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HOW LEGISLATION IS PASSED IN THE SENATE

INTRODUCING LEGISLATION

01 **Introducing legislation:** Any Senator can introduce a bill, either by submitting it to the clerks or formally introducing it from the floor. An unlimited number of Senators can co-sponsor the bill before it is entered on the Senate Journal, given a number, and referred to a standing committee.

COMMITTEE WORK

02 **Committee work:** The committee refers the bill to the appropriate subcommittee, which seeks input from relevant agencies and, if it is a major bill, holds public hearings with industry leaders and experts.

03 **Markup session:** The subcommittee decides whether they should recommend the pending measure to the full Senate or substantively amend it.

04 **Markup vote:** The subcommittee votes on how to report the bill to the full committee – favorably (with or without amendments), unfavorably, or without a recommendation (which rarely happens).

05 **Final markup:** The full committee holds its own markup. If they draft numerous amendments, they can report the original bill with new text, or introduce a new bill with all of the proposed amendments (this is called a “clean bill”).

06 **Committee action to report a bill:** The committee votes on whether or not to report the bill to the full Senate. If the committee votes yes, they write a report, which outlines what the bill intends to accomplish, oversight findings, CBO cost estimate, and sometimes dissenting opinions from committee members.

DEBATE, AMENDMENT PROCESS, AND VOTING

07 **Placed on Calendar:** The Committee Chair reports the bill back to the Senate and the Majority Leader places it on the Calendar of Business. A Senate majority can then vote to bring it to the floor.

08 **Lay bill before the Senate:** The Majority Leader will either ask for unanimous consent to take up the bill, or move to proceed to consider the bill. If no Senator objects in the first scenario or the motion passes in the second, the Senate can consider the bill and any amendments.

09 **Unlimited debate:** The floor is open for debate where members can speak for as long as they want and propose amendments.

10 **Amending Process:** The Senate first considers amendments recommended by the reporting committee. Senators can then offer additional amendments, all of which are voted on individually. This process continues until the Senate orders an official final version of the bill.

11 **Roll call:** The Senate votes on final passage. If the bill passes, it is sent to the House for consideration and approval.