


Delaware Legislative Overview

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Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time....*Winston Churchill, 1947*



Branches of Government

- ❑ Legislature

- Authority to make laws and to alter or repeal them.

- ❑ Executive

- Authority to administer and enforce the laws.

- ❑ Judiciary

- Authority to interpret and apply the law, adjudicate legal disputes.

Delaware Legislature

- ❑ Bicameral (Two houses) –
 - Senate (21) – Currently 12 D, 9 R
 - House (41) – Currently 26 D, 15 R
- ❑ 150th General Assembly
- ❑ Legislative Leadership – Who are they?
 - Majority/Minority Speaker, Pro Tem, Leader, Whip. Parliamentarians – Speaker, Lt. Gov
 - Agriculture Committee Chairs/members
- ❑ Schedule



Legislation

☐ Bill

- ☐ Amend Code
- ☐ Appropriate funds
- ☐ Amend local government charter
- ☐ Direct someone to do something

☐ Joint Resolution

- ☐ Direct someone to do something
- ☐ Has effect of law, but only in effect during the General Assembly

☐ Resolution/Concurrent Resolution

- ☐ Ask someone to do something
- ☐ Statement or declaration

☐ Constitutional Amendment

Legislative process

- ❑ Each legislation must be heard three times in each house:
 - At introduction on floor or in Committee (Wednesdays)
 - ❑ Only venue for unsolicited public comment
 - Committee disposition reported on floor, placed on ready list
 - On floor for vote
- ❑ Legislation must be passed in each house *in the exact same form* before enactment
- ❑ Bills, Joint Resolutions require Governor's signature to be enacted



Laws

- ❑ Each Bill, Joint Resolution and Constitutional Amendment that is enacted creates a law
- ❑ Noted as volume and chapter
- ❑ Resolutions and Concurrent Resolutions do not have the power of law



Code

- ❑ Delaware Code is a compendium of most Delaware Laws
- ❑ 31 Titles including:
 - Business (Corporations, Insurance, Commerce and Trade, Banking, Property, Public Utilities, Professions and Occupations)
 - Judicial (Court Procedures, Criminal, Estates, Domestic Relations)
 - State Government (Transportation, Motor Vehicles, State Agencies, Taxes)
 - Local Government



Legislative Information System

- <http://legis.delaware.gov/>



A few tips, IMHO.....

- ❑ Know the process, know the people
- ❑ Work through staffers
- ❑ Constructive personal relationships are important
- ❑ Face to Face contact beats other forms of communication
- ❑ Keep paper to 1 or 2 pages max
- ❑ Legislative “session” does not end June 30

Questions??
