From Idea to Law

Trace an Oklahoma bill and the points where residents can take part

OKH.C.5.3 "Trace the steps necessary for a bill to become a law in Oklahoma, including multiple opportunities for citizens to be involved in the process."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the bill's main steps in order, and circle each opportunity for residents to speak up. Use your marks to trace how the bill could become law.

A Water Station Bill

1. Imagine Oklahoma lawmakers considering a bill that would require public schools to offer water bottle filling stations. This is a proposed bill, not a current law. An idea can come from residents, but a legislator must introduce the bill in the Oklahoma House of Representatives or Senate. After introduction, the bill receives a reading and is assigned to a committee for study. The committee may hear testimony, change the bill, and vote on whether to move it forward. Residents can contact lawmakers before introduction. They may also speak at a committee meeting if public testimony is allowed.

2. Suppose the committee approves the water station bill. The full chamber debates it, may amend it, and votes. If it passes, the bill goes to the other chamber, where it moves through committee and a full-chamber vote. Residents can follow its progress online, ask their own legislators to support or oppose a change, and attend public committee meetings. If the two chambers pass different versions, lawmakers must agree on one text, sometimes through a conference committee. Both chambers then must approve the same version before it can go to the governor.

3. The governor can sign the bill into law or veto it. If the governor vetoes it, the Legislature can still make it law by overriding the veto with a two-thirds vote in each chamber. A bill can also become law without the governor's signature under certain timing rules. Residents can contact the governor to explain their views before a decision. Once a bill becomes law, its effective date determines when its requirements begin. If the bill fails in committee, loses a floor vote, or never wins agreement in both chambers, it does not reach the governor. Following each decision helps residents know when their voices may matter.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does a resident's idea reach a committee as a bill, and when could the resident speak up?

2. Trace the bill's path from approval by its first committee through a vote in the other chamber. Where could residents take part along that path?

3. If the chambers pass different versions, what must happen before the bill reaches the governor? How could a resident respond while lawmakers work on the text?

4. Once both chambers approve the same version, trace two ways it could become law. When could residents make their views known?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a different Oklahoma bill and write one paragraph tracing its path from introduction to becoming law. Include at least three specific ways residents could get involved at different stages, and explain what happens if the chambers pass different versions.

ANSWER KEY

From Idea to Law

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.5.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number the bill's main steps in order, and circle each opportunity for residents to speak up. Use your marks to trace how the bill could become law. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does a resident's idea reach a committee as a bill, and when could the resident speak up?	**A legislator introduces the bill, which receives a reading and is assigned to a committee. The resident could contact lawmakers before introduction or speak at a committee meeting if testimony is allowed.**
2	Trace the bill's path from approval by its first committee through a vote in the other chamber. Where could residents take part along that path?	**The first chamber debates and votes. If it passes, the other chamber considers it in committee and votes on it. Residents could attend public committee meetings or contact their legislators about a change.**
3	If the chambers pass different versions, what must happen before the bill reaches the governor? How could a resident respond while lawmakers work on the text?	**Lawmakers must agree on one text, and both chambers must approve it. A resident could contact legislators to support or oppose a change.**
4	Once both chambers approve the same version, trace two ways it could become law. When could residents make their views known?	**The governor could sign it, or the Legislature could override a veto with a two-thirds vote in each chamber. Residents could contact the governor before the decision.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Suppose a legislator introduces a bill requiring clearer warning signs at public swimming areas. Before introduction, residents could ask lawmakers to include signs in several languages. After the bill goes to a committee, residents could ask to testify about dangerous spots they have seen. If the committee advances it, the first chamber debates and votes, then the second chamber reviews and votes. Residents could contact legislators before the second vote to suggest changes. If the chambers pass different versions, both must approve the same text before sending it to the governor, who could sign it into law.

Accept accurate alternatives, including a bill becoming law without the governor's signature under the applicable timing rules. For Part 3, look for a logical sequence, agreement on identical text, and three citizen actions at distinct stages.