

NORTH CAROLINA GOVERNMENT



A FUN BOOK ON
GOVERNMENT,
STATE SYMBOLS, AND THE
LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

There are three branches of government established by the North Carolina Constitution: the legislative branch, the executive branch and the judicial branch. The legislative branch is composed of the General Assembly and its administrative support units. The Constitution of North Carolina gives the General Assembly the authority to make or enact laws; to establish rules and regulations governing the conduct of the people, their rights, duties and procedures; and to prescribe the consequences of certain activities. The General Assembly has the power to make new laws and amend or repeal existing laws that affect all the people of the State as well as laws affecting the local communities.

Before Raleigh became the Capital of North Carolina, each new session of the General Assembly moved from town to town. They met in Halifax, Hillsborough, Fayetteville, New Bern, Smithfield, and Tarboro between 1776 and 1794. They would meet in courthouses, schools, and local residences or in any structure big enough to hold the legislators. The Assembly of 1794-95 was the first to meet in Raleigh.

Tryon Palace in New Bern was the State's first capitol building. It was completed in 1771, but was abandoned during the Revolutionary War because of its exposure to enemy attack. When Raleigh was established as the capital, a simple two-story brick structure was built. It was completed in 1796 and served as the home for the General Assembly until it was destroyed by fire in 1831. A new capitol building was built and completed in 1840 and is the building you see on the capital grounds when you visit Raleigh. This building was used by the General Assembly until the present Legislative Building was completed in 1963. The first session in the present Legislative Building convened on February 6, 1963.

The 50 members of the Senate and 120 members of the House of Representatives make up the General Assembly of North Carolina. They

are elected every two years, in the even numbered years, from districts established by law. In order to qualify for election, a person must live in the district they wish to represent for at least one year and be registered to vote in North Carolina. To serve in the Senate, a person must be at least 25 years old. To serve in the House of Representatives, a person must be at least 21 years old. Newly elected legislators take office on January 1, following their election in November.

In the House of Representatives, the members elect a Speaker, who presides over the House when in session. The Speaker has many responsibilities, one of which is to preserve order in the House when in session. The Speaker Pro Tempore is also elected from the membership. In the absence of the Speaker, the Speaker Pro Tempore presides over the House. The Lieutenant Governor is the President of the Senate and presides over the Senate. The Lieutenant Governor is elected in a statewide election that is held every four years. The members of the Senate elect a President Pro Tempore and Deputy President Pro Tempore from among their membership, who in their turn, preside in the absence of the Lieutenant Governor.

Each house also elects a Principal Clerk. The Principal Clerks are responsible for documenting all of the actions that are taken on bills and recording these actions in the Journal. The Principal Clerks carry out the administrative duties of their respective chambers. The Senate also elects a Reading Clerk and a Sergeant-at-Arms. The Speaker appoints a Reading Clerk and a Sergeant-at-Arms for the House. The members elect other officers in each respective house from their political parties. These officers include a majority leader, minority leader, majority whip, and minority whip.

When the House and Senate meet in daily sessions, they assemble in their respective chambers. When a Joint Session of the General Assembly is held, the members of the House and Senate meet in the House Chamber. A Joint Session would be held to hear invited guests address the General Assembly. Such guests might include the

Governor, for the State of the State address; the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, for the State of the Judiciary Address; or perhaps even the President of the United States. The invited guest speaks from a podium known as the "Well of the House".

