



The Legislative Process

Jon Retzer
Assistant National Legislative Director

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS



PROTECTING OUR BENEFITS BEGINS WITH YOU

Our success in pushing for and seeing legislative changes in Washington remains dependent on the continued strength of our nationwide grassroots movement.

Now is the time to become proactive, and now is the time to prepare – before others decide it is a good idea to dismantle the VA or take away hard-earned benefits and services from those who have served and sacrificed for this country.

We are all responsible to help ensure that our government does not go back on its promises to our nation's veterans and their families.

Remember, protecting our benefits begins with you.



DAV RESOLUTIONS

- Our constitution and bylaws note **DAV cannot speak for or against any policy or legislation unless there is an adopted DAV resolution** that supports that position and resolutions adopted each year at our national convention.
- **The first step to supporting our veterans** is identifying the pressing issues they face every day.
- **Every year at DAV national convention delegates identify** the most important of these issues and create a set of resolutions designed to improve the lives of veterans throughout the United States.
- **DAV has been making historic strides in protecting veterans' rights** for over 100 years.

HOW CAN YOU, YOUR CHAPTER AND YOUR DEPARTMENT HELP?

- **Find out how** to become more involved and effective as a DAV advocate about the legislative process, department and national conventions, resolution writing, Benefits Protection Teams.
- **Learn more about** the most critical issues challenging veterans today.
- **All members have a voice in DAV** and can **introduce a resolution** through their local chapter and department.
- **Take Action on DAV Commander's Action Network (CAN)** alerts to contact your Members of Congress on specific bills.
- **Meet and educate** legislators, candidates and agencies, issues veterans face. Provide them our resolutions.



GET INVOLVED

DAV.org (Get Involved)

Advocate on Legislation

DAV Benefits Protection Team

- Protecting our Benefits Begins with You
- Sign up to receive legislative alerts
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Additional Information
- Benefits Protection Team Leader Workshop

Other Webinars

Member responsibilities during elections-video



COMMANDER'S ACTION NETWORK

Sign Up, which also is how you update your account information.

DAV's National Legislative Department - [Act Now!](#) (Take Actions Now) - Campaigns list

DAV-Supported Legislation

DAV Issues

Legislative Resources

- Critical Policy Goals
- Legislative Program (Resolutions)
- Congressional Testimony
- Issue Briefs
- Legislative Webinars
- Independent Budget
- DAV National Constitution, Bylaws & Regulations
- Legislative Victories for Veterans in 2022, the Second Session of the 117th Congress
- Legislative Victories for Veterans in 2021, the First Session of the 117th Congress
- Statement of Policy



Benefits Protection Team-Link



DAV SUPPORTED LEGISLATION - BILL DETAILS ([congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov))

CONGRESS.GOV Advanced Searches Browse

Search Tools | Support | Sign In

Legislation | Congressional Record | Committees | Members

Legislation Examples: hr5, sres9, "health care" MORE OPTIONS

Home > Legislation > 118th Congress > S.2513

Citation | Subscribe | Share/Save | Site Feedback

S.2513 - Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2023

118th Congress (2023-2024) | [Get alerts](#)

BILL Hide Overview

Sponsor: [Sen. Tester, Jon \[D-MT\]](#) (Introduced 07/26/2023)

Committees: Senate - Veterans' Affairs

Latest Action: Senate - 07/26/2023 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. ([All Actions](#))

Tracker: Introduced > Passed Senate > Passed House > To President > Became Law

More on This Bill
[CBO Cost Estimates \[0\]](#)

Give Feedback on This Bill
[Contact Your Member](#)

Summary (0) | Text (1) | Actions (1) | Titles (2) | Amendments (0) | Cosponsors (1) | Committees (1) | Related Bills (0)

Summary: S.2513 — 118th Congress (2023-2024)

[All Information](#) (Except Text)

A summary is in progress.

