

Elder Advocacy Boot Camp

April 17, 2026

Advocacy 101

- Current Landscape
- The Legislative Process
- Engaging with Lawmakers and Advocating a Position

Where Are We Now?

103rd Legislature

Michigan House: 58 Republicans, 52 Democrats

Michigan Senate: 19 Democrats, 18 Republicans, 1 Vacancy

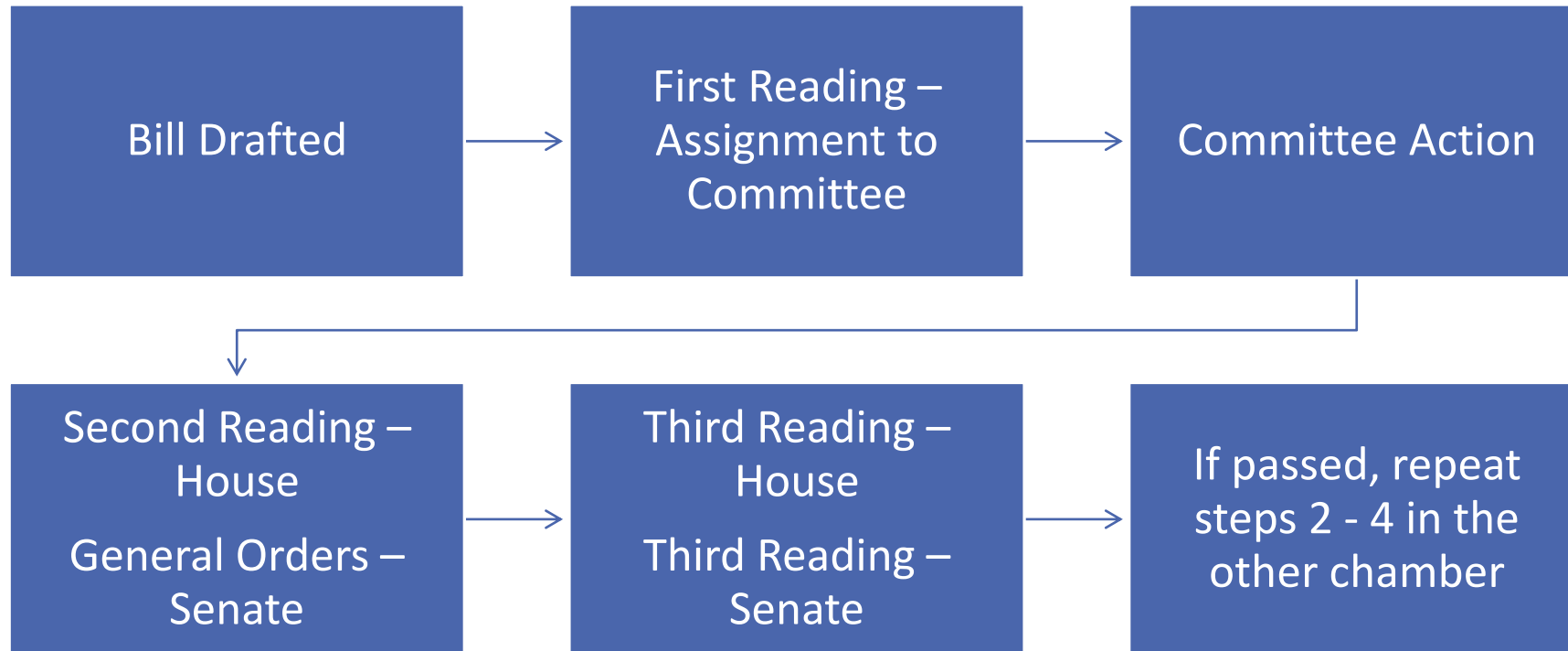
Governor Gretchen Whitmer (Final Year of Second Term)

The Process....



CAPITOL | SERVICES
We are your voice.

How a Bill Becomes a Law



Bill Drafted

Any member of the House or Senate may introduce a bill

Members are limited to only so many bill introductions per month (determined by rules)

Finding the proper sponsor is very important

Actual drafting of legislation done by the non-partisan Legislative Service Bureau

Sponsors encourage fellow lawmakers to “co-sponsor” the bill

Draft of the bill is submitted to the clerk and the bill is assigned a number

In Michigan, Senate Bills begin with SB 1; House Bills begin with HB 4001 so no two bills will have the same number

Leadership assigns the bill to a committee

Committee Action

Committee Chair determines if and when bills referred to a committee will receive a hearing

Most bills never get a hearing and die in committee

Committee hearings involve the committee hearing testimony from interested parties

