

Youth in Government

How to Write a Bill

Step 1- Develop an Idea for a Bill

Ideas for state laws come from citizens who have ideas on how to improve their lives. There are many laws already in existence in Arizona, but these laws can be amended for further improvement. Your idea for a bill must be for either a law that **does not yet exist**, or will be an amendment to an existing law. In the box below, write down your ideas for a law, which would improve the lives of the citizens of Arizona. Some topics for ideas are:

1. Education
2. Green Technology
3. Public Health and Safety
4. Crime
5. Pollution
6. Racial Problems
7. Internet censorship
8. Civil Rights
9. Unemployment
10. Issues involving school

With your partner, brainstorm some topics that are important to you:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Still having trouble coming up with an idea? Ask yourself these questions:

1. What conditions exist in your school that make it difficult for you to get the best education?
2. What conditions exist in your city that makes it difficult for you to feel safe?
3. Are there enough employment opportunities for your family?
4. Does your family have health care?
5. Do you agree with the current laws for hunting?
6. Does your city have enough opportunities for recreation?

Write your idea for a bill: _____

Step 2 – Draft the Bill

Writing Your Bill

You and your partner should work as team, so that each of you contributes about the same amount of work. Listen to each other's ideas and cooperate in the writing process.

The bill must include:

1. Title
2. Body of the Bill with at least five aspects of the bill
3. Importance of the Bill & why we need it to become a law

Title: The first part of the bill is the title. Write the title below. The title does not need to be detailed, but it needs to clearly present the idea. Begin with, "A bill to..."

A bill to _____

Body of the Bill

The body of the bill specifies how the bill will fulfill the requirements you wrote in your title. These specifications are separated into **sections**. A good bill should have enough information to need at least 5 sections. Each section is a sentence or short paragraph with complete thoughts. Say what you want to say in as few words as possible. See the sample bill attached for an example of how to write your sections.

Your sections need to include:

- Definitions of the terms of the bill
- How the bill will be funded
- Who will enforce the bill
- A penalty for not following the new law
- An effective date

Definitions: Define specifically who or what this bill is about.

Funding: Where will the money come from to fund your idea?

Enforcement: Who will make sure everyone follows the new law?

Penalty: A bill must specify a penalty for non-compliance. The penalty could be a fine, loss of a privilege, mandatory community service, jail time, etc. The penalty should match the severity of the crime.

Effective Date: A bill must specify a time when the bill will be come effective. Consider how long it will realistically take to follow all the specifications you have outlined.

Now you are ready to draft your bill. Below is a bill template. Write your draft in the spaces provided. Use only the number of sections you need. Additional sections can be added if necessary.

Senate/House Bill # _____

Sponsor's Name: _____

Name of Bill: _____

Section 1.

Section 2.

Section 3.

Section 4.

Section 5.

Section 6.

Sample Bill

Bill No. S0102

Referred to the committee on:

School:

Introduced by:

A bill to mandate that all public schools (K-12) in the state of Arizona have at least one school nurse.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA ENACT:

Section 1: This bill shall be funded by the Arizona Department of Health and Human Services. On count day, additional funds will be given to the school that will cover the expenses of any medicines, equipment, etc. The district's school board will be responsible for providing payroll.

Section 2: The school nurse will have to update their certification cards before the expiration date (CPR, First-Aid, etc.)

Section 3: A parental consent form should be sent home September of every school year in order for the nurse to prescribe medications to each pupil.

Section 4: After the passage of this law, the state will send inspectors to schools to each district for enforcement. Inspections take place in the middle of each semester (mid-November and mid-April each school year).

Section 5: If the school fails to pass the first inspection, 10% of their count day earnings will be taken. After failing to pass the second, an additional fine of \$5,000 will be charged.

Section 6: The Arizona Department of Education will be responsible for the enforcement of this law

Section 7: This bill will go into effect by September 1 of the 2011-2012 school year.