How to Read a Bill

New Legislative Staff Training

Ohio Legislative Service Commission

About this Course

- In this course, you will learn how to read bills and amendments as they move through Ohio's legislative process.
- If your employer is tracking your course completion, be sure to click on the course completion link at the end of the course.
- For additional information, see *A Guidebook for Ohio Legislators* – Chapter 6: Tools for Understanding a Bill (PDF)

What is a Bill?

- A bill is a formal, written legal document introduced by a member of the General Assembly to change the law.
- The term "bill" refers to the document from the time it is drafted and delivered to the member until it is considered and passed by both the House and the Senate.
- After being enacted (passed) by the General Assembly, the bill becomes an "act."

How Does a Bill Change the Law?

Bills propose changes to Ohio law by doing any of the following:

- Amending (changing) existing provisions of law;
- Enacting new provisions of law;
- Repealing (eliminating) provisions of law.

Sources of bill draft ideas

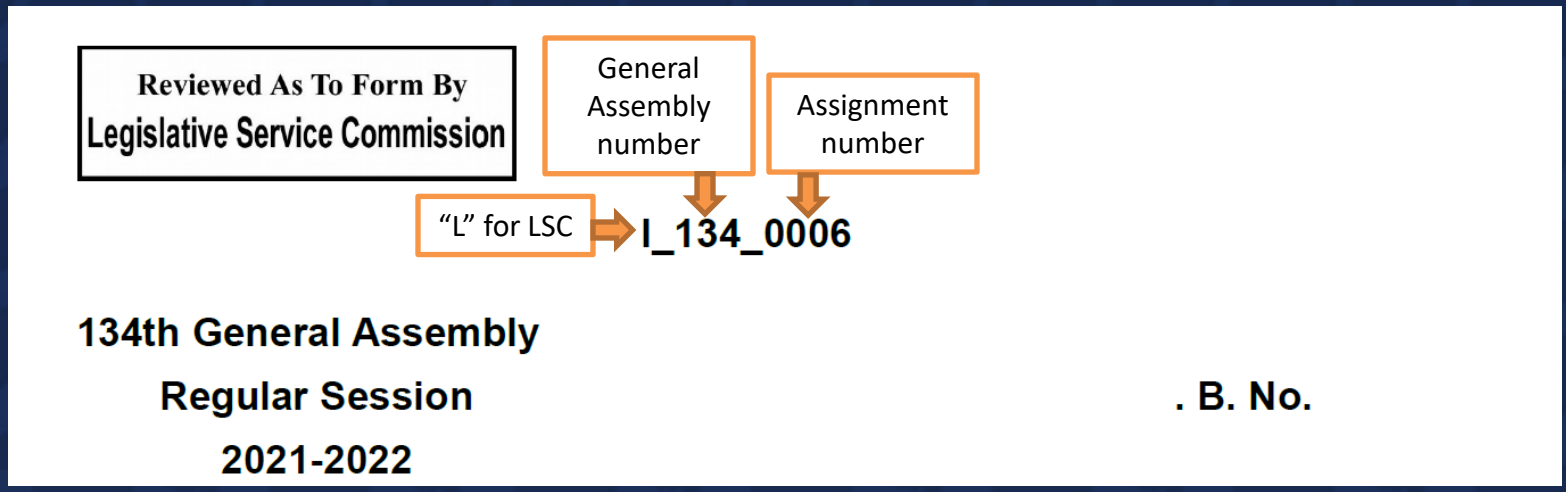
- Legislator
- Constituents
- Administrative departments (executive branch)
- Other states' legislation
- Lobbyists
- Changes in federal law
- National organizations
- News of the day

Idea → Document

- A member or the member's staff can ask LSC to draft a bill.
- LSC works with the member's office to put the member's policy ideas into a bill draft.
- Once finished, LSC will send the member a bill draft in the form of an "L-number bill draft."
- LSC keeps each bill draft confidential through the drafting process until it is introduced.

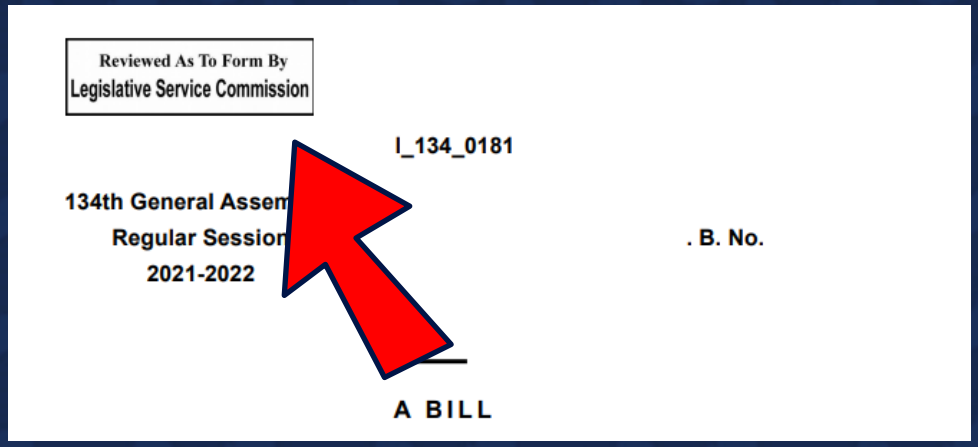
L-NUMBER FOR BILLS

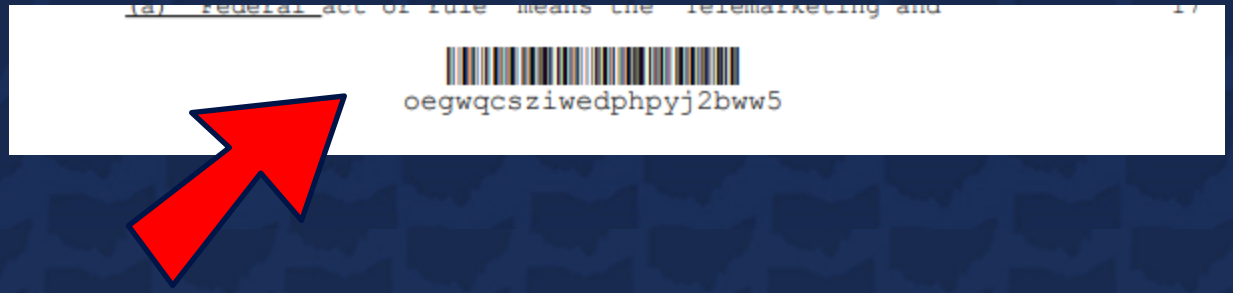
- Each LSC bill draft has a unique tracking number at the top.
  - If the requestor asks for changes to the draft, LSC will give the draft the same number, but add "-1," "-2," or "-3." For example, l_134_0006-5 would be the sixth version of the bill draft. This is called a "dash version."
- A bill draft can only be introduced once. If a member wishes to introduce the same bill in the other chamber (a companion bill), the member's office must ask LSC to produce a copy with a different number.