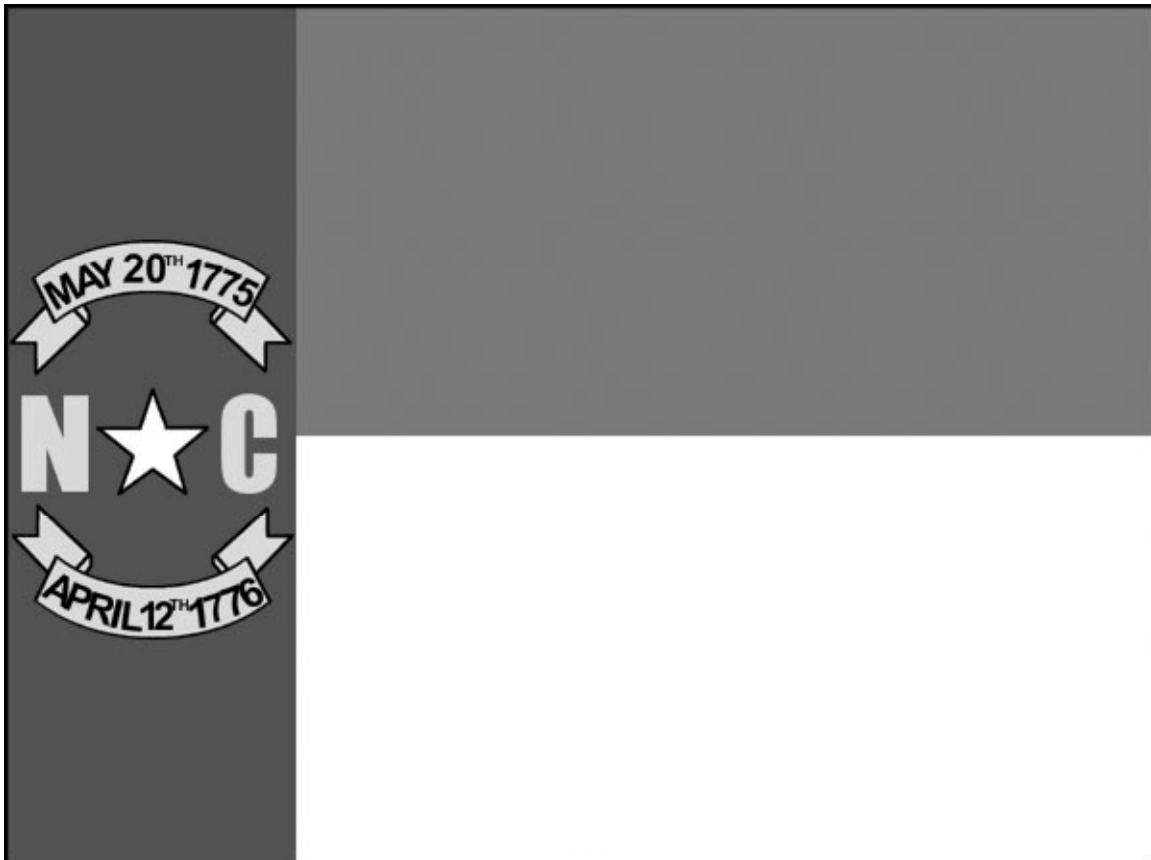
Committees do much of the legislative work of the General Assembly. Soon after the beginning of the legislative session, standing committees are appointed. The Speaker appoints the members of the committees in the House and the President Pro Tempore appoints the members of the committees in the Senate. Each committee has one or more Chairs and Vice-Chairs. Normally, as soon as a bill is introduced and assigned to a committee, the committee members will carefully study the bill and make recommendations. If the committee approves the bill, it reports this fact and the bill is placed on the Calendar.

The Calendar is the daily schedule of business for the consideration of bills by the full membership of the bodies of both houses. The Senate and the House of Representatives make up their own calendars each day for session. The House uses the color yellow for the Calendar and their bill jackets and the Senate uses the color blue for their Senate Calendar and bill jackets. The House of Representatives and the Senate work as two separate memberships during their daily sessions, but all legislation must pass three readings in each body.

The North Carolina State Flag

The State flag is divided into three rectangles, two horizontal and one vertical. The upper right rectangle is red and the lower right rectangle is white. The entire background of the rectangle on the left is dark blue. The scroll and the letters N and C are gold. The dates on the scroll are dark blue and the star is white.

