

UNDERSTANDING THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS



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Oklahoma Policy Institute

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Fundamentals of the Legislature
- Players in the Legislative Process
- Steps in the Legislative Process
- Language of the Legislative Process

LEGISLATIVE FUNDAMENTALS

- Bicameral System
- 2 Year Legislature with Yearly Sessions
 - 1st Monday in February
 - Last Friday in May “Sine Die”
- Create, Amend, and Abolish “Statutes”
- Power of the Purse
- 12 Year Term Limits
 - Senate and House combined

LEGISLATIVE PLAYERS

- House of Representatives
- Senate
- Governor
- Lobbyist
- Supreme Court
- The People



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The image shows a highly detailed, classical-style entrance. At the top is a semi-circular pediment with a blue sky and white clouds. Below this is a wide, flat lintel with a gold-colored border. The central part of the lintel is a light-colored rectangular panel with the words "HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES" in dark, serif capital letters. The entrance is flanked by two large, fluted columns with Corinthian capitals. The columns are made of a material with a blue and white marbled pattern. Above the columns, there are decorative elements including a gold-colored arch and a gold-colored horizontal band. The overall style is reminiscent of a theatrical set or a highly decorated architectural facade.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- 101 Members
- X Republican/ X Democrat
- Led by “Speaker of the House”
- 2 Year Terms
- \$38,400 + Per Diem
 - Leadership gets a bonus
- Bills numbered starting with HB 1001



SENATE CHAMBER

SENATE

- 48 Members
- X Republican/ X Democrat
- Lieutenant Governor
- “President Pro Tempore”
- 4 year terms
- \$38,400 + Per Diem
 - Leadership gets a bouns
- Bills numbered starting with SB 0001

GOVERNOR

- Chief Executive
- \$147,000
- Four-Year Term
 - Two-Term Limit
- Proposes an Annual Budget
- Reviews and Acts on Every Bill Passed by the Legislature
- Appoints Cabinet and Justices

PAY NO ATTENTION
TO THE MAN OUTSIDE,
SENATOR



LOBBYIST

- Counsel Clients on Potential Legislation
- Find “Sponsors” for Proposed Legislation
- Help or Actually Draft Proposed Legislation
- Help Pass or “Kill” Legislation



SUPREME COURT

- Article 7, Sec. 4 Okla. Constitution
- Appointed to Lifetime Terms
- Retention Ballot Every 6 Years
- Final Say on Legislation

LEGISLATIVE PLAYERS – THE PEOPLE



POWER TO PEOPLE

- Voters/“Constituents”
- Volunteers
- Donors
- Grassroots Lobbyists
- Hold the Legislators Accountable

ARTICLE 5, Sec. 24 OKLA. CONST.

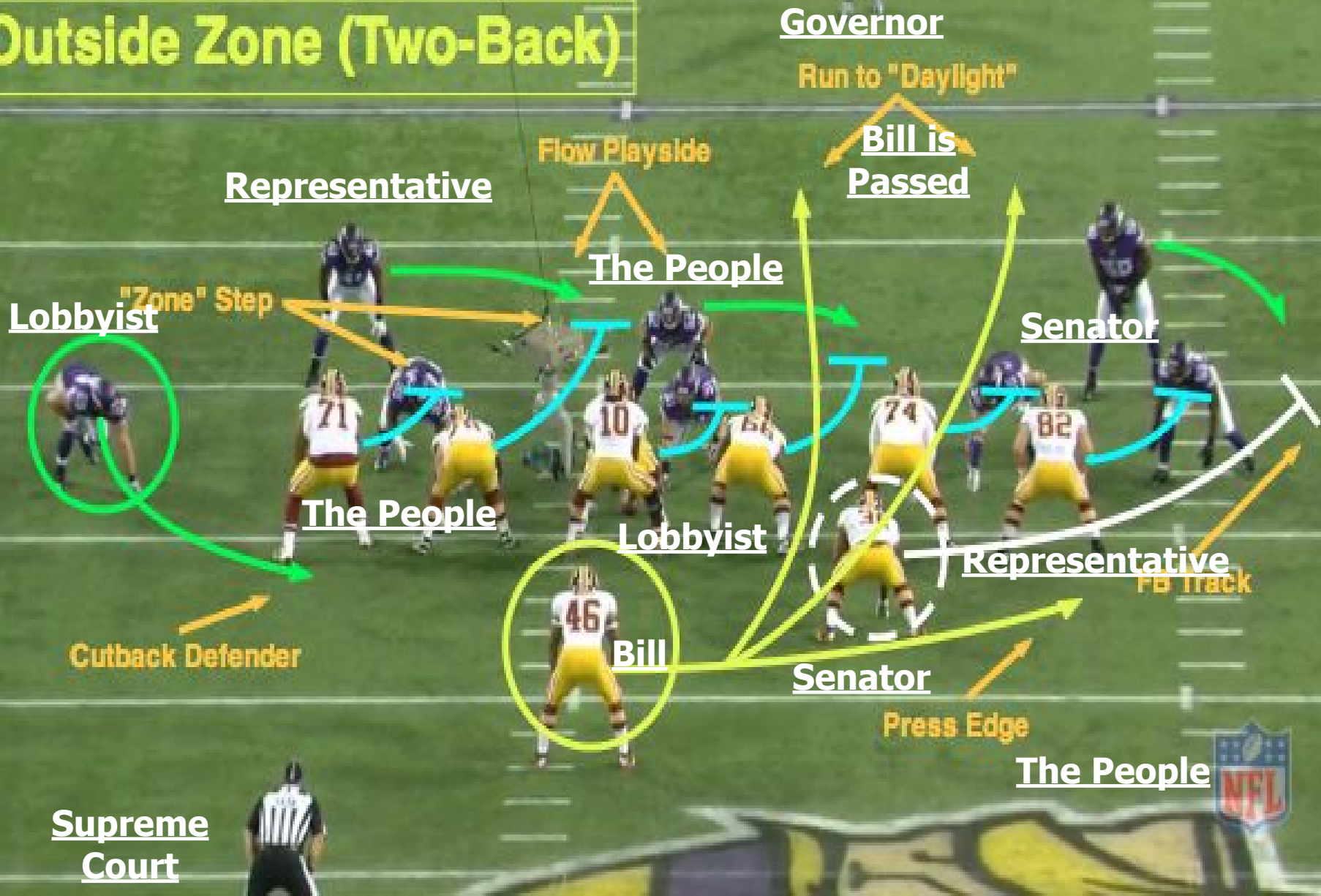
“...The people reserve to themselves the power to propose laws and amendments to the constitution and to enact or reject the same at the polls independent of the legislature, and also reserve power at their option to approve or reject at the polls any act of the legislature.”