CONGRESS.GOV



OVERVIEW OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Article I of the U.S. Constitution grants all legislative powers to a bicameral Congress. “**Great Compromise**” seeking to balance the effects of popular majorities with the interests of the states

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

POPULAR MAJORITIES

2
YEAR

435
DISTRICTS
TERMS

Originates Revenue
Legislation



SENATE

INTERESTS OF THE STATES

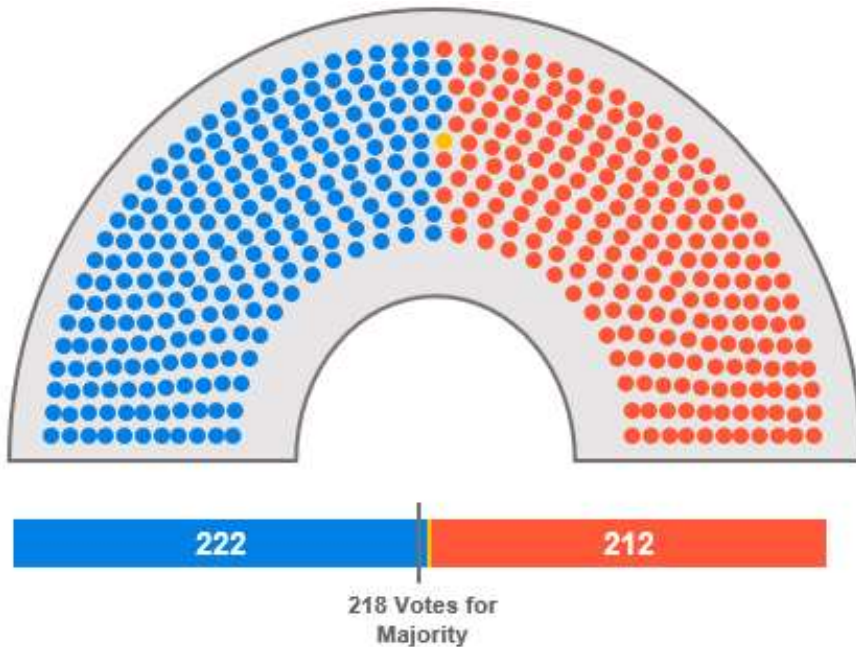
100
2 PER STATE

6
YEAR
TERMS

Presidential Nominations
& Treaties



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



All 435 seats in the House are up for reelection every two years.

The next election for all Representatives is November 2024.

The House is comprised of 21 Committees.

Each Committee has a Chair and a Ranking Member.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) is broken down into subcommittees:

- Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (DAMA)
- Economic Opportunity (EO)
- Health
- Oversight and Investigations (O&I)
- Technology Modernization (Tech Mod)

SENATE

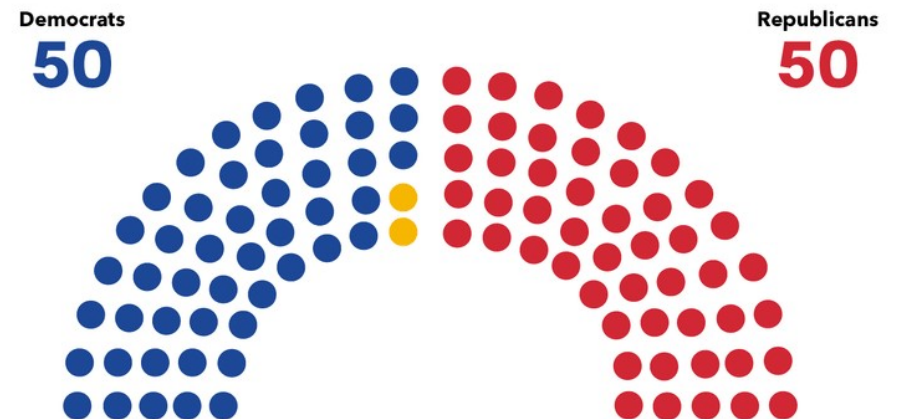
Only 1/3 of the Senate seats are elected every two years.

33 to 34 senators are up for election at one time.

The Senate is comprised of 16 Committees. Each Committee has a Chair and a Ranking Member.

Veterans' Affairs (SVAC)

Armed Services (SASC)



CONGRESS

What does the “118th Congress” mean?

The U.S. Congress operates in 2-year terms called Congress. Each “congress” is divided into two sessions and currently we are in the 1st session of the 118th Congress.

The 118th Congress started in January 2023 and will end in December 2024.

Any bills introduced during this session of the 118th Congress have until December of next year to be acted upon.

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

All laws in the United States begin as bills. Before a bill can become a law, it must be approved by the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate, and the President.

The Bill Begins

Laws begin as ideas. Ideas come from resolutions.

These ideas may come from a Member—or from a citizen like you.

Citizens who have ideas for laws can contact their Member to discuss their ideas.

If the Member agree, they research the ideas and write them into bills.

THE BILL IS PROPOSED

Only a Member of congress can introduce legislation.

Member talks with other Members about the bill in hopes of getting them to co-sponsor their legislation.

As advocates, through DAV CAN, we ask our Member to co-sponsor and support passage of the legislation.