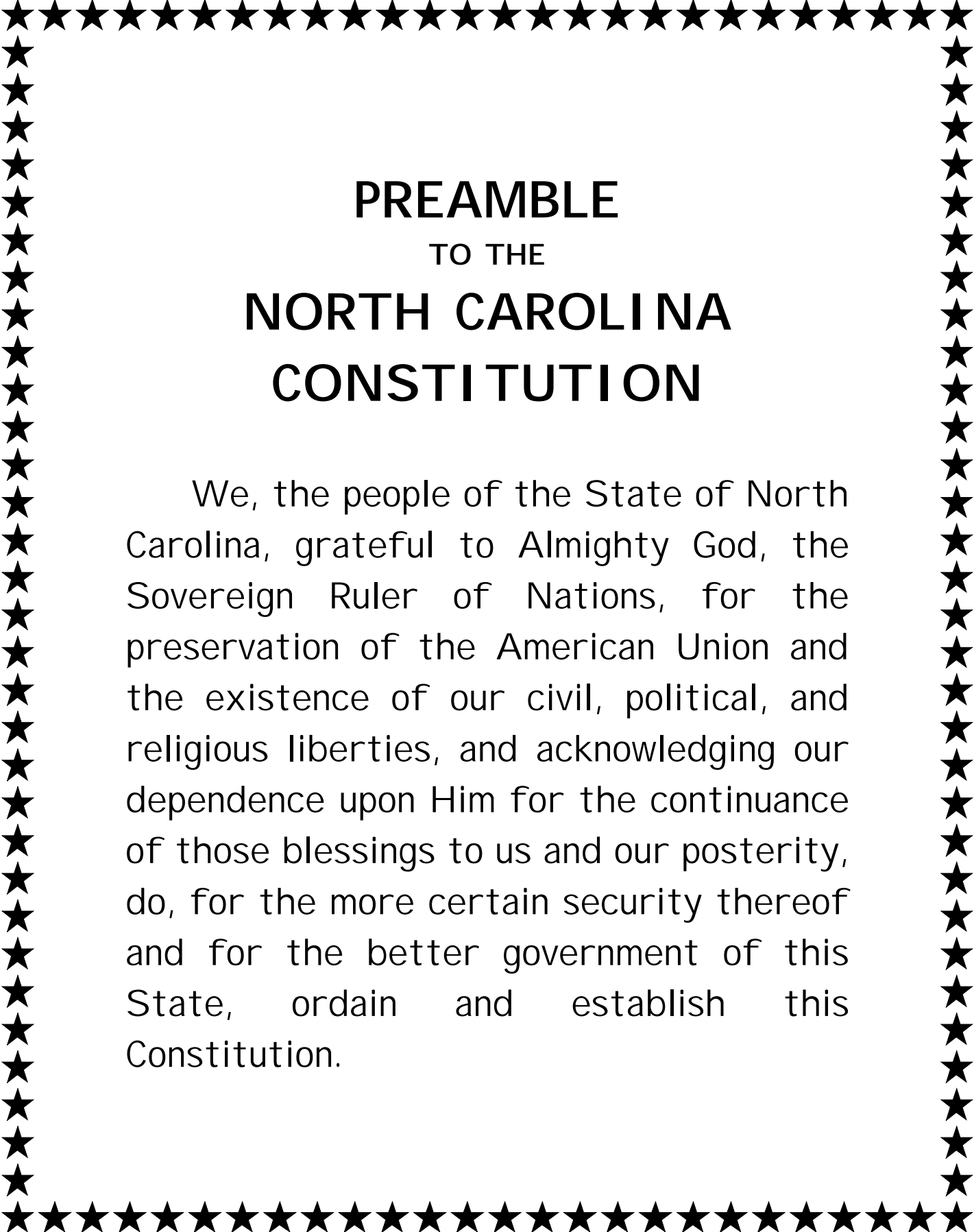
The State flag displays two dates. May 20, 1775, is the date thought to have been the time of the issuance of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. This document made a bold statement in favor of independence for the colonies. It stated that English laws were no longer in effect in Mecklenburg County. April 12, 1776, is the date of the Halifax Resolves. In this document, North Carolina authorized its delegates to the Continental Congress to vote for independence from England. These dates celebrate the fact that North Carolina was the first colony to declare its independence from England well before the famous date of July 4, 1776.



The North Carolina State Seal



The North Carolina Constitution provides for a State seal and it is called the "Great Seal of the State of North Carolina". Throughout history, several seals have been used by the State. The last change to the seal was made in 1983, at which time the date, April 12, 1776, was added at the bottom to commemorate the Halifax Resolves. This conformed the Seal and the State Flag. The State Motto, "Esse Quam Videri", which is Latin for "To be rather than to seem", appears at the bottom of the Seal.



