

OUR COMUNIDAD, OUR VOICES:  
EL PODER es NUESTRO!

WOMEN'S  
HEALTH  
CLINIC

**CLOSED!**

**¡CERRADO!**

CLÍNICA  
DE LA  
MUJER

Shouldn't everyone  
have access to  
the healthcare  
they need?  
How can we  
change this?

HEALTH INSURANCE  
APPLICATION  
DENIED

**STRONG  
FAMILIES**

Colorado  
Organization for  
Latina  
Opportunity and  
Reproductive Rights



# HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW IN COLORADO

## THE COLORADO LEGISLATURE

has two legislative chambers – the House of Representatives and the Senate. There are 65 members of the House of Representatives and 35 members of the Senate. The Colorado Legislature meets for 120 days each year.



## STEP 1: INTRODUCE A BILL

A member of the House of Representatives or the Senate can introduce a bill. The member who introduces the bill is called the “prime” sponsor. Each legislator is only allowed to introduce five bills each legislative session.

COLOR members meet with potential sponsors to share our stories, helping to inform the development of legislation as it is being created.



**A BILL IS** an idea for a new law, or an idea to change or get rid of an existing law. Ideas for bills can come from anyone – legislators, community members, organizations, even corporations. COLOR tracks legislation that helps Latin@ families by expanding access to the full range of reproductive healthcare services, promoting justice for immigrants, increasing access to education for young parents, protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth and their families, and improving economic opportunities.



## STEP 2: SEND TO COMMITTEE

Once introduced, a bill gets assigned a number, and then the bill is sent to a committee. The House of Representatives has 11 committees and the Senate has 10 committees.



### STEP 3: COMMITTEE HEARS THE BILL

The committee studies the bill to see if it would make a good law. Committees often hold hearings, where people testify in support of or in opposition to the bill. (Members of the committee can suggest changes (called amendments) to the bill for the committee to consider.



After listening to all of the information and proposed changes, the committee will vote on the bill. If more than half of the committee members support the bill, it moves onto the next step. If the committee doesn't vote on the bill or the bill gets defeated in committee, it cannot move on.

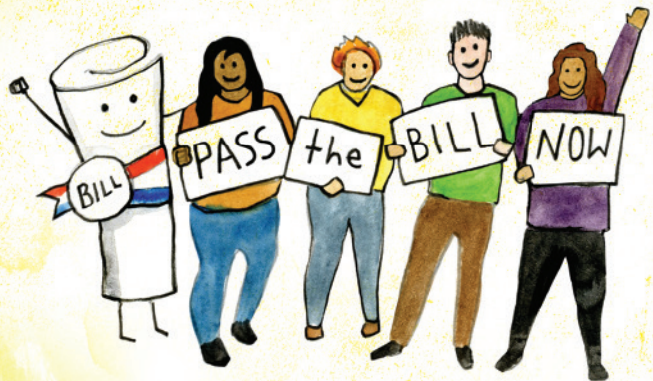
COLORist@s and supporters share their stories by testifying at committee hearings. COLOR members who can't attend in person can submit written testimony into the record. COLOR members can call the members of the committee to express their support or share their concern about a bill, and we often have days of action to share our experiences with legislators in person.

### STEP 4: FLOOR ACTION

A bill that is approved by committee returns to the chamber (House or Senate) where it was introduced for a full vote. Legislators can amend the bill, and vote on amendments. If the full chamber passes a bill, it has a "third reading" vote for final approval before sending it to the other chamber. Bills that don't pass on the third reading do not move on in the process.



If a bill passes in the House of Representatives, it goes through a similar process in the Senate. Before a bill becomes law, it must be approved by both chambers of the legislature. The bill must pass with the same wording in the House of Representatives and the Senate before it can go to the Governor. If the Senate amends a House bill, or vice versa, the bill must go back to the original chamber and be approved with the amendments before proceeding. Sometimes, bills with different amendments end up in a conference committee, where a small group of members from each chamber try to work out the differences.



When a bill is being considered on the chamber floor, COLORist@s participate in days of action, calling or visiting legislators to express their support or opposition to a bill. We may also show up at the Capitol building on the day of a floor vote to rally, speak to the media, and do in-person storytelling with legislators.



## STEP 5: GOVERNOR'S DESK

If the bill passes both chambers, it goes to the Governor for approval. The Governor has three choices:

1. Governor signs the bill.
2. Governor vetoes (or rejects) the bill. The House of Representatives and Senate may override the veto by a two-thirds vote of each chamber.
3. Governor takes no action. If the Governor doesn't sign the bill, it will still become a law without their approval.

While a bill is waiting for the Governor to make a decision, COLORist@s call the Governor's office, send emails, and participate in social media campaigns to urge the Governor to sign or veto the bill.



**STRONG FAMILIES** is a program of Forward Together. COLOR is a member of Strong Families, joining more than

150 groups working to change how we think, feel, act, and make policy about families. Forward Together staffs and leads Strong Families.

[www.strongfamiliesmovement.org](http://www.strongfamiliesmovement.org)

 @StrongFams

 strongfamiliesfbpage

## COLORADO ORGANIZATION FOR LATINA OPPORTUNITY AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS (COLOR)

is a sisterhood of Latinas, dedicated to building a movement of Latinas, their families, and allies through leadership development, organizing, and advocacy to create opportunity and achieve reproductive justice. For more information, contact COLOR via email at [info@colorlatina.org](mailto:info@colorlatina.org) or by phone at (303) 393-0382.

[www.colorlatina.org](http://www.colorlatina.org)

 @colorlatina.org

 COLORLATINA

