How a Bill is Passed in the Georgia Legislature

1. Legislator sees need for a new law or changes in existing law and decides to introduce a bill.
2. Legislator goes to Office of Legislative Counsel. There, attorney advises legislator on legal issues and drafts bill.
3. Legislator files bill with the Clerk of the House or Secretary of the Senate.
4. On legislative day after filing, bill is formally introduced. In chamber, bill's title is read during period of first readings.
5. Immediately after first reading, presiding officer assigns bill to a standing committee.
6. In the House only, on next legislative day, Clerk reads bill's title (second reading) in chamber, although actual bill is now in committee. In Senate, second reading comes after bill is reported favorably from committee.
7. Bill is reported favorably by committee and returned to Clerk or Secretary.
8. Bill considered by committee. Author and other legislators may testify. If controversial, public hearings may be held.
9. Clerk or Secretary prepares a General Calendar of bills favorably reported from committee.
10. The Rules Committee of each house meets and from bills on General Calendar for the next day's floor consideration.
11. Presiding officer calls up bills from the Rules Calendar for floor consideration.
12. Once presiding officer calls bill up from Rules Calendar, Clerk or Secretary reads bill's title (third reading). Bill is now ready for floor debate, amendments, and voting.
13. After debate, main question is called and members vote. If bill is approved by majority of total membership of that house, it is sent to the other house.
14. If second house passes bill, it is returned to house where bill was introduced. If changes are accepted, second house signs bill. If first house rejects changes and second house insists, a conference committee may be appointed. If committee report is accepted by both houses, bill becomes law.
15. Bill is enrolled and sent to the Governor (if requested). Otherwise, all enrolled bills sent to Governor following adjournment sine die.
16. Governor may sign bill or do nothing, and bill becomes law. Governor may veto bill, which requires two-thirds of members of each house to override.

Acts and other laws enacted at the session are printed in the Georgia Laws series. Also, act is incorporated into the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. Act becomes effective the following July 1, unless a different effective date is provided in act.