Requirements for Introduction

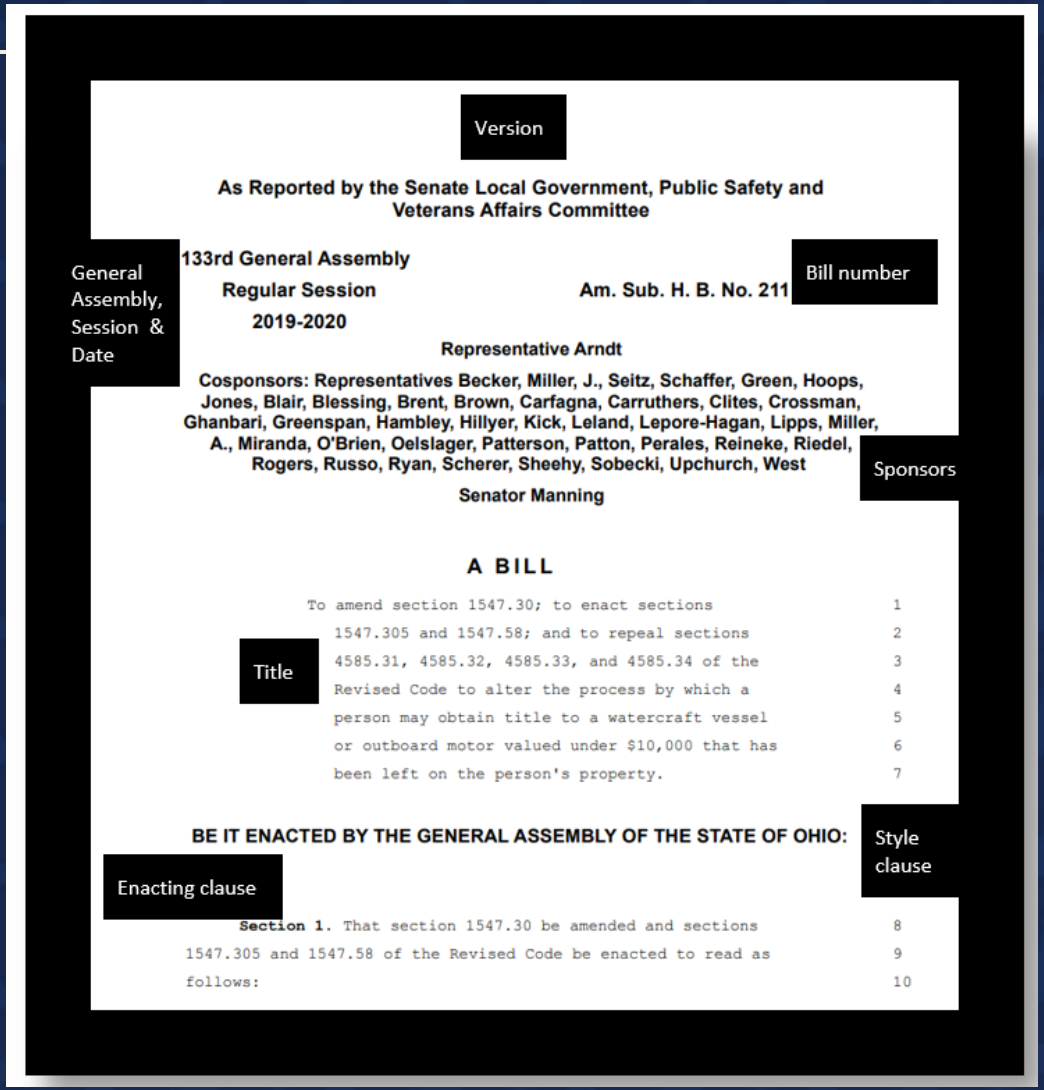
- Each bill draft must have:
  - LSC review stamp in upper left corner
  - A bar code, enabling the Clerk to scan the bill draft for introduction





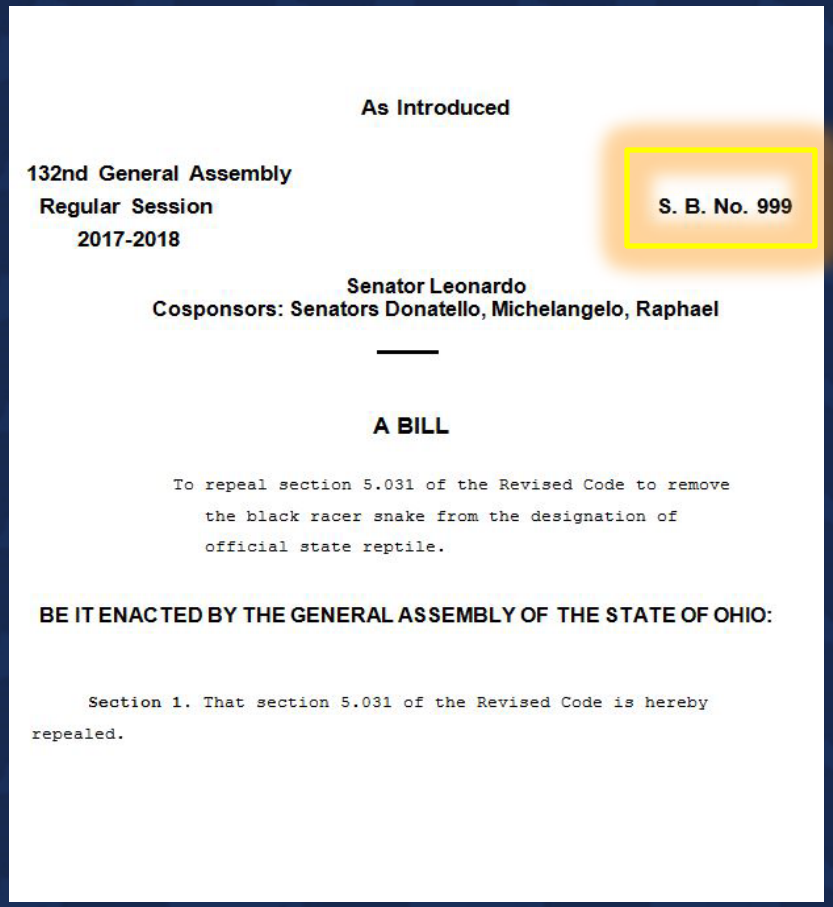
Parts of a Bill

- Version
- General Assembly, session & date
- Bill number
- Sponsors
- Title
- Style clause
- Enacting clause
- Not pictured:
  - Bill body
  - Repeal clause
  - Uncodified sections



BILL NUMBER

- When a bill is filed with the Clerk, the Clerk assigns it a bill number.
  - H.B. = House Bill
  - S.B. = Senate Bill
- Bills are numbered in the order they are received.
- A bill keeps its number throughout that General Assembly.
- If the bill is reintroduced in a future General Assembly, it will have a different number.



As Introduced

132nd General Assembly
Regular Session
2017-2018

S. B. No. 999

Senator Leonardo
Cosponsors: Senators Donatello, Michelangelo, Raphael

A BILL

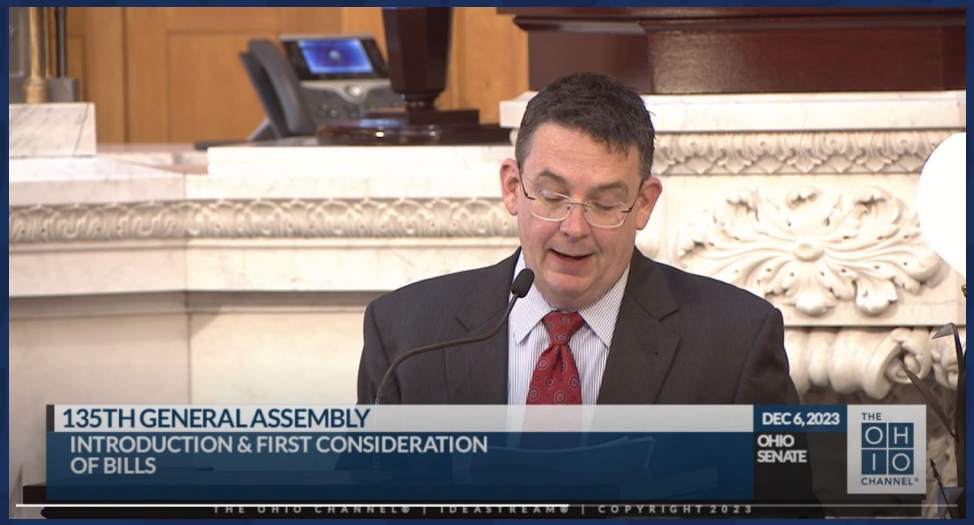
To repeal section 5.031 of the Revised Code to remove the black racer snake from the designation of official state reptile.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That section 5.031 of the Revised Code is hereby repealed.

