

# CHUTES AND LADDERING

## WASHINGTON STATE'S LEGISLATIVE PROCESS GAME

**Players:** 2-4

**Materials:** 1 six-sided die or spinner

Token for each player

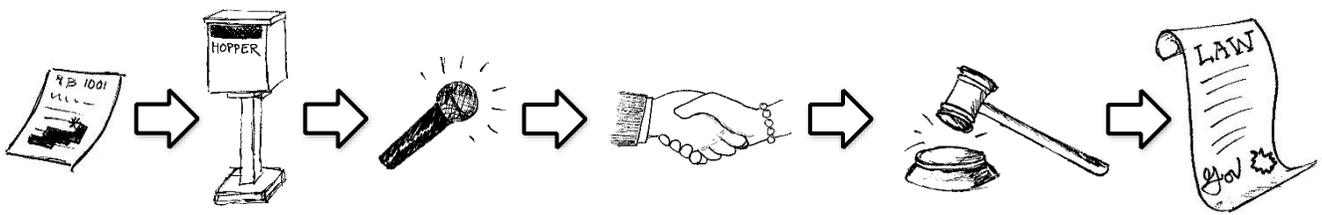
**Object of the game:**

Navigate your "bill" through all the steps of the legislative process and reach the 110<sup>th</sup> square to become a law.

**Directions:**

The board is divided into sections representing different stages of the legislative process. The arrows (just like in Chutes and Ladders) describe many of the events that can happen to a bill during the process to make it move faster or slower on the way to becoming a law. The legislative session only has 105 days for a bill to pass, and lots of ways to slow it down. Be the first to get all the way to the final square and win by turning your bill into a law!

All players start with their playing pieces off the board next to square 1 (idea for a bill). On their turn, each player spins the spinner or rolls the dice and moves their piece the number of spaces shown. If the piece ends at the start of an arrow, it immediately moves up or down to the square at the other end. White arrows speed up your progress through the legislative process; grey arrows send you back! The chart below explains how each arrow corresponds to something that can happen to a bill during the legislative session. The person who lands on an arrow should read aloud the description to the group. (The description of the arrow also reminds you which square to advance or fall back to.) The game ends when one player reaches square 110, It's a Law!



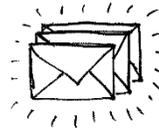
Stage	Arrows
<p><b>Drafting The Bill</b></p> <p>Legislators, the Governor, agencies, interest groups, and regular citizens can suggest new laws to fix problems in our state. They can be simple (like proposing a state animal) or complicated (like the budget for the entire state government). Legislators work with stakeholders and staff to research the issue and write the bill.</p> 	 <p><b>1: Idea</b> Anybody can suggest an idea for a bill. It becomes official when a legislator decides to sponsor it.</p> <p><b>3: Prefile – advance to square 9</b> “Prefiled” bills are written and ready to go before session even starts, giving them a head start on the process.</p> <p><b>9: Hopper</b> When the final draft of a bill is ready, the sponsoring legislator drops it in a wooden box called the Hopper. Then it gets a number and is ready to be assigned to a committee for other legislators and the public to read.</p> 
<p><b>Committee</b></p> <p>Committees give legislators a chance to study bills in small groups focused on one topic, like health care, education, or transportation. The majority party in the House or Senate decides which committee a bill should be assigned to, and the committee chair decides whether to give it a hearing. (There’s never enough time to hear every single bill!) At the hearing, anybody with an opinion about the bill can come and share their thoughts in public testimony, which helps the committee to</p>  	<p><b>17: Phone Tree – advance to square 35</b> On important issues, committee members can get hundreds of calls and emails from citizens arguing for and against the bill. Legislators then have to decide whether to take action, or whether the issue needs more work to come to a compromise that more people can agree on.</p>  <p><b>23: Leadership Pull – advance to square 42</b> Occasionally, the leaders of the House or Senate will decide to “pull” an important bill into floor debate without requiring the usual committee vote.</p> <p><b>24: Negative Testimony – drop back to square 18</b> Lobbyists, citizens, agencies, businesses, and other stakeholders can have a big impact on whether a bill advances. If lots of people testify at the public hearing that they are opposed to the bill, they can persuade the committee members not to support the bill in its current form. Sometimes public testimony leads to amendments that fix concerns, and the bill might move forward later.</p> 

