

January 7, 2015: On Wednesday, January 6, 2015 the 189th session of the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (also known as the Massachusetts Legislature) was sworn into office as prescribed by the *Massachusetts Constitution, Article X of the Articles of Amendment*. The General Court shall remain in session for the next two years.

The Legislature, which is broken into, two branches the Senate (40 members) and the House Representatives (160 members) as outlined in the state *Constitution, Part the Second, Chapter 1, section The General Court*. Each chamber elected their leaders after having been sworn in.

The Senate elected;

Senator Stanley C. Rosenburg, Democrat from Amherst
Senate President

Senator Bruce E. Tarr, Republican from Gloucester
Minority Leader

The House of Representatives elected:

Representative Robert A. DeLeo, Democrat from Winthrop
Speaker of the House

Representative Bradley H. Jones , Republican from North Andover
House Minority Leader

With their leadership in place members of each chamber will be able to start the process of drafting and submitting proposed pieces of legislation (referred to as bills). These bills once drafted will be submitted to the Clerk's Office in each chamber. Once received by the Clerk's Office they will be entered into the docket to receive a number and remain active for the next two years unless or until the legislature takes action on the bill. If no action is taken when the 189th session of the General Court closes the bill will be considered dead.

Once the Clerk's Office receives a bill they issue it a number and it will be assigned to one of 21 Joint Committees. Each Joint Committee is made up of six Senators and eleven Representatives with the exception of the Joint Committee on Transportation, which has seven Senators, and thirteen Representatives.

Each committee will hold public hearings on each bill in order to gather the public's input as well as the input of other legislators and lobbyist. Each bill that ultimately becomes law will go through three readings.

The first reading will result in the committee either stating the committee views the bill favorably or that the committee reports that the bill ought not to pass. If it is

reported that the bill ought not to pass then it will be sent a special committee in each the Senate and House. These committees will bring the bill before their full chamber. If the Chamber votes to accept that recommendation then the bill is officially dead.

If the committee provides a favorable report then the bill is subject to a second public hearing and members of each chamber may offer amendments to the original bill.

Once the committee completes this second review if they continue to believe the bill is worthy of becoming law it is then submitted to Committee for Bills in the Third Reading of each chamber. From that committee the bill is then presented to the full legislator for a vote.

If a bill passes both the House and Senate but has different language it is then sent to a conference committee made up of members of both chambers where they attempt to reach a resolution in regards to the conflicting language. After that resolution is reached the bill is then voted on again in its final form by both chambers and then sent to the Governor.

Once the Governor receives a final a bill approved by both chambers they can take one of the following steps:

The first action is to sign the bill into law and it will normally take effect as a new or amended law ninety days after being signed. Unless the bill is considered emergency legislation then it takes effect immediately upon being signed

The second action would be to veto or reject the bill and return it to the legislature with suggested changes. If two thirds of both chambers vote to approve the bill then the veto is considered overridden and the bill becomes law.

The third option when the legislature is in session is for the Governor to take no action for ten days after receiving the bill. If the Governor chooses to take no action for ten excluding Sundays and holidays while the legislator is in session the bill becomes law automatically.

The fourth option is similar to the third option but applies to when the legislature is out of session. If after ten days of inaction while the legislature is out of session the bill is considered vetoed this is often referred to as a pocket veto.

Hopefully, this helps everyone understand the legislative process in Massachusetts as we move into the 189th session of the General Court. ASIS Boston will continue to follow legislation as it is filed and makes its way through the legislative process. This will include routinely providing updates to the membership and offering testimony to legislative committees if appropriate as well as speaking with individual members of the legislator about issue of importance to our industry.

If anyone has any questions, comments or concerns about any pending legislation they should contact a member of the chapter board or the chapter's legislative liaison David DiNapoli at dvdinapoli@gmail.com.