

HOW DOES A BILL BECOME A LAW (PROCESS)

- **Introduction:** The process begins when a bill is introduced.
- **First Reading:** The bill is “read” for the first time, without debate, and printed.
- **Second Reading:** The principle of the bill is debated. It is then voted on and the bill is sent to a parliamentary committee.
- **Committee Stage:** A committee hears witnesses, examines the bill clause-by-clause and submits a report recommending the bill be accepted as is or with amendments, or that it not proceed any further.
- **Report Stage:** Additional amendments to the bill may be moved, debated and voted on.
- **Third Reading:** The bill is debated a final time and voted on.
- **Message:** Once passed, the bill is sent to the Senate, where the process starts again from first reading.
- **Royal Assent:** The Governor General or a deputy gives the bill Royal Assent and it becomes a law.

11

WHEN A BILL BECOMES LAW

Steps to a Bill Becoming a Law

A bill is introduced.

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11

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It is then voted on and the bill is
sent to a parliamentary committee.

A committee hears witnesses, examines the bill clause-by-clause and submits a report recommending the bill be accepted as is or with amendments, or that it not proceed any further.

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- **New Canadian Flag Bill:** June 1964 was the year of the great flag debate. It was an idea first proposed by Lester B. Pearson, which became a long, protracted, complicated debate with committees, a filibuster, a bitter and country-wide debate and finally it was put to the vote in in the House and Senate. Six months after its initial proposal, the new Canadian flag became the official flag when the Queen made the Royal Proclamation in January 1965.
- **The Medical Assistance in Dying Act:** This act, passed in June 2016, allows medical assistance (from physicians, nurse practitioners, etc.) in the dying process for the grievously and irremediably ill.
- **The Same Sex Marriage Bill:** This bill was passed on July 20, 2005, giving the right to same-sex couples to marry and divorce.
- **The Canadian Bill of Rights:** This bill was introduced by John Diefenbaker and passed on August 10, 1960. It is considered the forerunner to the constitution's Charter of Rights and Freedoms as it brought in first protections for our basic rights to life, liberty and security of the person, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, equality rights, etc.
- **The Official Languages Act:** Passed in 1969, this act made English and French the official languages of Canada and created the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

1. Which bill did you choose?

2. Who proposed this bill? What riding did they represent?

3. Why did they propose this bill? How is it linked to their riding?

4. Who benefitted the most from this bill? Who did not? Why?

5. What were some of the issues debated regarding this bill?

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

- **C-278, Act to respect a day to increase public awareness of epilepsy, aka Purple Day Act**
On June 28, 2012, this bill received Royal Assent. Every March 26 will be Purple Day to raise awareness of those affected by epilepsy.
- **C-210, Amend the National Anthem Act (gender)**
This bill calls for the words “thy sons” in the national anthem to be changed to “of us”.
- **S-201, Genetic Non-Discrimination Act**
This bill, assented on May 4, 2017, protects people from having to undergo genetic testing or to disclose the results of a genetic test for goods or services, contracts and agreements.
- **C-262, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act**
This act calls for verification that Canadian laws align with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.