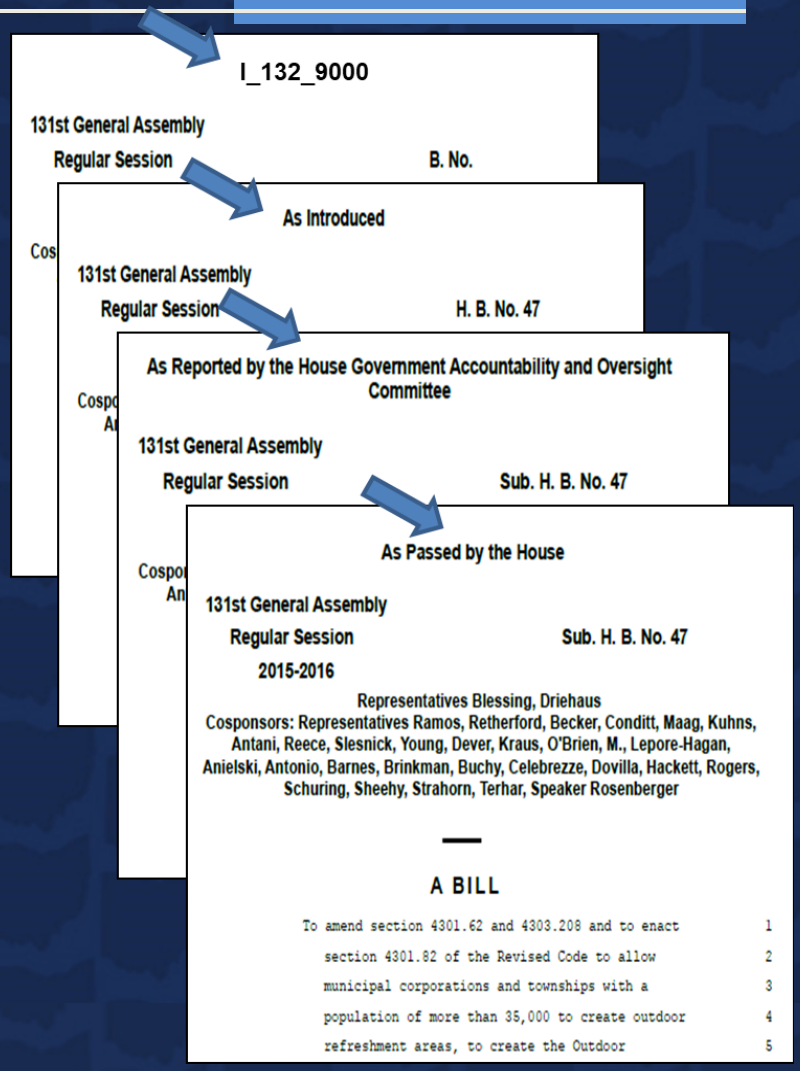
Introduction at Session

- A bill is officially introduced during floor session.
- This is the bill's "first consideration" for purposes of the constitutional requirement that each bill be considered three times.



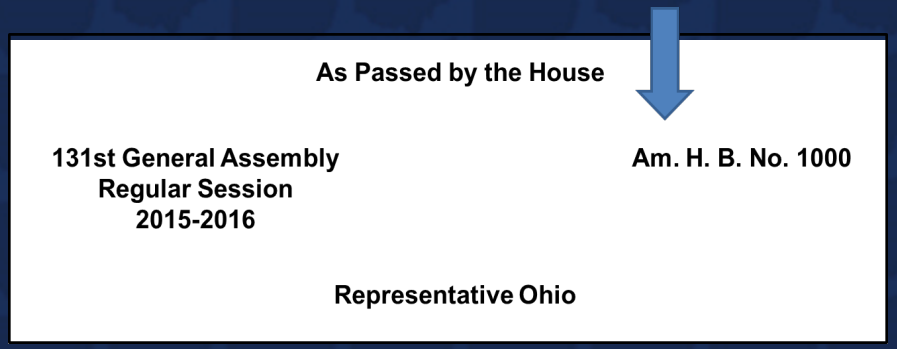
Bill Version

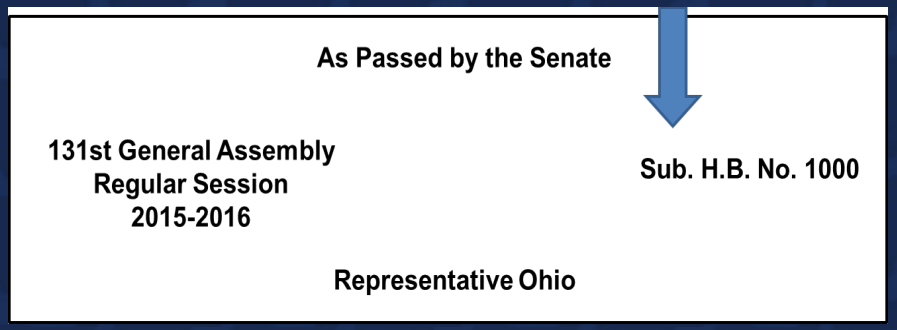
- The Clerk also replaces the L-number header with "As Introduced."
- The bill version is updated throughout the legislative process.
- Make sure you're looking at the most recent version of a bill! Contents and line numbers may change with each version.



Amended and Substitute Bills

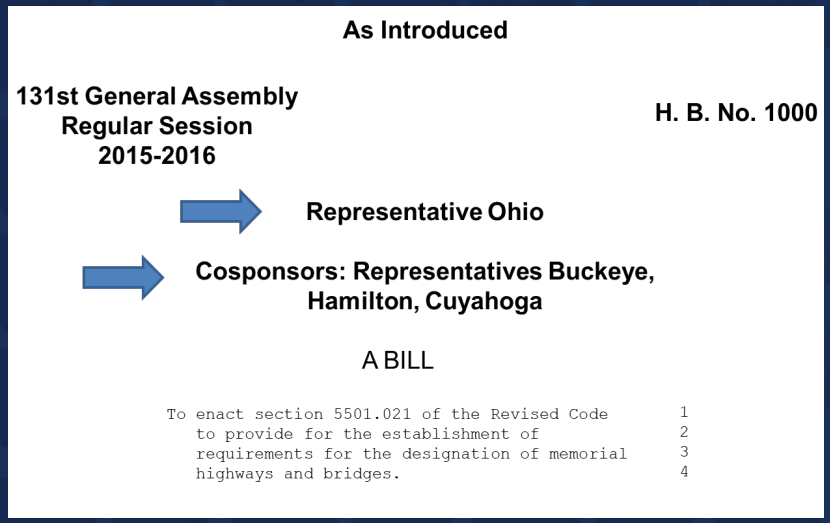
- If a bill is changed after introduction, "Am." or "Sub." is added to the bill number.
  - Am. = Amended Bill
  - Sub. = Substitute Bill
- An amended bill has had changes made to it in committee or on the floor through the adoption of amendments.
- A substitute bill has had changes made to it in committee – usually a larger number of changes.





Bill Sponsors

- The member who submits a bill for introduction is the bill's primary sponsor. Two members may be joint sponsors of a bill.
- Often, the primary sponsor(s) will ask other legislators to be cosponsors. Cosponsors may be added throughout the legislative process.
- When a bill reaches the second house, the first member of the second house who is listed as a cosponsor is often considered to be "carrying" the bill in the second house.



