governor can sign the bill into law or, without taking any affirmative action, allow the bill to become law without his/her signature or he or she may veto or reject the bill. Should the governor veto your bill, don't give up. A veto can be overridden if at least two-thirds of the legislators in the Assembly and the Senate agree with your bill.