INITIATIVE PETITION

- Voters' Right To Propose Legislation
 - Article 5, Section 24 of the Oklahoma Constitution
- Requires Signatures of Voters

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Outside Zone (Two-Back)



ORIGINS OF BILLS

- Constituent Request
- Request of a Government Agency
- Request of an Interest Group
- National Model Legislation
- Governor Request
- Member Interest
- Interim Study

STEP 2: INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

In the beginning...

The background of the slide is a high-quality image of Earth from space. The horizon of the planet is visible, with a thin blue line of the atmosphere. To the left, a bright sun or star is partially visible, creating a strong lens flare that illuminates the scene with a warm, golden light. The rest of the sky is a deep, dark black.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

- Bill Request Made by December
- Filing Deadline in January
- First Reading Start of Session
- Second Reading
- Sent to Committees
 - Assigned by Majority Leader

COMMITTEE HEARINGS



Committee Hearings

- 4 Weeks for Bills to be Heard in Committee
- Chair Decides If Bill Will Be Heard
- Testimony For/Against Bill Allowed
- Bill Can Be Amended
- Bill Dies If Not Heard
- Bill Dies Without Majority Vote
- Bill “Do Pass” With Majority Vote

GENERAL ORDER



GENERAL ORDER

- Bill Eligible for “Third Reading”
- Bill Dies If Not Scheduled to be Heard
- “House Calendar Committee”
- “Senate Majority Floor Leader”

THIRD READING

- Bill Explained by Author
- Bill Can be Amended and Debated
- Bill Needs “Aye” Vote of Majority of Members to Pass
- Bill that Fails can be Called back for reconsideration
- Passed Bill “Engrossed”
 - Sent to Opposite Chamber



Oh God

not again...

OPPOSITE CHAMBER-DEJA VU

- Bill Goes Through Same Process
 - If passed, it is “Enrolled” and sent to the Governor
- Bill Dies If Not Passed by Opposite Chamber
- Bill Can be Amended
 - If amended, the bill is sent back to the chamber of origin

Amended Bill

- Sent Back to Original Chamber
 - If Chamber Accepts Amendments
 - Bill Enrolled and Sent to Governor



AMENDED BILL DECLINED

- Sent to Conference Committee
- Bill Can be:
 - Accepted As Written
 - Conference Committee Substitute
- If the committee doesn't issue a "conference committee report" and come to an agreement the bill dies
- If the committee comes to an agreement and a report is issued that passes both chambers, it is then enrolled and sent to the Governor.



Action by the Governor

- An enrolled bill approved by both chambers is transmitted to the Governor. The Governor can do the following:
 - Sign the bill into law within five days.
 - Allow the bill to become law by taking no action within five days when the legislature is in session.
 - Veto the entire bill. The legislature can override the Governor by a 2/3rd majority vote (68 votes from the House and 32 from the Senate). If the bill contains an emergency clause, the veto must be overridden by a 3/4th majority vote (76 votes from the House and 36 from the Senate).
 - Line-item veto spending items in appropriations bills. Such vetoes are similarly subject to being overridden by the legislature.
 - Following legislative adjournment, the Governor has fifteen days to sign the bill, veto a bill, or exercise a “pocket veto” by taking no action.

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More Resources:

Legislative Primer:

<http://okpolicy.org/resources/2016-oklahoma-legislative-primer>

What's That?

<http://okpolicy.org/category/whats-that/>

Contact Us!



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