PREAMBLE
TO THE
NORTH CAROLINA
CONSTITUTION

We, the people of the State of North Carolina, grateful to Almighty God, the Sovereign Ruler of Nations, for the preservation of the American Union and the existence of our civil, political, and religious liberties, and acknowledging our dependence upon Him for the continuance of those blessings to us and our posterity, do, for the more certain security thereof and for the better government of this State, ordain and establish this Constitution.

North Carolina State Government

Legislative Branch

The Legislative Branch makes laws for North Carolina. It is made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives, which together are known as the General Assembly. The Legislature meets biennially and all members are elected for two-year terms.

Executive Branch

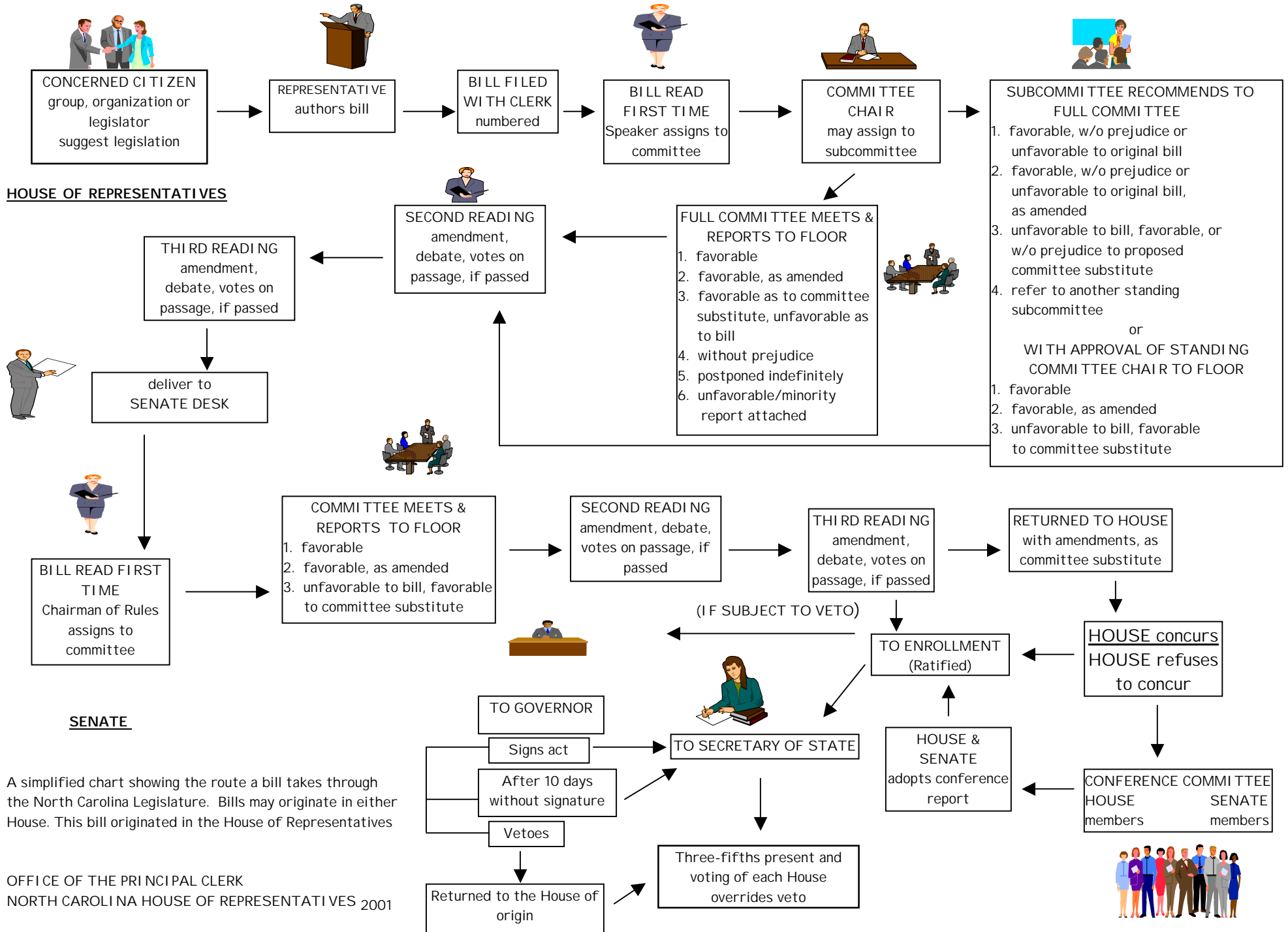
The Executive Branch of government enforces laws made by the legislature. The head of this branch is the Governor, who is elected every four years. Along with the Governor, the Executive Branch also includes the Lieutenant Governor, the Council of State, and many State agencies.

