

How a bill becomes a law?

In the simplest terms, a bill becomes a law after it passes the Senate and the House and the President signs it. For more information about how a bill becomes a law, visit the Library of Congress' [guide](#) on how a bill becomes a law. [The Clerks office](#) also provides a guide to the legislative processes as it specifically relates to the House of Representatives. The Congressional Research Service has an even more detailed explanation [here](#).

What does a member of Congress do?

Congressional Representatives are responsible for representing the people of their District in the United States Congress. Part of this responsibility is writing and voting on bills in the U.S. Congress. We decide whether to vote for or against every bill that comes before Congress. All bills must pass Congress before they can go to the President to be signed into law. We also draft our own bills and work to get the other Representatives to vote for our legislation so that it can become law.

In order to do our job well, we spend a lot of time meeting with people who live in our states to tell them about what is happening in government and to listen to their ideas about how to improve life in our country. I regularly meet with people from different backgrounds. I especially enjoy meeting with kids to learn about what is happening at our schools.

Another important part of my job is to [help residents](#) of the District if they have a problem with the federal government.

What is the difference between the House of Representatives and the United States Senate?

The U.S. Congress is made up of two "houses": the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. There are 100 members of the Senate and 435 members of the House. Each state gets two Senators, regardless of how many people live in that state. The number of Representatives each state gets, however, is based on the number of people that live in the state. Senators serve for six year terms. Representatives serve for two year terms. There are also some things that only Members of the House or only members of the Senate can do. For example, only Senators can vote on whether or not to confirm the president's nominees for judgeships. If you are from Maryland your Senators are [Benjamin L. Cardin](#) and [Barbra Mikulski](#)

What is the district work period?

District work periods, sometimes referred to as recesses; occur at times during the summer. These are times when the congress is not in session and the members are able so spend a lot of time in their districts meeting their constituents. Click [here](#) to download the calendar for 2007 to see when the house is in session.