As Introduced

131st General Assembly
Regular Session
2015-2016

H. B. No. 1000

Representative Ohio

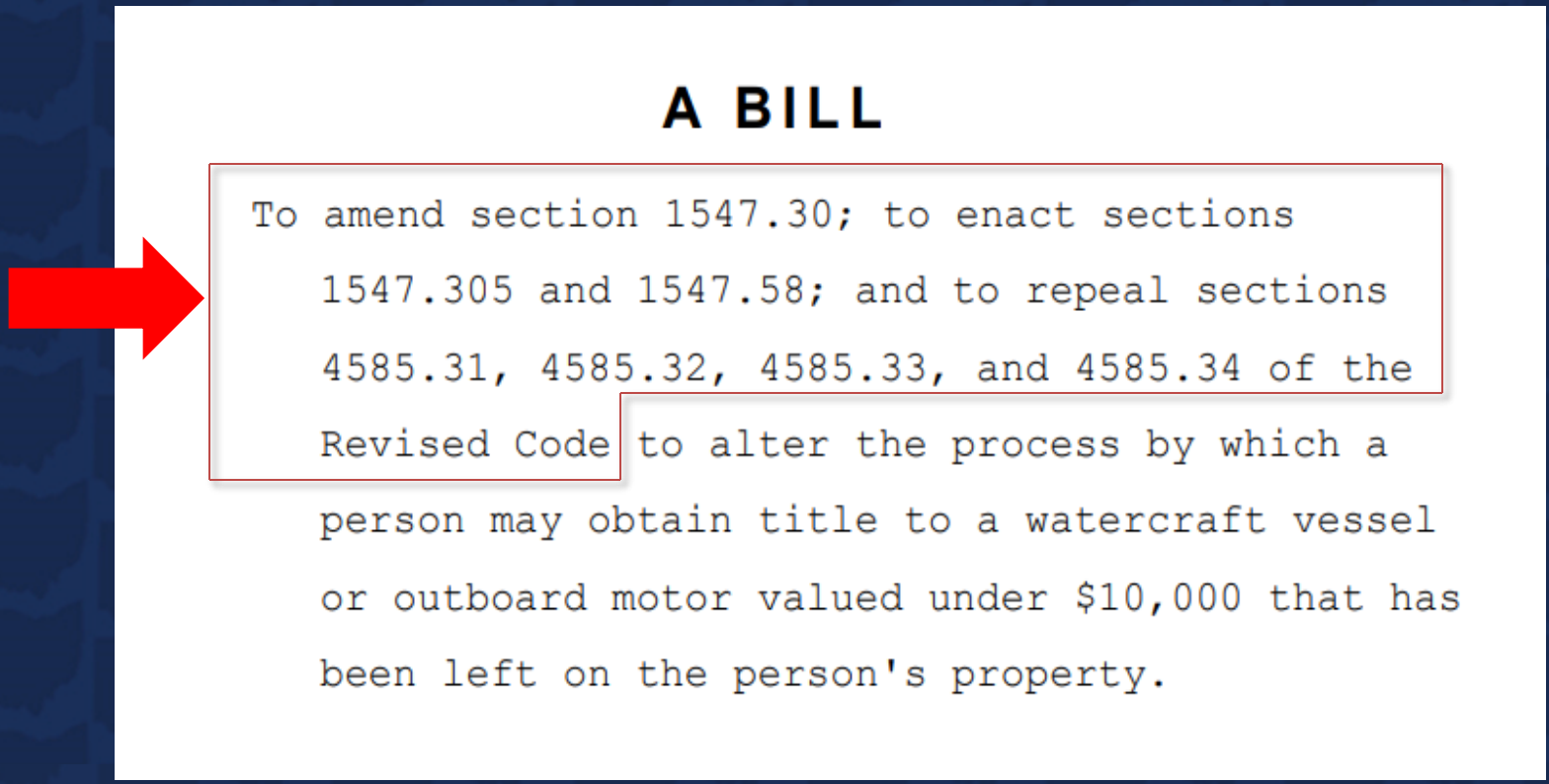
Cosponsors: Representatives Buckeye, Hamilton, Cuyahoga

A BILL

To enact section 5501.021 of the Revised Code to provide for the establishment of requirements for the designation of memorial highways and bridges.

Bill Title – Affected Statutes

The title includes a list of every section of the Ohio Revised Code that the bill amends, enacts, or repeals.

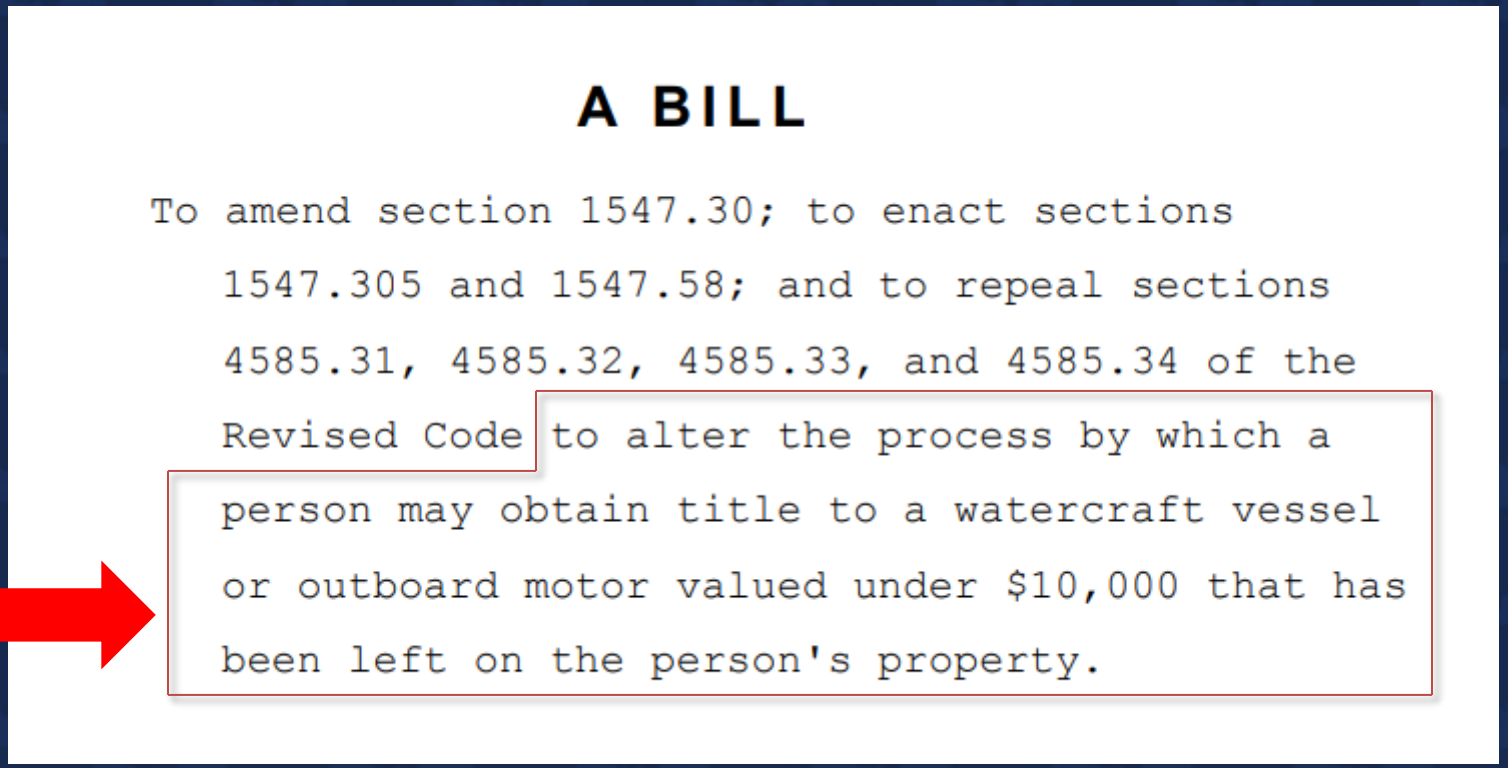


A BILL

To amend section 1547.30; to enact sections 1547.305 and 1547.58; and to repeal sections 4585.31, 4585.32, 4585.33, and 4585.34 of the Revised Code to alter the process by which a person may obtain title to a watercraft vessel or outboard motor valued under $10,000 that has been left on the person's property.

Bill Title – Description of Content

The title also includes a brief description of the bill's content. This is required under Article II, Section 15 of the Ohio Constitution.