Judicial Branch

The Judicial Branch interprets what our laws mean and makes decisions about the laws and those who break them. The Courts of the Judicial Branch are split into three divisions, the Appellate Division, the Superior Court Division, and the District Court Division.

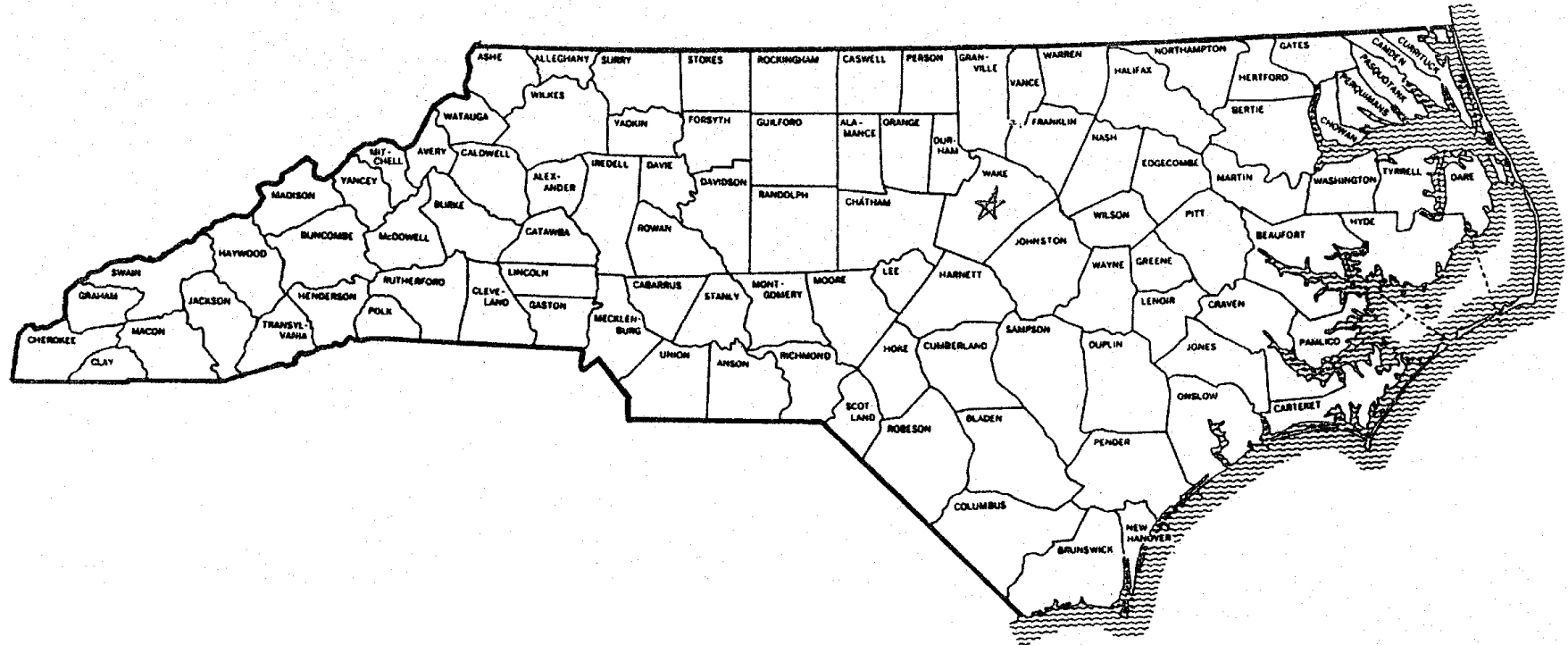


HOW AN IDEA BECOMES A LAW



A simplified chart showing the route a bill takes through the North Carolina Legislature. Bills may originate in either House. This bill originated in the House of Representatives

NORTH CAROLINA COUNTIES



- HOW MANY COUNTIES ARE IN NORTH CAROLINA?
- WHICH COUNTY DO YOU LIVE IN?
- CAN YOU FIND YOUR COUNTY ON THE MAP?