Each committee chair has wide latitude in how to handle hearings

Even after a hearing, the chair might choose not to hold a vote on the bills

Bills may be amended by a majority vote of the committee

A majority of committee members present and serving must vote yes to report a bill to the floor

If a bill is reported from committee, it moves to the floor for potential consideration

Floor Action

The Speaker of the House and Senate Majority Leader determine which bills on the floor will be put up for a vote in their respective chambers

Many bills die on the floor from lack of action

If a bill is taken up, there are two stages: Second Reading (General Orders) and Third Reading

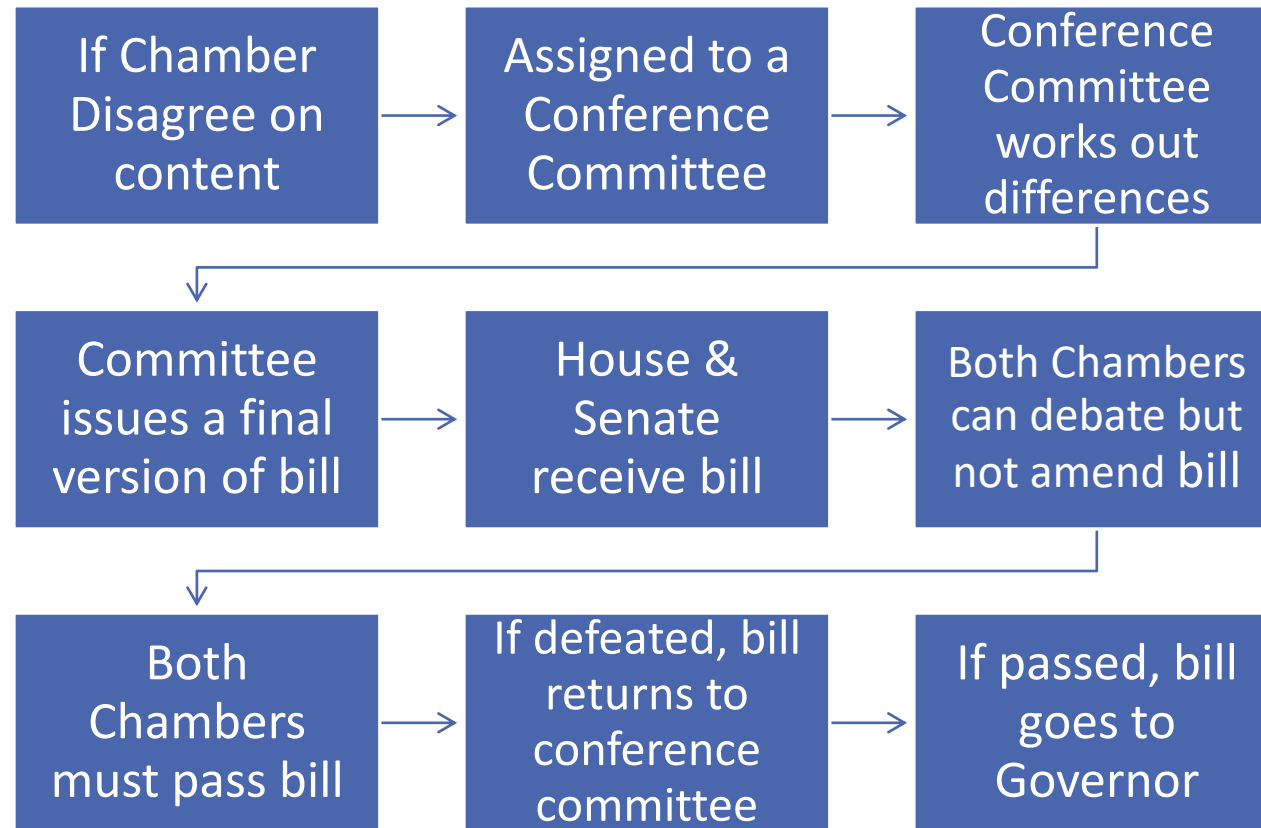
On Second Reading, a simple majority of those present may move the bill to Third Reading

On Third Reading (also called “Final Passage”) a majority of those present and serving must vote yes for a bill to be amended on the floor and for it to be passed

