

How a Bill Becomes a Law Basic Steps to Health Care Reform, 2009

Step One: Bill is Introduced

- House: HR 3200, *America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009*
- Senate: *Affordable Health Choices Act*

Step Two: Bill is Sent to Appropriate House or Senate Committee(s)

House of Representatives Committees with jurisdiction over health care:

- Energy & Commerce
- Education & Labor
- Ways & Means

Senate Committees with jurisdiction over health care:

- Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP)
- Finance

Step Three: Committee Mark Up

The bill is "marked up" where amendments and revisions are made.

Step Four: Each Chamber Merges Its Bills

- The House Tri-Committee will work to merge the three committee bills into one House bill.
- The Senate HELP and Finance Committees will work to merge their two bills into one Senate bill.

Step Five: House and Senate Floor Votes on Merged House and Senate Bills

Each chamber votes on its health care reform bill.

Step Six: Conference Committee.

Since the House and Senate will be passing different versions of Health Care Reform legislation, the bills will be sent to a conference committee, where Members from both chambers will hammer out the differences to work towards one complete bill.

- Many advocacy organizations and constituent groups work extremely hard in influencing Members of the conference committee for possible last-minute changes to a bill.

Step Seven: Full Congressional Vote on One Bill

After the conference committee has finished its work on the legislation, one bill is then voted on by both houses of Congress.

Step Eight: Bill Sent to President for Signature

Once a bill is sent to the President, it will become law if it is signed within 10 days. If the bill is vetoed, it is sent back to Congress, where the House and Senate can override the presidential veto with a required two-thirds vote.

- If the presidential veto is overridden, then the bill becomes law without the President's signature.

Possible Step: Budget Reconciliation

Though rarely used, this parliamentary measure could be used to pass health care reform. Budget reconciliation would only require a simple majority of 51 votes.