THE STATE SONG

"The Old North State," was adopted as the official song of the State of North Carolina by the General Assembly of 1927. The words were written by William Gaston and the music was collected and arranged by Mrs. E. E. Randolph.

THE OLD NORTH STATE

Carolina! Carolina! heaven's blessings attend her,
While we live we will cherish, protect, and defend her,
Tho' the scorner may sneer at and witling defame her,
Still our hearts swell with gladness whenever we name her.

Chorus:

Hurrah! Hurrah! the Old North State forever,
Hurrah! Hurrah! the good Old North State.

Tho' she envies not others, their merited glory,
Say whose name stands the foremost, in liberty's story,
Tho' to true to herself e'er to crouch to oppression,
Who can yield to just rule a more loyal submission.

(Repeat chorus)

Then let all those who love us, love the land that we live in,
As happy a region as on this side of heaven,
Where plenty and peace, love and joy smile before us,
Raise aloud, raise together the heart thrilling chorus.

(Repeat chorus)

THE STATE TOAST

This poem, composed in 1904 by Leonora Martin and Mary Burke Kerr, was officially adopted as the toast of North Carolina by the General Assembly of 1957.

Here's to the land of the long leaf pine,
The summer land where the sun doth shine,
Where the weak grow strong and the strong grow great,
Here's to "Down Home," the Old North State!

Here's to the land of the cotten bloom white,
Where the scuppernong perfumes the breeze at night,
Where the soft southern moss and jessamine mate,
'Neath the murmuring pines of the Old North State!

Here's to the land where the galax grows,
Where the rhododendron's rosette glows,
Where soars Mount Mitchell's summit great,
In the "Land of the Sky," in the Old North State!

Here's to the land where maidens are fair,
Where friends are true and cold hearts rare,
The near land, the dear land, whatever fate,
The blest land, the best land, the Old North State!

FILL IN THE BLANKS

Use your booklet to help you find the answers.

1. How many sections is the North Carolina State flag divided into? _____
2. What is the name given to the President of the Senate?

3. What is the capitol of North Carolina? _____
4. Which branch of the State Government enforces laws made by the legislature? _____
5. The House of Representatives has how many members?

6. How many members are there in the Senate?

7. What is the name given to the person who presides over the House of Representatives? _____
8. The Courts of the Judicial Branch are split into how many divisions? _____
9. Can you name the State song? _____
10. A bill is a proposed what? _____

11. What is the State Motto? _____
12. What is the meaning of the State Motto? _____
13. Can you name the type of potato that North Carolina adopted as the State vegetable? _____
14. Who officially adopted the State Toast of North Carolina? _____
15. How many years do the members of the House and Senate serve in a term? _____
16. What is the name of the two-year session? _____
17. What is the name of the room where members of the House of Representatives and Senate meet?

18. Who presides over the House when the Speaker is absent? _____
19. The Legislative branch of government known as the General Assembly is made up of what two groups?

20. How many branches are there in the North Carolina State government? _____

JUMBLE

Unscramble the State symbols.

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|--------------------|-------|
| 1. | State Beverage | KILM | _____ |
| 2. | State Bird | DINALRAC | _____ |
| 3. | State Boat | DSAH | _____ |
| 4. | State Colors | DRE EUBL | _____ |
| 5. | State Dog | PTTOL ONUHD | _____ |
| 6. | State Fish | CLHENAN SABS | _____ |
| 7. | State Flower | DOWOGDO | _____ |
| 8. | State Insect | EYNOHEBE | _____ |
| 9. | State Mammal | AYGR ELQSRIRU | _____ |
| 10. | State Motto | SESE AMQU DIVREI | _____ |
| 11. | State Nickname | RTA EHEL TESAT | _____ |
| 12. | State Reptile | ENRSTAE XBO RUTLET | _____ |
| 13. | State Rock | RANETIG | _____ |
| 14. | State Shell | TCHOSC NNETBO | _____ |
| 15. | State Song | DLO RTOHN TAETS | _____ |
| 16. | State Stone | ALDERME | _____ |
| 17. | State Toast | TSAET AOTST | _____ |
| 18. | State Tree | INPE | _____ |
| 19. | State Vegetable | ETSWE TOOATP | _____ |
| 20. | State Capitol | GHLEIRA | _____ |

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SEARCH AND SEEK

See how many hidden words you can find.

