



Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce Advocacy Committee

Understanding Committees & Bill Assignments

Once a bill (LD#) is introduced in the Maine Legislature, it is referred to a committee for review. Each committee holds public hearings, considers public and expert testimony, may suggest changes (amendments), and votes on whether the bill should move forward in the legislative process

1. How a Bill is Assigned to a Committee

The President of the Senate and Speaker of the House decide which committee a bill is assigned to, usually based on the bill's topic. For example:

- A bill about school funding goes to the **Education and Cultural Affairs Committee**
- A bill about workplace regulations goes to the **Labor and Housing Committee**
- A bill impacting small businesses or economic development might go to the **Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business (IDEA) Committee**

Helpful Tip: You can find committee assignments on the bill's page in the legislative tracking system:

<https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/>

2. How to Find and Follow Committees

- **Browse all Committees and Members**

<https://legislature.maine.gov/committee/>

- **There are 20 joint standing committees in Maine, covering areas like:**

- Appropriations and Financial Affairs
- Environment and Natural Resources
- Health and Human Services
- Taxation
- Transportation
- Veterans and Legal Affairs

- **Each Committee Page Includes:**

- List of members
 - Staff contacts
 - Bills under review
 - Hearings/work session schedules
 - Testimony submission links
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3. Why Committee Assignments Matter

- **This is where decisions are made.**
If a committee votes that a bill “Ought Not to Pass,” it likely dies there.
 - **Public input is welcome here.**
This is the stage where testimony from citizens, organizations, and businesses is *most* impactful.
 - **Relationships matter.**
If a bill affects your industry or business, it's valuable to know who sits on the committee reviewing it.
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Understanding Committee Reports

After deliberation, committees issue a report that includes one of the following recommendations:

- **Ought to Pass (OTP)** – Support the bill as written
- **OTP As Amended** – Support the bill with changes
- **Ought Not to Pass (ONTP)** – Oppose the bill
- **Divided Report** – Committee is split; multiple recommendations go to the full chamber

These reports carry significant weight and shape how the full House and Senate vote.

Helpful Tip for Members: Track the Committee, not just the Bill

If you care about a bill, keep an eye on **everything that the committee is working on**—you may find other legislation that impacts your interests. You can also:

- **Sign up for committee mailing lists**
To get hearing notices and stay up to date.
- **Watch hearings and work sessions live or recorded**
Via the Legislature’s YouTube channel or audio stream
- **Contact committee members directly**
Especially if you live in their district or they chair the committee