

Bills, Resolutions, Petitions, and Memorials

A. INTRODUCTORY; VARIOUS TYPES OF BILLS, RESOLUTIONS, AND OTHER MECHANISMS FOR ACTION

§ 1. In General

The objectives of this chapter are to define the various procedures by which measures are introduced and considered by the Congress and to describe the formal steps through which legislation must pass in order to become law. The role of the President in approving or vetoing measures submitted by the Congress is also considered.

While the greater part of the business considered and voted upon in the two Houses of Congress is legislative in character, other kinds of business are taken up by resolution either in one House alone or in both Houses concurrently. These nonlegislative measures, while not having the force of statute and usually limited to declarations of policy or to the internal operations of Congress, nevertheless play an important procedural role. Examples of such business include measures expressing the opinions of Congress on political questions or establishing rules of parliamentary procedure.

§ 2. Bills

The term “bill,” as used in the Constitution,⁽¹⁾ refers to the chief vehicle employed by the Congress in the enactment of laws under its legislative power.

Bills are categorized under two headings: public and private. The former are general in their application, while the latter are specific and are limited in application to specified individuals or entities.⁽²⁾

Chapter 2 of title I of the United States Code contains the following provision regarding the enacting clause of a bill:

§ 101. The enacting clause of all Acts of Congress shall be in the following form: “Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress Assembled.”

Cross Reference

Introduction and reference of bills, see Ch. 16, *supra*.

1. U.S. Const. art. I, § 7.
2. See § 3, *infra*.