BILL

CAPITOL

CAUCUSES

CLERK OF THE HOUSE

COMMITTEE

CONFERENCE

DEBATE

DISTRICT

ENROLLED

HEARING

HOUSE

JOURNAL

MAJORITY

PRESIDENT

PUBLIC LAW

PUBLIC OPINION

QUORUM

REFERRED

REPORT

REPRESENTATIVE

ROLL CALL

SENATE

SENATOR

SIGNATURE

SPEAKER

STATUTE

VETO

VICE PRESIDENT

VOTE

WHIP

SPENCER'S SWEET POTATO SOUFFLE

- 4 cups of cooked mashed sweet potatoes
- 1 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup milk
- 2 eggs
- 1/3 cup margarine
- 2 tsp. vanilla

Mix all together and put into casserole dish.
Sprinkle topping over sweet potatoes.
Bake at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes.

TOPPING

- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/3 cup margarine
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1/3 flour



HOW AN IDEA BECOMES A BILL

Can you put these bill actions in the correct order by drawing a line from the step # to the action it would represent?

- STEP # 1 Bill sent to other chamber of the General Assembly and referred to committee. Step #4 is repeated.
- STEP # 2 The committee reviews the bill and reports on it.
- STEP # 3 Representative or Senator writes the bill.
- STEP # 4 The Governor signs the bill.
- STEP # 5 A conference committee made up of House and Senate members writes a final version of the bill.
- STEP # 6 House or Senate passes the bill.
- STEP # 7 A concerned citizen, group, or legislator has an idea and suggests legislation.
- STEP # 8 The bill is introduced to either the House or Senate and referred to committee.
- STEP # 9 The House and Senate pass the final version of the bill.
- STEP # 10 The Secretary of State is given custody of the bill and it becomes law.
- STEP # 11 If the bill has been changed, it either returns to the original chamber for a new vote or proceeds to a conference committee. If no changes have been made, the bill is sent to the Governor.
- STEP # 12 The Senate or House passes the bill.

FUN BOOK

ANSWER SHEET

BRAIN TEASER

PREAMBLE TO THE NORTH CAROLINA CONSTITUTION

We, the people of the State of North Carolina, grateful to Almighty God, the Sovereign Ruler of Nations, for the preservation of the American Union and the existence of our civil, political and religious liberties, and acknowledging our dependence upon Him for the continuance of those blessings to us and our posterity, do, for the more certain security thereof and for the better government of this State, ordain and establish this Constitution.

JUMBLE

1. MILK
2. CARDINAL
3. SHAD
4. RED and BLUE
5. PLOTT HOUND
6. CHANNEL BASS
7. DOGWOOD
8. HONEYBEE
9. GRAY SQUIRREL
10. ESSE QUAM VIDERI
11. TAR HEEL STATE
12. EASTERN BOX TURTLE
13. GRANITE
14. SCOTCH BONNET
15. OLD NORTH STATE
16. EMERALD
17. STATE TOAST
18. PINE
19. SWEET POTATO
20. RALEIGH

FILL IN THE BLANK

1. Three
2. Lieutenant Governor
3. Raleigh
4. Executive Branch
5. 120
6. 50
7. The Speaker
8. Three
9. The Old North State
10. Law
11. "Esse Quam Videri"
12. "To be rather to seem"
13. Sweet Potato
14. The General Assembly
15. Two
16. Biennial
17. The Chamber
18. The Speaker Pro Tempore
19. House of Representatives/Senate
20. Three

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| M | A | R | K | U | P | G | B | L | N | C | A | R | U | G | T | U | H |
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ANSWER SHEET

