

5. FLOOR ACTION

Floor Amendments

Confusion can result when amendments are not handled in an orderly manner on the chamber floor. Major amendments presented verbally, haphazardly or hastily drafted by members can lead to technical mistakes and other errors. When extensive floor amendments are presented without advance notice, helter-skelter decision-making and uninformed debate often result. If too many amendments are offered from the floor without advance notice, delays can occur and the consideration of other priority matters can be prevented. Yet, procedures can be adopted to minimize the problems associated with floor amendments.

Ways to control floor amendments. Legislatures employ a variety of techniques to help control the process of amending bills on the floor. Both chambers in Idaho and Oregon prohibit floor amendments and amend bills only in committee. Other legislative bodies often restrict the offering of floor amendments to a particular order of business—the second or third reading in more than 75 percent of the chambers (see table 96-5.1). In 13 legislative assemblies, most bill revision takes place during committee of the whole; these chambers are:

Arizona Senate and House	Minnesota Senate and House
Colorado Senate and House	Montana Senate and House
Kansas Senate and House	Wyoming Senate and House
Michigan Senate	

Legislative bodies frequently require or encourage members to prefile floor amendments. This happens in the 32 chambers shown below.

Arizona House	Maryland Senate
Arkansas Senate and House	Montana Senate and House
Connecticut Senate and House	Nevada Senate and House
Delaware House	New Hampshire House
Florida House	New Jersey Senate
Hawaii Senate and House	New York Assembly
Illinois Senate and House	Pennsylvania House
Indiana Senate and House	Tennessee Senate
Iowa Senate and House	Utah Senate
Kentucky Senate and House	Washington House
Maine Senate and House	Wyoming Senate

Written analyses of floor amendments also can enhance the legislative process. These explanations can clarify intent and help legislators make informed decisions. Thirteen chambers provide written analyses for all floor amendments, while another 20 bodies furnish an explanation only for some (see table 96-5.2).

The ability to display floor amendments can facilitate their consideration. The following chambers use overheard projectors, videos or computers to present amendments.

Arizona House	Indiana Senate
Arkansas Senate	Maryland House
California Assembly	Michigan Senate and House
Colorado House	Montana Senate and House
Connecticut Senate and House	South Carolina House
Florida Senate and House	South Dakota House
Illinois Senate and House	Texas House

Table 96-5.1 When Bills Normally are Amended

State (1)	On second reading	On third reading	During committee of the whole	Other
Alabama		B		
Alaska	B			
Arizona			B	
Arkansas	B			
California		B		
Colorado	S	B	B	
Connecticut		B		
Delaware		H		
Florida	B			
Georgia		H		
Hawaii		B		
Idaho				
Illinois	B			
Indiana	B			
Iowa		H		2
Kansas			B	
Kentucky	S	H		
Louisiana		B		
Maine	B			
Maryland	B			
Massachusetts				
Michigan	H	B	S	
Minnesota			B	
Mississippi		H		
Missouri				3
Montana	B		B	
Nebraska	S	S		4
Nevada	B	B		

Table 96-5.1 When Bills Normally are Amended, cont'd.

State (1)	On second reading	On third reading	During committee of the whole	Other
New Hampshire	B			
New Jersey	B			
New Mexico		B		
New York		B		
North Carolina	H			
North Dakota	B			
Ohio		B		
Oklahoma		B		
Oregon				
Pennsylvania	S	B		
Rhode Island	S			
South Carolina	H			
South Dakota	B			
Tennessee		B		
Texas	B			
Utah	S	B		
Vermont	B	B		
Virginia	B	B		
Washington	B			
West Virginia	B			
Wisconsin	B			
Wyoming	B	B	B	

Table 96-5.1 When Bills Normally are Amended, cont'd.

<p>Key:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">S=SenateH=House or AssemblyB=Both chambers <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The following chambers did not respond to the survey: Delaware Senate, Georgia Senate, Massachusetts Senate and House, Mississippi Senate, North Carolina Senate, Rhode Island House, South Carolina Senate; nor did any legislatures from the U.S. territories respond.2. Iowa Senate: A bill may be amended when it is called up for debate.3. Missouri Senate and House: A bill may be amended when it is considered for perfection.4. Nebraska Senate: Bills are amended on fourth reading.
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Table 96-5.2 Written Analysis for Floor Amendments

A written analysis is provided for all floor amendments:	
California Senate and Assembly	Maine Senate and House
Delaware House	New Hampshire Senate
Illinois Senate and House	New Jersey Senate and General Assembly
Indiana Senate	Pennsylvania House
Kentucky Senate	
A written analysis is provided for some floor amendments:	
Alaska Senate and House	Nebraska Senate
Arizona Senate and House	Ohio Senate and House
Connecticut Senate and House	Oklahoma House
Iowa Senate	Pennsylvania Senate
Kansas Senate	South Carolina House
Louisiana Senate	Virginia House
Maryland House	Washington Senate and House
Michigan Senate	
No written analysis of floor amendments is provided:	
Alabama Senate	Nevada Senate and Assembly
Arkansas Senate and House	New Hampshire House
Colorado Senate and House	New Mexico Senate and House
Florida Senate and House	New York Senate and Assembly
Georgia House	North Carolina House
Hawaii Senate and House	North Dakota Senate and House
Indiana House	Oklahoma Senate
Iowa House	Rhode Island Senate
Kansas House	South Dakota Senate and House
Kentucky House	Tennessee Senate and House
Louisiana House	Texas Senate and House
Maryland Senate	Utah Senate and House
Michigan House	Vermont Senate and House
Minnesota Senate and House	Virginia Senate
Mississippi House	West Virginia Senate and House
Missouri Senate and House	Wisconsin Senate and House
Montana Senate and House	Wyoming Senate and House