THE BILL IS INTRODUCED

A bill is introduced when it is placed in the hopper—a special box on the side of the clerk's desk.

Only Members can introduce bills.

When a bill is introduced, a bill clerk assigns it a number that begins with H.R. / S.

A clerk then reads the bill to all the Members, and the Chair sends the bill to one of the standing committees.

THE BILL GOES TO COMMITTEE

When the bill reaches committee, the committee members—groups of Members who are experts on topics such as agriculture, education, or international relations—review, research, and revise the bill before voting on whether or not to send the bill back to the House floor.

If the committee members would like more information before deciding if the bill should be sent to the floor, the bill is sent to a subcommittee.

While in subcommittee, the bill is closely examined and expert opinions are gathered before it is sent back to the committee for approval.

THE BILL IS REPORTED

When the committee has approved a bill, it is sent—or reported—to the floor.

Once reported, a bill is ready to be debated by all Members.



THE BILL IS DEBATED

When a bill is debated, Members discuss the bill and explain why they agree or disagree with it.

Then, a clerk reads the bill section by section and the Members recommend changes.

When all changes have been made, the bill is ready to be voted on.



HOUSE VOTES ON THE BILL

There are three methods for voting on a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives:

If a majority of the Representatives say or select yes, the bill passes in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The bill is then certified by the Clerk of the House and delivered to the U.S. Senate.

SENATE VOTES ON THE BILL

When a bill reaches the U.S. Senate, it goes through many of the same steps it went through in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The bill is discussed in a Senate committee and then reported to the Senate floor to be voted on.

When either chamber approves a bill that was passed by the other chamber, the two chambers must resolve any legislative differences of the bill by way of a conference committee.

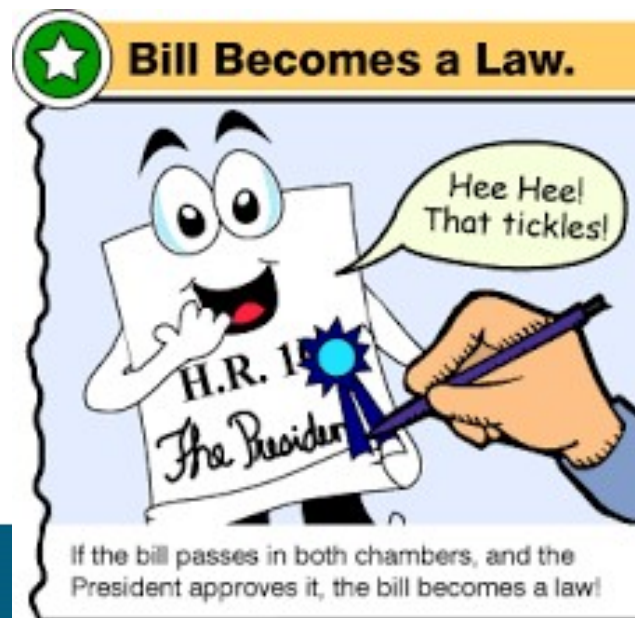
THE BILL IS SENT TO THE PRESIDENT

When a bill reaches the President, there are three choices.

1. Sign and pass the bill—the bill becomes a law.
2. Refuse to sign, or veto, the bill—the bill is sent back to the U.S. House of Representatives, along with the President's reasons for the veto. If the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate still believe the bill should become a law, they can hold another vote on the bill. If two-thirds of the Representatives and Senators support the bill, the President's veto is overridden and the bill becomes a law.
3. Do nothing (pocket veto)—if Congress is in session, the bill automatically becomes law after 10 days. If Congress is not in session, the bill does not become a law.

THE BILL IS A LAW

If a bill has passed in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate and has been approved by the President, or if a presidential veto has been overridden, the bill becomes a law and is enforced by the government.



SUMMARY

- Our constitution and bylaws note DAV cannot speak for or against any policy or legislation unless there is an adopted DAV resolution that supports that position.
- Senators-6 years /Representatives-2 years
- Bills must pass both Chambers
- A period of Congress is 2 years
- 118th Congress ends in December 2024, currently in first session.
- If a bill expires in current Congress, it must be reintroduced in new Congress for consideration.

BILL TO LAW SUMMARY

1. Begins As Ideas
2. Introduced / Bill Number Assigned
3. Goes To Committee
4. Legislation Debated
5. Voted On In House and Senate
6. Sent To The President
7. Becomes Law




Thank You!

JON RETZER

Assistant National Legislative Director

(202) 554-3501

jretzer@dav.org