A BILL

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Additional title requirements

The title description must say so if the bill does any of the following:

- Imposes a tax
- Includes an appropriation
- Declares an emergency

Style Clause

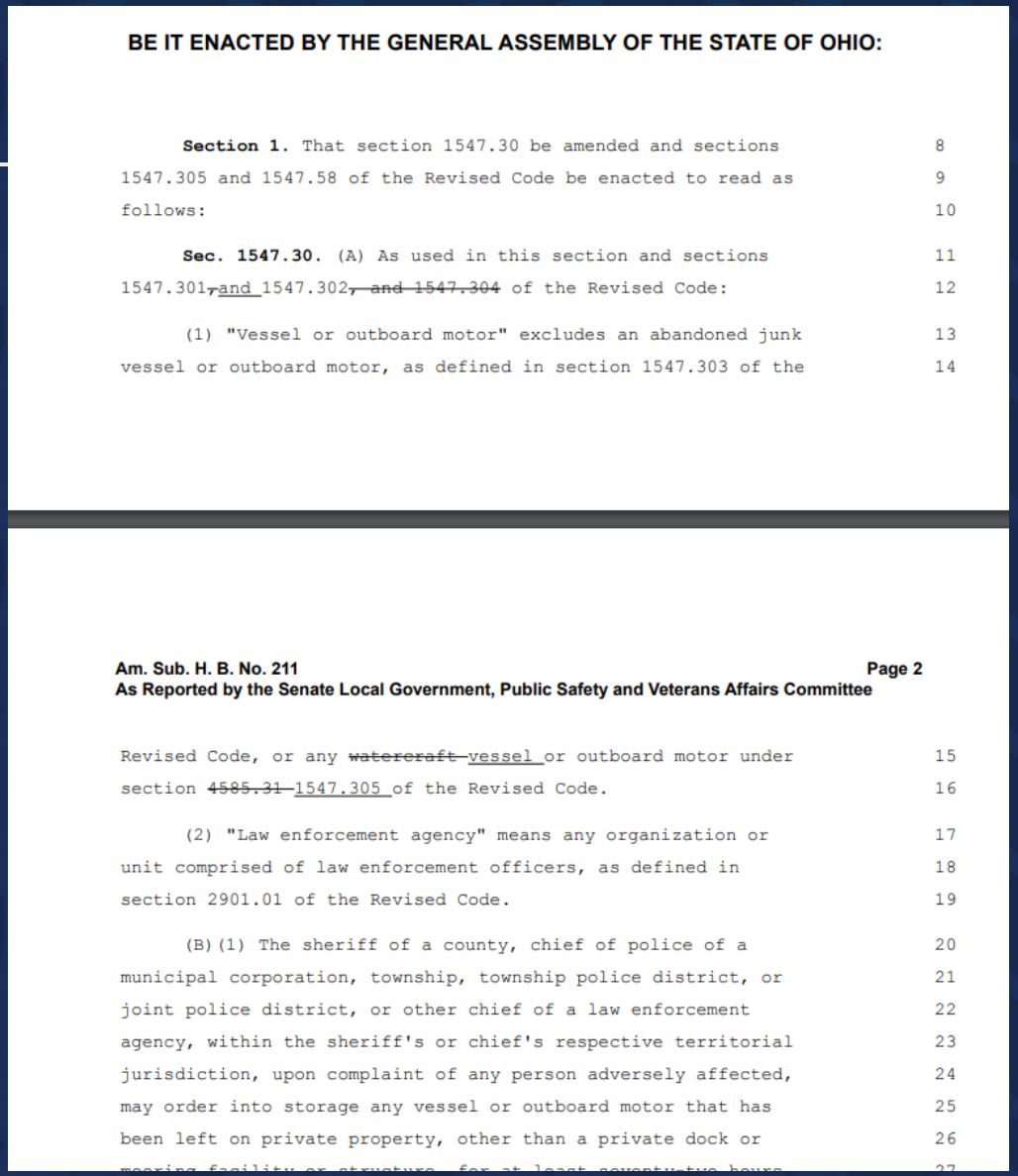
The style clause follows the bill's title.

Article II, Section 15 of the Ohio Constitution requires every bill to have the style clause.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Bill body

- Unlike federal legislation, an Ohio bill must include the full text of all affected Revised Code sections, as required by the Ohio Constitution.
- Sections appear in numerical order, not organized by subject matter.



BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That section 1547.30 be amended and sections 1547.305 and 1547.58 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

Sec. 1547.30. (A) As used in this section and sections 1547.301~~,~~ and 1547.302~~, and 1547.304~~ of the Revised Code:

(1) "Vessel or outboard motor" excludes an abandoned junk vessel or outboard motor, as defined in section 1547.303 of the

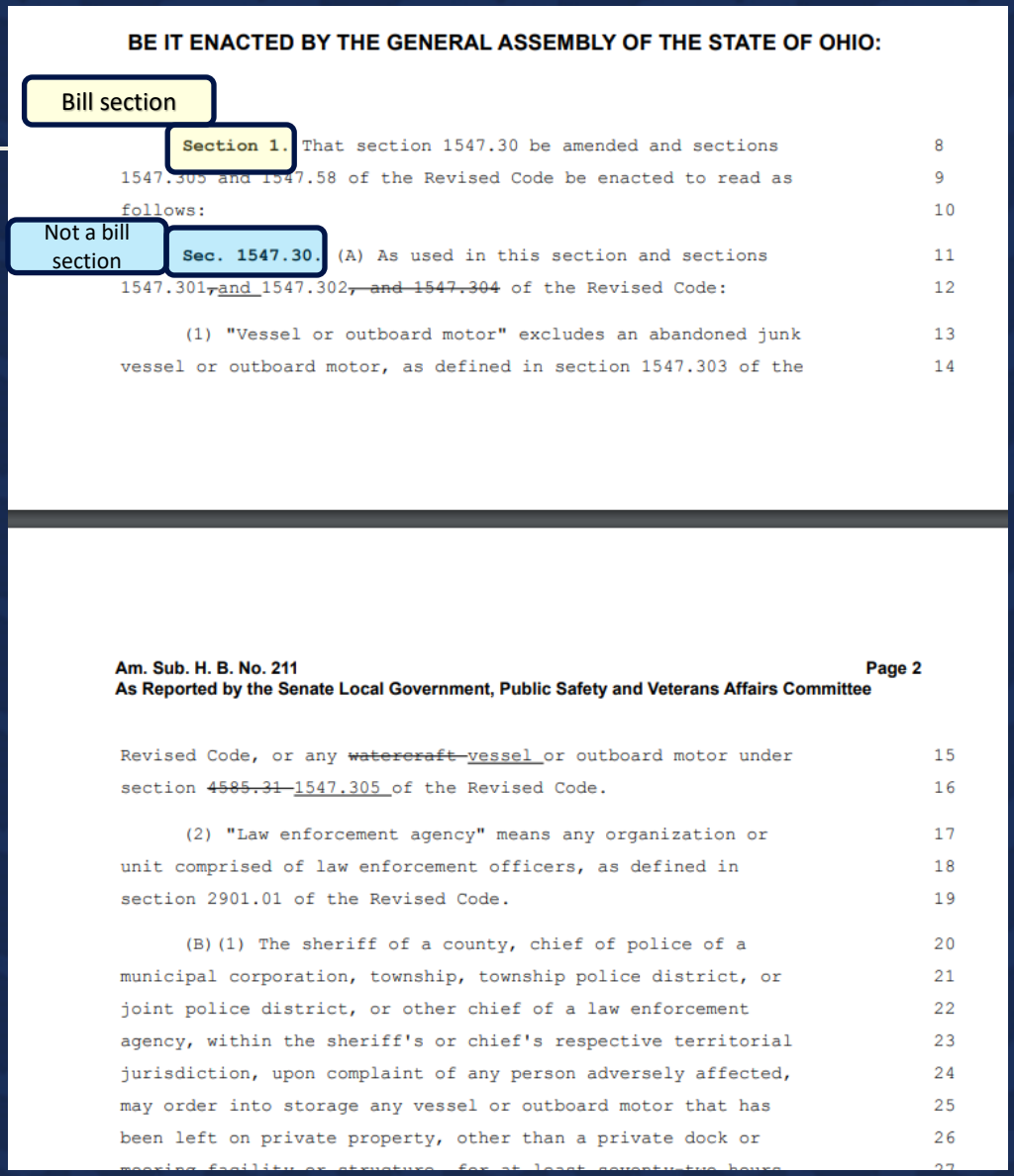
Revised Code, or any ~~watercraft~~ vessel or outboard motor under section ~~4585.31~~ 1547.305 of the Revised Code.

(2) "Law enforcement agency" means any organization or unit comprised of law enforcement officers, as defined in section 2901.01 of the Revised Code.

