

## CONGRESS 101 – Electronic Access

### Branches of Government

Learn more about the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the U.S. government

<https://www.usa.gov/branches-of-government>

### How to Contact Your Elected Officials

Learn how to get in touch with your federal, state, and local elected leaders

<https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>

### What is the U.S. Electoral College?

<http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/about.html>

### Search for Veterans, Military and Family bills the U.S. Congress

<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.php>

Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives - <http://clerk.house.gov/>

United States Senate - <http://www.senate.gov/index.htm>

Learn to speak the language of Congress <http://innovation.cq.com/media/congressional-glossary/?ref=CQ>

### How Federal Laws Are Made

The U.S. Congress makes federal laws for the nation. Congress has two legislative bodies or branches: the [U.S. Senate](#) and the [U.S. House of Representatives](#).

- [How a bill becomes law when it originates in the House of Representatives](#)
- [How a bill becomes law when it originates in the Senate](#)

Steps in making a law:

1. If A Senator or Representative has an idea for a new law, he/she produces a rough draft of the idea and sponsors it, which makes it a bill.
2. The bill then goes to whichever legislative branch (Senate or House) the Senator or Representative belongs.
3. The [bill then goes through a process](#), which can change it, amend, or lay it so there is no vote.
4. If the bill undergoes a vote by the entire legislative branch, a majority vote will send it to the other branch where it will go through a similar process.
5. If there is a majority vote and both the House and the Senate approve all changes made, the bill then goes to the President.

6. The [President Takes action](#) on the bill by either signing it into law, letting it become law without a signature, vetoing it, or pocket vetoing it.

### **What is a Presidential Executive Order?**

An executive order is a directive by the President of the United States that has the power of a federal law. Presidents might issue executive orders to create committees or organizations like the Peace Corps. In general, though, Presidents use executive orders to direct and manage how the federal government operates.

### **Can Executive Orders be overturned?**

Congress may attempt to overturn an executive order by passing legislation (a bill) that opposes the order. However, the President can [veto](#) that bill, and Congress would then need to override that veto to pass the bill. In addition, the [Supreme Court](#) can declare an executive order to be unconstitutional.

### **How do I find Executive Orders?**

The White House posts all [executive orders from the current U.S. President](#), and the [National Archives and Records Administration \(NARA\)](#) maintains text of [executive orders from former presidents since 1937](#).

### **State Laws and Regulations**

State legislatures create and pass bills and the governor signs them into law. State courts may review these laws and remove them if they think they do not agree with the state's constitution. The Law Library of Congress has a [guide for each state](#) that can help you find laws and regulations.

### **Other Links of Interest**

<https://twitter.com/cspan/lists/members-of-congress/members?lang=en> Members of Congress twitter accounts

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/38> Title 38 U.S. Code Veterans Benefits

<http://veterans.house.gov/> House Veterans Affairs Committee

<http://www.veterans.senate.gov/index.cfm> Senate Veterans Affairs Committee

<http://www.va.gov/oca/> Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Congressional Affairs