

# Quick Guide: Drafting a Bill

*Three steps to write a great bill!*

## 1. IDENTIFY A PROBLEM THAT EXISTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Oftentimes, it can be difficult to think of a good idea for a bill. The best place to start is to think of problems that might exist in your community that you would like to solve. Is there a problem with education? Transportation? Checking your local news source can also help you come up with ideas.

Looking for Bill Ideas? Try this link. <http://bit.ly/2BTfikM> Or browse through Montana's current laws. <http://bit.ly/2BU5yqp>

## 2. COME UP WITH A SOLUTION

Thinking of ways to solve a problem can be difficult. Always remember that if a problem is large you don't have to solve it all at once! More often than not, problems are solved using a long series of steps. If you are having trouble coming up with a solution, try a google search and see if anyone else has been trying to solve the same problem.

## 3. WRITING YOUR BILL

When writing your bill, you want to make it as clear and thought out as possible. You should follow this format when writing your bill.

**I. Short Title:** If you have a working title, other than the official title include it in this section. For example, "The Motorist's Liability Insurance Act."

**II. Definitions:** If there are any terms that need to be clarified, define them here.

**III. Procedural Provision:** This is the meat of the bill. What do you want to accomplish? What is the solution to the problem that you identified? Be specific.

**IV. Penalties:** If this bill isn't carried out by someone, what will be their punishment? Who will carry out that punishment?

**V. Savings Clause:** Do you only want this bill to apply to certain people? Is there a group that you would like to exclude? Make note of that in this section. **Be aware that name-calling and discriminatory language will NOT be tolerated, even in a joke bill.**

**VI. Fiscal Note:** How are you going to pay for this bill? Oftentimes, this will come from the "General Fund." Other examples include taxes, or incentives.

**VII. Enactment Date:** When will this bill take effect? As soon as it's passed, or the next year? This should be the final section in any bill.

**REMEMBER: IF YOU AREN'T CLEAR, YOUR BILL PROBABLY WON'T PASS!**