(B)(1) The sheriff of a county, chief of police of a municipal corporation, township, township police district, or joint police district, or other chief of a law enforcement agency, within the sheriff's or chief's respective territorial jurisdiction, upon complaint of any person adversely affected, may order into storage any vessel or outboard motor that has been left on private property, other than a private dock or

SECTIONS OF A BILL

- Bills are divided into parts called sections
- The word “section” is spelled out - Section 1, Section 2, etc.
- Revised Code sections, on the other hand, are marked with an abbreviated “Sec.” before the section number.
- Uncodified language also appears in bill sections (at the end of the bill)



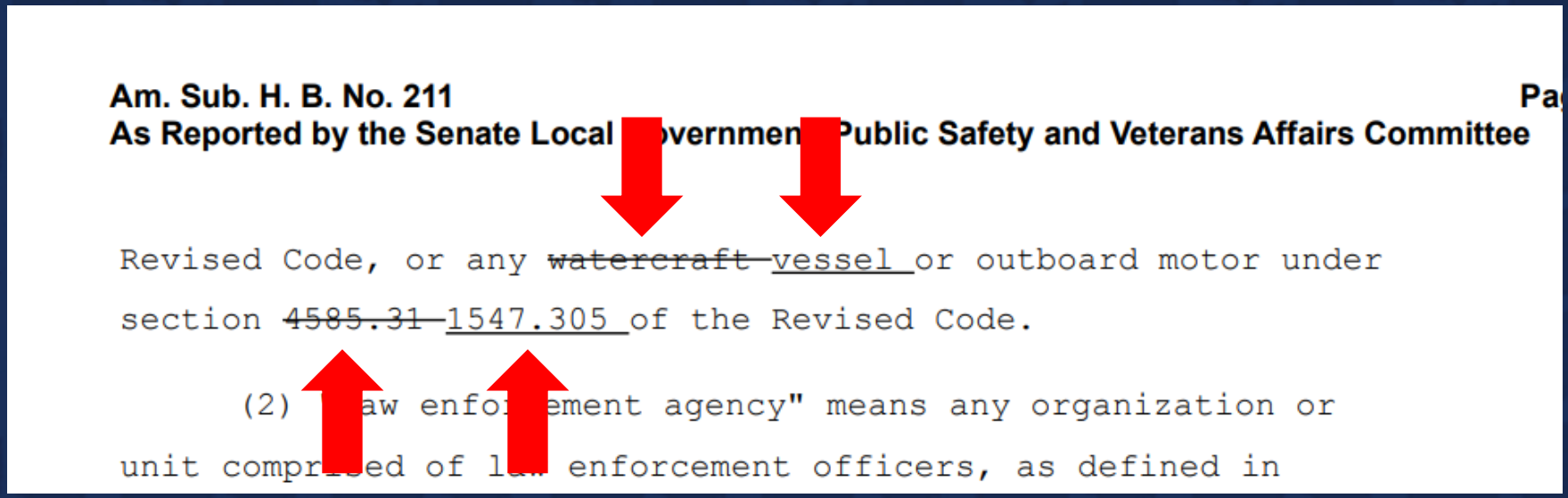
Enacting Clause

- Section 1 of a bill is usually the enacting clause.
- This clause lists the sections of the Revised Code that the bill amends or enacts.

Section 1. That section 1547.30 be amended and sections 1547.305 and 1547.58 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

WHAT'S BEING CHANGED?

New language is underlined



Am. Sub. H. B. No. 211
As Reported by the Senate Local [illegible]overnmen[illegible] Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee

Revised Code, or any ~~watercraft~~ vessel or outboard motor under section ~~4585.31~~ 1547.305 of the Revised Code.

(2) [illegible]aw enfo[illegible]ement agency" means any organization or unit compr[illegible]ed of l[illegible] enforcement officers, as defined in

~~Existing language being removed is stricken~~

Enacting New R.C. Sections

When a bill enacts a new R.C. section, the text of the entire section, including the section number, is underlined.

Sec. 1547.58. When the chief of the division of parks and watercraft issues a registration certificate under section 1547.54 of the Revised Code, the chief also shall provide to the owner of the registered watercraft a disclosure statement regarding the requirements and procedures established under section 1547.305 of the Revised Code.

Types of Repeal Clauses

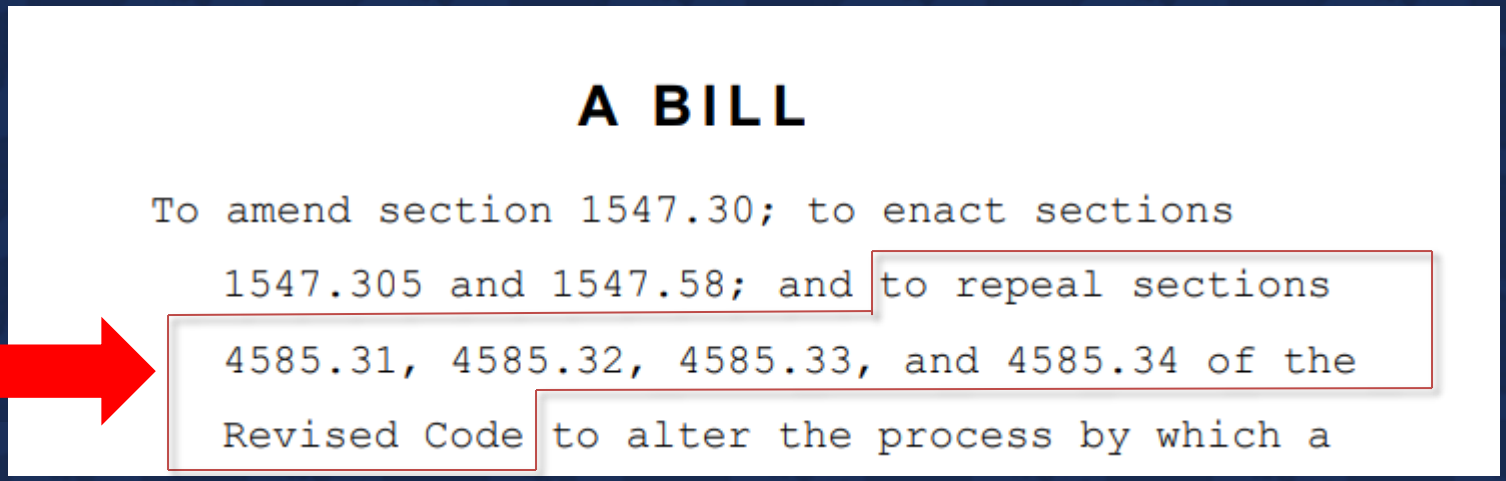
Section 2. That existing section 1547.30 of the Revised Code is hereby repealed.

Section 3. That sections 4585.31, 4585.32, 4585.33, and 4585.34 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed.

- When a bill **amends** an R.C. section, it includes a repeal clause that repeals the **"existing"** version of that R.C. section. (Section 2 above)
- When a bill **repeals** an R.C. section outright – meaning it is being eliminated from the law – it includes a repeal clause that does not use the word "existing." (Section 3 above)

Outright Repeals

- When a bill repeals an R.C. section outright, the text of the section is not included in the bill.
- How do I know what's being repealed?
  - Look at the title or the repeal clause to identify the R.C. sections being repealed.
  - Look up the sections using codes.ohio.gov.



A BILL

To amend section 1547.30; to enact sections 1547.305 and 1547.58; and to repeal sections 4585.31, 4585.32, 4585.33, and 4585.34 of the Revised Code to alter the process by which a

Uncodified Law

- Uncodified sections of law appear as sections of the bill (Section 3, Section 4, etc.), not as Revised Code sections.
- These usually appear at the end of the bill, after any amended or enacted R.C. sections.

Section 4. The Director of Agriculture shall establish appropriate procedures for renewing the registration of a person operating as an animal rescue for dogs under section 956.06 of the Revised Code who was so registered prior to the effective date of this section. The procedures shall include an appropriate time within which the person shall renew the registration, which shall not be later than two hundred seventy-five days after the effective date of this section.

