

# Legislative Process

## How do we make a law?

Every state has its own laws, which are made by the body known as the legislature (parliament ).

### Process

Drafting a law is normally a complex and demanding process requiring detailed research and discussion. Generally it is the Federal Council that submits draft laws to parliament, but a law may also be drafted on the initiative of a member of parliament, a parliamentary group, a committee (in these three cases, the law is based on a motion or parliamentary initiative) or a canton (cantonal initiative).

The preliminary draft is usually submitted to a consultation procedure by the competent parliamentary committee or by the Federal Council. During the consultation process, the cantons and various actors from civil society (political parties, interest groups, NGOs, etc.) assess the proposal and express their opinions. After the consultation procedure, the final draft is produced and submitted to the two chambers of parliament, along with a dispatch, a report explaining the new law in detail.

## How is agreement reached on a new law?

In Parliament, the two Councils take turns to deal with the draft, and a process begins back and forth with the aim of

reaching agreement in both chambers of parliament. If the National Council and the Council of States can agree on a joint text, the law is passed. If a certain number of voters object to the new law, they can demand that the law be submitted to a vote of the people; this is known as an optional referendum, and is also held if demanded by eight cantons. If there is no call or insufficient support for a referendum, the law comes into force without being submitted to a popular vote. If there is sufficient support for a referendum, the law must be submitted to a vote of the people.

### [Swiss Legislative Process](#)