



# Coffee Chat: DC's Legislative Process



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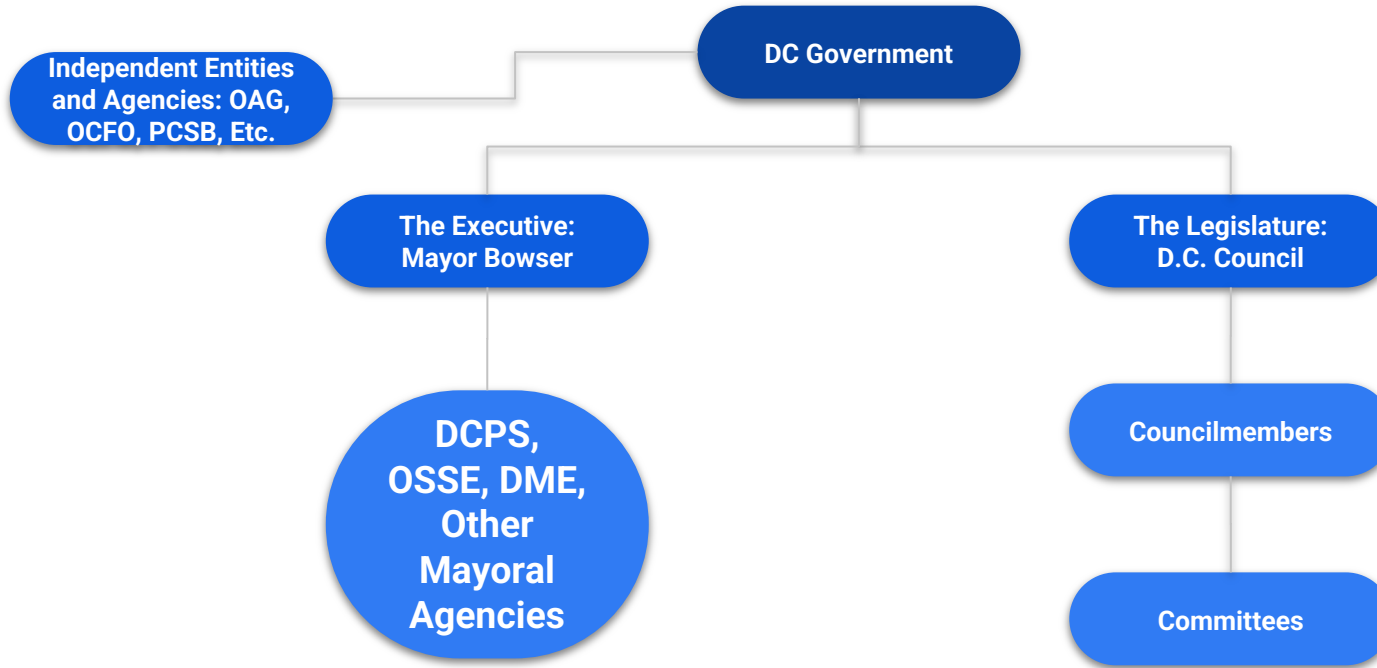
# Warm Up: How a bill becomes a law in DC

How does a bill go from idea to law in DC?





# Refresher: The Who of DC Government



# The Council: Structure and Committees



- The Council is comprised of 13 members:
  - The Chair, 4 at-large members, and 8 ward members.
- Legislative and oversight responsibilities divided between their committees.
- Number of committees can change, freshman legislators do not receive committees their first 2 years—or first council period

## Who decides the committees?

The Council Chair will propose the committees, their chairs, and the agencies and topics under their purview.

The Council then votes to approve that plan.

# The Council: Committees for Council Period 25



- **Committee of the Whole**
- Business & Economic Development
- Executive Admin & Labor
- Facilities & Family Services
- Transportation & Environment
- Health
- Hospital and Health Equity
- Housing and Human Services
- Judiciary & Public Safety
- Public Works & Operations
- Recreation, Libraries & Youth Affairs

# The Legislative Process: Bill Introductions



## **Bills can be introduced in two basic ways:**

1. By members of the D.C. Council after they've been developed and drafted:
  - a. Through their own research
  - b. At the request of members of the public, advocates, organizations or businesses.
  
- 1. At the request of the Mayor, AG, or other government entity**
  - a. The technical introduction is still made by a member of the Council
  - b. Most often it's the Chairman.
    - i. You may have heard a bill being referenced something like *"Introduced on January 12, 2023 by the Chairman at the request of the Mayor.."*

# Legislative Process



## Introduction and Referral

The Bill is introduced  
Chairman determines referral  
Can be to more than one committee  
“Comments”

## Committee Holds Hearing

Every bill must have a hearing to be voted on.  
Some bills have multiple hearings  
After the hearing, committee staff will revise the bill and include this “Committee Print” in the Committee Report.

## Committee Markup

Bills must be voted “out of committee”  
The committee chair will “move” the committee print.  
A majority of committee members present at the vote must approve the measure.

## COW, 1st and 2nd Reading

Once out of committee, the bill moves to a Committee of the Whole review.  
After COW, the bill is voted on at least twice at 1st and 2nd reading.  
Rarely a bill can receive a 3rd reading.

## Mayor’s Signature or Veto

The bill is transmitted to the Mayor.  
If she signs it, it is sent onto Congress for the Congressional Review Period.  
If she vetoes, Council can override with 9 votes.

# Legislative Issues Shaping Council Period 25



## **Chairman Mendelson's *Schools First in Budgeting Act of 2022*:**

- **Approved at the end of Council Period 24**
- **Creates a 9-step process for determining the annual budget for each DCPS school.**
- **The Chairman's goal was to ensure that school-level budgets are "held harmless" from year-to-year changes in enrollment**
- **The bill was strongly opposed by the Mayor and the Chancellor who argued it would tie their hands and prevent them from effectively managing the DCPS budget.**





# What's new in Council Period 25?

- Mayor's proposed universal before and after school programming
- School boundary study and revision
- Adequacy study
- End of federal stimulus funding
- School resource officers

# Budget Process Refresher



Mayor Proposes  
Budget

Council Holds  
Hearings

Committee  
Markups

COW Budget  
and 1st  
Reading

2nd Reading  
and Mayoral  
Review

March 22

March 27 - April 12

April 25 - April 27

May 16

May 30

Mayor Transmits  
Budget to Council

Committee Public  
Hearings on the "Fiscal  
Year 2024 Local  
Budget Act of 2023".

Committee Markups  
and Reporting on  
Agency Budgets

Chairman Mendelson  
proposes COW budget  
and COW review.

2nd Reading of the  
Local Budget Act &  
Federal Portion

1st Reading of Local  
Budget Act & Budget  
Support Act

TBD:

2nd Reading of the  
Budget Support Act



# Questions?



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