Examples of Uncodified Law

Temporary law, such as an appropriation

Section 329.10. MED STATE MEDICAL BOARD

Dedicated Purpose Fund Group			
5C60 883609	Operating Expenses	$ 9,467,737	$ 9,655,200
TOTAL DPF Dedicated Purpose Fund Group		$ 9,467,737	$ 9,655,200
TOTAL ALL BUDGET FUND GROUPS		$ 9,467,737	$ 9,655,200

Section 327.320. GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

(A) There is hereby created the Graduate Medical Education Study Committee. The Committee shall consist of all of the following members:

(1) The Executive Director of the Office of Health Transformation;

EXAMPLES OF UNCODIFIED LAW, PART 2

Special law (not of general application), such as a grant of state-owned land

Section 753.20. (A) The Governor may execute a deed in the name of the state ("grantor") conveying to the City of Toledo or to a grantee to be determined, and to the grantee's heirs and assigns or successors and assigns, all of the state's right, title, and interest in the following described real estate:

Situate in the City of Toledo, County of Lucas, State of Ohio:

All of Lots Number 1051, 1052 and 1053 AND All of Lots 1057, 1058, 1059, and 1409½ in the VISTULA DIVISION in the CITY OF TOLEDO, LUCAS COUNTY, OHIO.

EXAMPLES OF UNCODIFIED LAW PART 3

Emergency clause

Section 3. This act is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety. The reason for such necessity is that boaters using the waters of this state urgently need the support and protection afforded by this act during the current boating season. Therefore, this act shall go into immediate effect.

Understanding Amendments

What is an Amendment?

- An amendment is a formal document that proposes changes to a bill.
- It provides a set of instructions that indicate where in the bill the changes should be made and what those changes should be.

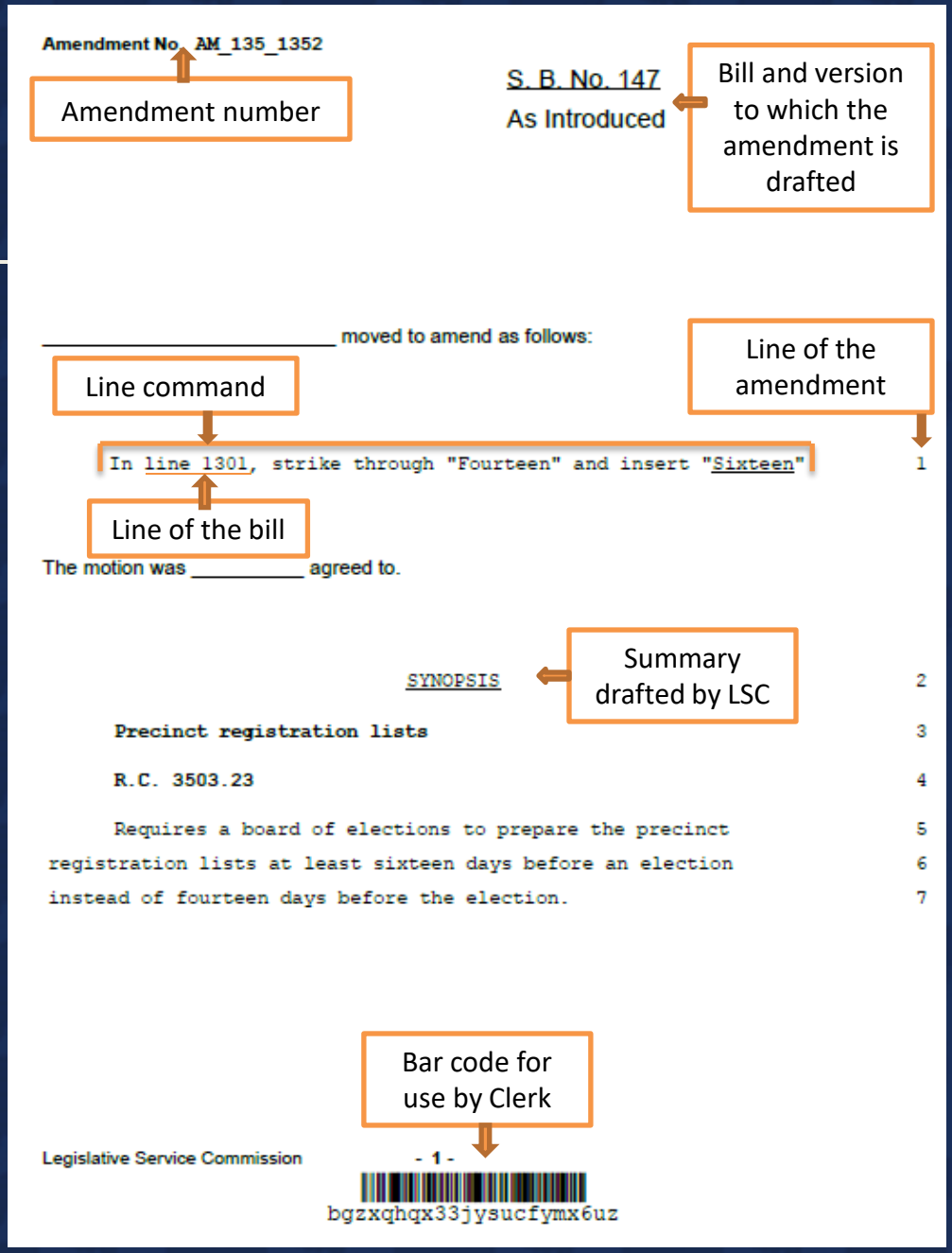
In line 1301, strike through "Fourteen" and insert "Sixteen" 1

How are Amendments Used?

- LSC drafts amendments at the request of a legislator or the legislator's staff.
  - An amendment might change the operation of a bill or add provisions to it.
  - An amendment also might correct a technical error.
- Only legislators who serve on a committee may offer an amendment to a bill being heard by that committee.
- Any legislator may offer an amendment to a bill while it is being considered on the floor.

Parts of an Amendment

- Legislators refer to an amendment by its **amendment number.**
- The amendment must be drafted to the current **version of the bill**. For the amendment to be offered again later in the process, LSC must redraft it.
- **Line commands** refer to the line of the bill where the change is to occur.
- LSC includes a brief **synopsis** of each amendment.



Amendment Vocabulary

- **Insert** – add new language or sections of law
  - After line 32, insert:

    "This is new language being added to an R.C. section."
- **Delete** – remove language from the bill
  - In line 57, delete "five" and insert "three"
- **Strike through** – strike through language that is current law
  - In line 13, strike through "director" and insert "deputy director"
- **Reinsert** – restore (un-strike) current law language in the bill
  - In line 82, reinsert "free" and delete "for a fee"

Amendments vs Substitute Bills

- While a bill is in committee, a member may offer a substitute version of the bill ("sub bill") instead of offering an amendment.
- A sub bill is a new version of the bill with all the proposed changes included in it.
- When many changes are proposed, a sub bill can be easier to read than an amendment.
- If a committee adopts several amendments to a bill, it will usually be reported as a substitute bill.

Time for a pop quiz!

Question 1

True or false?

Bills are numbered by the Clerk of the house in which the bill is introduced. When the bill is passed by the first house and is introduced in the second house, it receives a new bill number.

Question 1 – Answer

False.

Bills keep their numbers throughout that particular General Assembly.

QUESTION 2

Which part of the bill is indicated by the arrow?