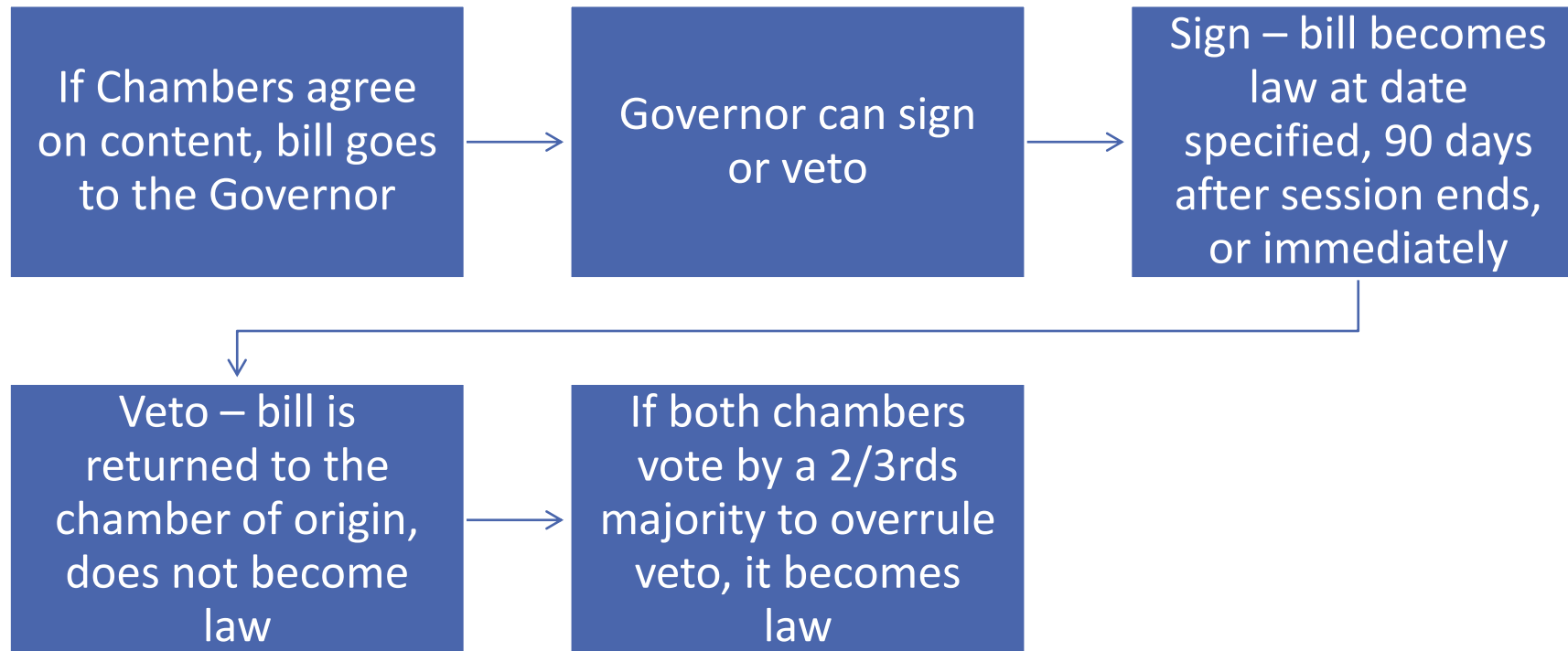
Frequently, complicated amendments (or multiple amendments) are incorporated into what is called a “Substitute” bill. This happens both in committee and on the floor. It allows the body to vote on several amendments as part of a single motion.

When a bill passes, it moves to the other chamber and the entire process is repeated.

Extra Credit – the Conference Committee



When a Bill Finally Gets to the Governor



Tried and True Advocacy Techniques



How Do I Contact My Legislators?

Know when and where to contact a legislator:

Mon & Fri – In District

Tues – Thurs – In Lansing

Decide how to contact your legislator:

Face-to-face meeting, personal letter, via e-mail, or phone call

Always include your name and role when communicating with legislators

Knowing Which Legislator to Contact

It is always best to start with the lawmakers representing the district in which you live

Determine which lawmakers are in key positions to be helpful

You can also have success reaching out to lawmakers who you know share your views (looking for champions)

Lawmakers in the majority party generally have more influence

Freshmen lawmakers to elder statespersons can all be helpful

Tips For Contacting Legislators

Be knowledgeable.

Identify the bill or issue of concern to you, including its current status in the legislative process.

Use your own words.

Personalize your story.

Select one or two persons to speak.

For in person meetings, if you have more than two members in your group, select one or two spokespersons. Inquire about your legislator's views.

Tips for Contacting Legislators

Be sure to have a clear proposal to offer.

Give substantive reasons for making changes and factual information to justify your positions. Make suggestions.

Show appreciation.

Saying “Thank You” goes a long way!

Remember, legislators can be influenced.

They want to know what you think. It is up to you to make your voice heard.

Build Relationships w/ Legislators

- Attend coffee hours and local events
 - Communicate often
 - Offer your expertise

Helpful Online Tools

[Legislature.mi.gov](https://legislature.mi.gov) is an excellent source of information on bill status, committee schedules and general information about legislation and lawmakers.

Questions? Thank You!

CAPITOL | SERVICES
We are your voice.