

# **Why Lawyers Have Jobs**

**How Laws Get Made**

# Who's Responsible?

- It's the government's job to make laws
- Both provincial governments and federal governments do this
- Even cities do this, but they can only make by-laws
- This presentation will only deal with the federal government

# Who's Responsible?

- In a democracy, the people rule
- In a representative democracy the people elect other people to rule
- Canada is a representative democracy

# Who's Responsible?



- At the federal level, Canadian citizens elect Members of Parliament or MPs to make laws on our behalf
- MPs sit in the House of Commons and one of their major jobs is to pass bills which become laws

# Who's Responsible?

- In Canada, most bills that become laws are introduced by the party in government
- Opposition parties and regular MPs can introduce bills, but they are rarely passed in a majority government situation



# Who's Responsible?

- Senators can also introduce bills, but the House of Commons is really where it is at
- Senators are not elected and thus lack legitimacy and do not matter too much in terms of passing laws
- Money bills (bills dealing with spending money) can only originate in the House

# What is a Bill?

- A “bill” is a written document that somebody wants to make law
- If it’s passed by Parliament, it becomes law
- Until it’s passed, it is called a bill



# How a Bill is Passed

1<sup>st</sup> - a bill is numbered and placed on the Order Paper

2<sup>nd</sup> – the bill is introduced and goes through a first reading

# How a Bill is Passed

3<sup>rd</sup> – then comes second reading after which it is referred to the appropriate committee

4<sup>th</sup> – the committee more closely considers and can make amendments to the bill

# How a Bill is Passed

5<sup>th</sup> – at the end of the study, the committee votes on the bill

6<sup>th</sup> – if it passes the committee, the bill is then reported out to the House; this is called the Report Stage

# How a Bill is Passed

7<sup>th</sup> – during the report stage amendments can also be made

8<sup>th</sup> – the House then votes to adopt the bill or not

# How a Bill is Passed

9<sup>th</sup> – if it passes this vote it goes on to the Senate, where the process is roughly repeated; while technically the Senate has almost equal authority to the House, in reality they usually just pass everything the House sends them

# How a Bill is Passed

10<sup>th</sup> – if it passes the Senate it then goes to the Governor General for Royal Assent; again, technically the GG has the authority to not sign the bill, but in reality the GG does not really have a choice and just signs whatever Parliament sends him/her






# How a Bill is Passed

This is a basic outline for the way a bill is passed. In reality there are lots of different exceptions and different paths a bill can take

# How a Bill is Passed

No matter what path a bill takes it always must have three main components:

-  It must pass the House
-  It must pass the Senate
-  It must be signed by the Governor General