SEARCH and SEEK

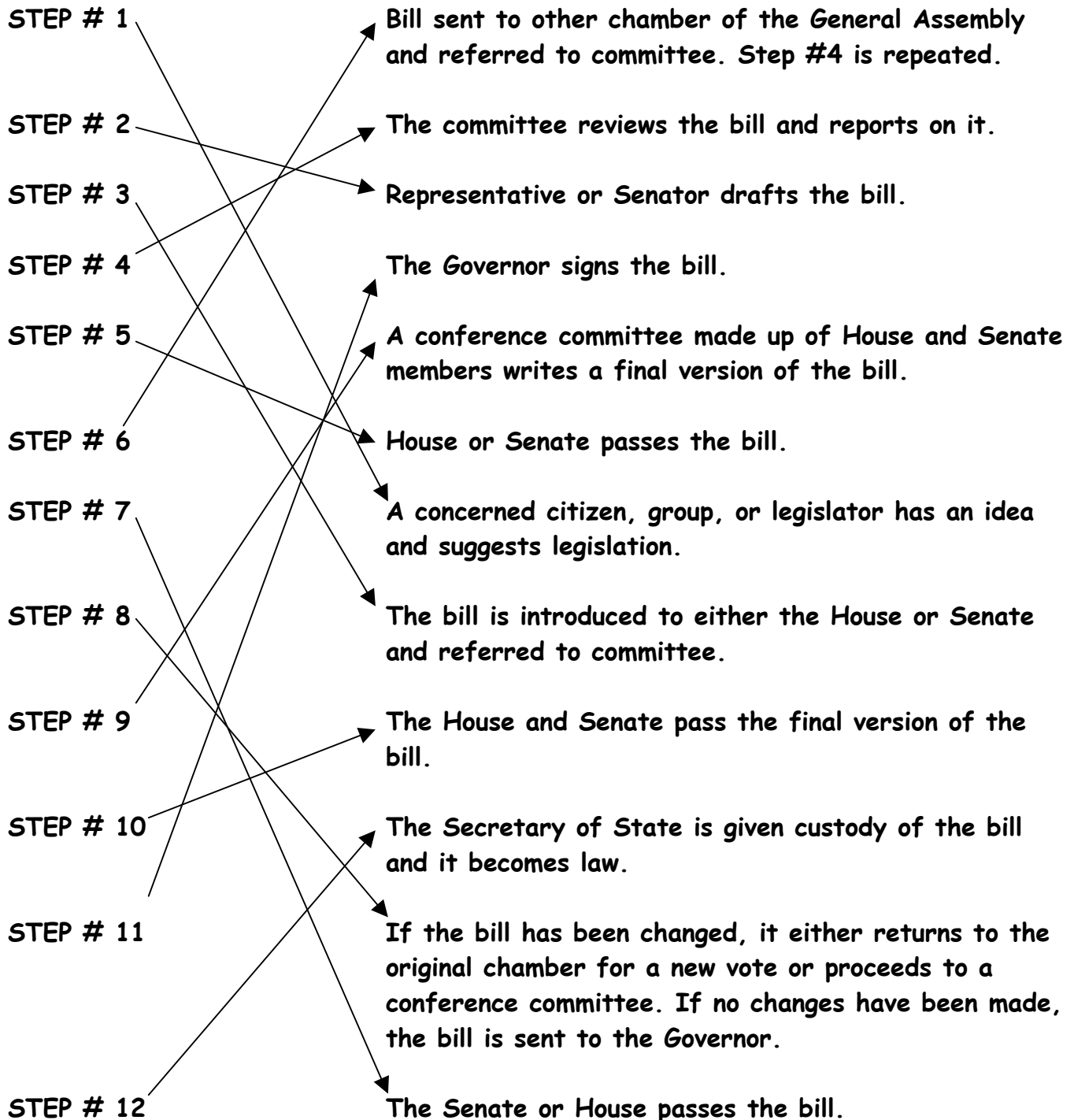
BILL
 CAPITOL
 CAUCUSES
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 COMMITTEE
 CONFERENCE
 DEBATE
 DISTRICT
 ENROLLED
 HEARING

HOUSE
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 SENATOR
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 STATUTE
 VETO
 VICE PRESIDENT
 VOTE
 WHIP

ANSWER SHEET

HOW AN IDEA BECOMES A BILL



This publication was compiled by:

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