<p><i>decide whether the bill should move forward in becoming a law.</i></p>	<p><b>33: Fiscal Committee – drop back to square 15</b>                  Bills can receive hearings in more than one committee. If a bill will cost the state a significant amount of money (more than \$10,000), it will get a second hearing in a fiscal committee. The fiscal committees handle budget issues and decide how to spend money across many different priorities.</p> 
<p><b>Floor Action</b></p> <p><i>Bills that pass out of committee are sent to the “floor” of the House or Senate, for all members to consider. However, there are still too many to discuss them all on the floor. Their first stop is the Rules Committee, which decides which bills to put on the floor calendar for possible debate. The majority party then decides each day which of those bills to discuss, amend, and put to a vote. Any member of the House or Senate can propose an amendment or speak for or against a bill on the floor, but there is no public comment during floor action.</i></p>	<p><b>40: X-Filed in Rules Committee – drop back to square 13</b>                  The Rules Committee determines which bills make it to the floor. Any bill that has passed out of committee can be pulled by the Rules Committee and sent to the floor calendar. However, there are so many bills that sometimes members will agree that a bill isn’t ready. In that case, they can send it to the “x-files”, meaning it probably won’t go to the floor that session.</p> <p><b>46: Necessary To Implement the Budget – advance to square 97</b>                  Budget deals are usually struck towards the end of session. Sometimes the budget requires additional legislation to carry out the funding plan. For example, if the budget includes money for a new school lunch program, legislators might also need to pass a law creating the program. Bills that are “Necessary To Implement the Budget”, or NTIB, get fast-track hearings and floor action even if the cutoff deadlines have passed.</p>  <p><b>54: House of Origin Cutoff – drop back to square 10</b>                  About halfway through session, bills face a “cutoff” deadline to pass out of their first chamber. If legislators don’t vote to pass a bill before the cutoff, it won’t advance any further that session.</p>
<p><b>Opposite House</b></p>  <p><i>After the House of Origin Cutoff, the bills that passed switch chambers and go through the whole process again. This time, the House is considering bills that started in the Senate, and</i></p>	<p><b>57: Strong bipartisan support – advance to square 100</b>                  Some bills have widespread support from legislators in both chambers and both parties. When there is broad agreement, a bill can move through the second chamber very quickly. It still gets a public hearing, Rules pull, and floor vote, but it can happen much faster when there isn’t a need for a lot of debate.</p> 

*the Senate is considering bills from the House. Things move quickly because there are fewer bills than there were at the beginning of session.*



**63: Email Campaign – advance to square 82**



On important issues, committee members can get hundreds of calls and emails from citizens arguing for and against the bill. Legislators then have to

decide whether to take action, or whether the issue needs more work to come to a compromise that more people can agree on.



**75: Fiscal Committee – drop back to square 60**

Bills can receive hearings in more than one committee. If a bill will cost the state a significant amount of money (more than \$10,000), it will get a second hearing in a fiscal



committee. The fiscal committees handle budget issues and decide how to spend money across many different priorities.

**77: Consent Calendar – advance to square 86**

Sometimes everyone agrees on a bill and it doesn't need debate or amendment. These bills go on a special list (the Suspension Calendar in the House and the Consent Calendar in the Senate) for a quick, usually unanimous vote.

**80: Politically sensitive – drop back to square 76**

Some bills pass easily through their house of origin, but are much less popular in the other chamber. (This often happens when the House and Senate are controlled by different parties.) A bill that is politically sensitive might need more work or amendments to make it work for both chambers.

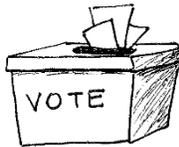


**83: Floor Amendment – advance to square 88**

Bills can be amended by any member during floor debate. Often these amendments address concerns or ideas that weren't fixed in committee, and make the final bill more likely to pass.

**89: Opposite House cutoff – drop back to square 11**

Like the first cutoff, Opposite House Cutoff is a deadline for passing bills in their second chamber. Bills that haven't passed the chamber by the cutoff won't advance any further that session.

<p><b>Concurrence</b></p> <p><i>For a bill to become law, the House and Senate have to pass the exact same version. When the second chamber adds amendments that change the original version, those amendments either have to go back to the first chamber for approval, or the second chamber has to agree to take them off. This process is called concurrence.</i></p>	<p><b>90: Concurrence – advance to square 98</b>                  If the bill’s house of origin agrees with the changes made in the opposite house, the members vote to concur with the amendments. The bill is ready to go to the Governor!</p>  <p><b>93: Conference fails – drop back to square 12</b>                  If the two houses have an especially hard time agreeing, they can call a Conference Committee made up of both Representatives and Senators to negotiate a compromise. If the conference doesn’t come to an agreement that a majority of both houses can support, the bill dies, and won’t become a law that session.</p>
<p><b>The Governor and Last Steps</b></p> <p><i>In odd-numbered years, Washington’s legislative session lasts 105 days. (In even-numbered years, it’s only 60.) By the end, tulip trees are blooming around the Capitol, and the bills that have made it through both chambers and concurrence are almost ready to become law. But first, there are a few last steps they have to get through.</i></p> 	<p><b>105: Sine Die – drop back to space 10</b>                  The very final deadline for bills is the last day of session. The last day is called “Sine Die,” a Latin phrase meaning “without another day,” because at the end both the House and Senate adjourn without setting a date to come back. If the exact same version of a bill hasn’t passed both the House and Senate by Sine Die, it’s lost its chance to become a law this session.</p> <p><b>108: Governor Vetoes – drop back to space 10</b></p>  <p>If the Governor believes the Legislature has passed a bill that shouldn’t become a law, he or she can veto it. The Legislature can override a veto with a 2/3 majority vote in both House and Senate, but more often, a vetoed bill just dies.</p> <p><b>109: Referendum – drop back to space 5</b>                  If enough citizens think that a bill shouldn’t become law, they can collect signatures and file a referendum to stop it. The referendum then goes to the ballot in the next general election, and Washington’s voters get to decide whether or not it should become a law.</p>  <p><b>110: It’s a Law!</b>                  If your bill survived public hearings, floor actions, amendments, concurrence, cutoffs, and didn’t get vetoed by the Governor or held up by a referendum... congratulations! It’s become a law!</p> 