As Introduced

131st General Assembly
Regular Session
2015-2016

H. B. No. 1000

Representative Ohio

Cosponsors: Representatives Buckeye, Hamilton, Cuyahoga

A BILL

To enact section 5501.021 of the Revised Code to provide for the establishment of requirements for the designation of memorial highways and bridges.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That section 5501.021 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

Sec. 5501.021. The director of transportation shall adopt rules in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code that establish requirements governing the designation of a bridge or highway in this state as a memorial bridge or highway. At a minimum, the rules shall specify that the person for whom a memorial bridge or highway is named

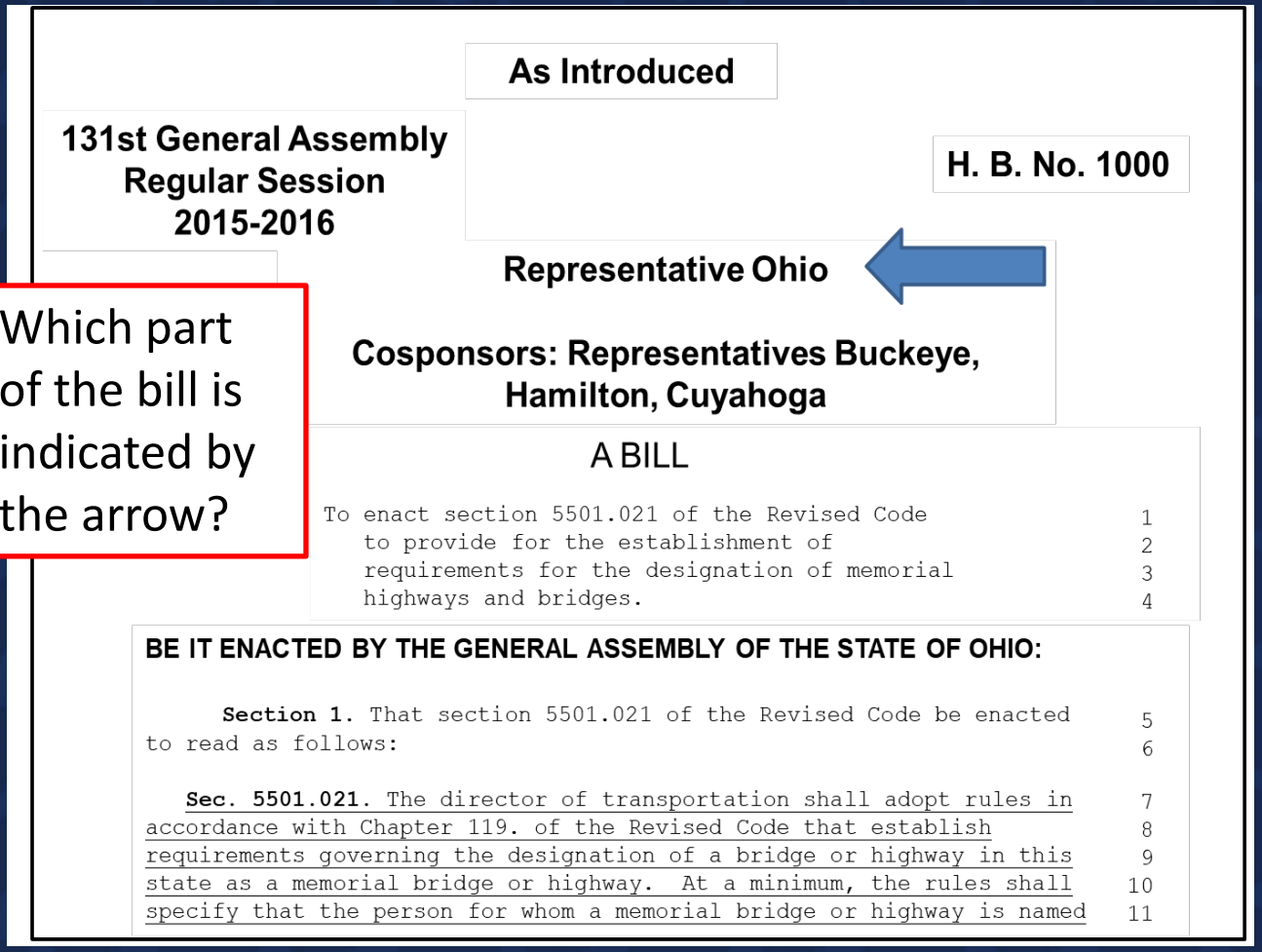
Question 2 – Answer

The bill version.

The bill version indicates the bill's stage in the legislative process, such as:

- As Introduced
- As Reported by Committee
- As Passed by the House
- As Passed by the Senate

QUESTION 3



As Introduced

131st General Assembly
Regular Session
2015-2016

H. B. No. 1000

Representative Ohio

Cosponsors: Representatives Buckeye, Hamilton, Cuyahoga

Which part of the bill is indicated by the arrow?

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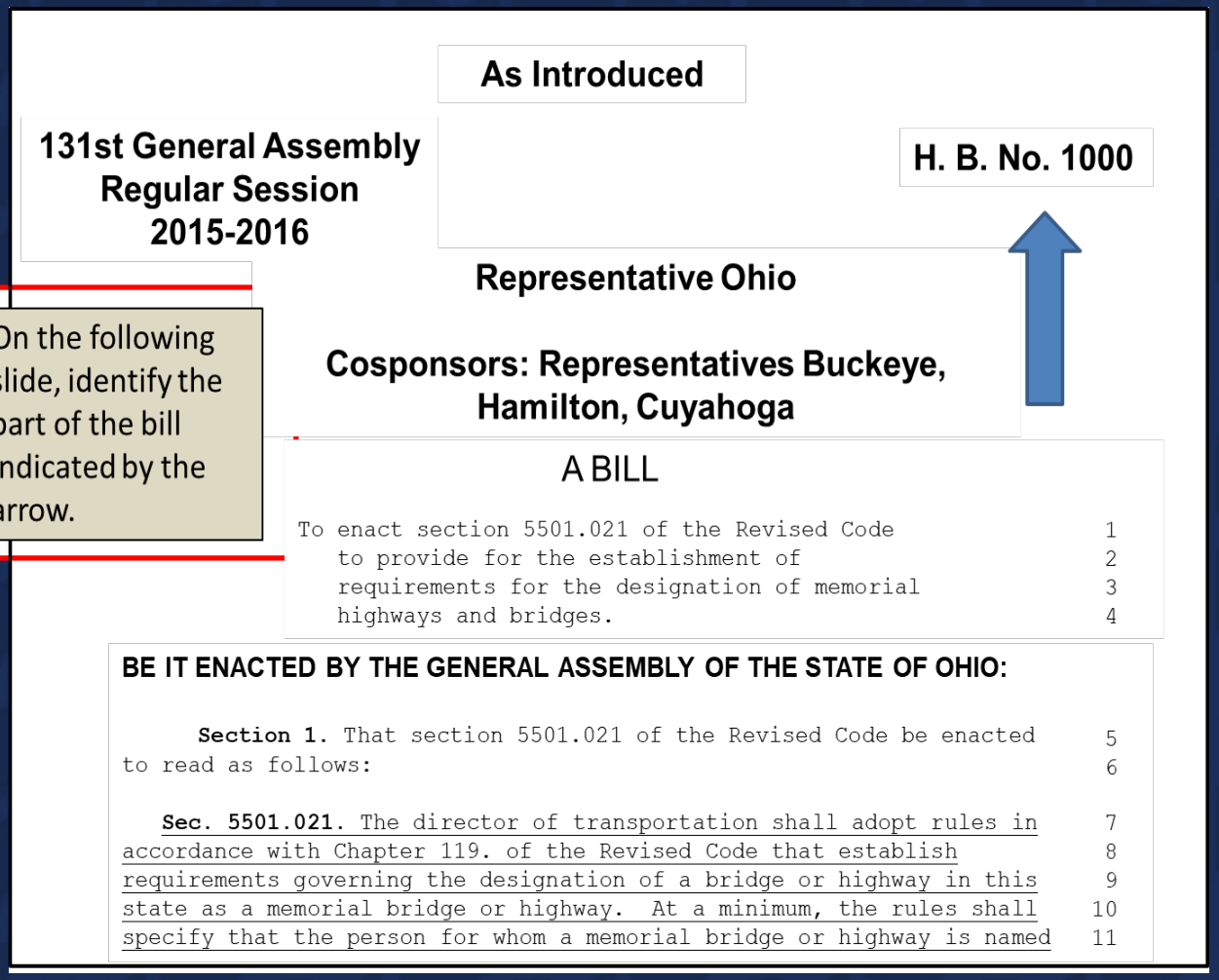
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Question 3 – Answer

The primary sponsor.

The bill's primary sponsor or joint sponsors are listed at the top of the bill, before any cosponsors.

QUESTION 4



As Introduced

131st General Assembly
Regular Session
2015-2016

H. B. No. 1000

Representative Ohio

Cosponsors: Representatives Buckeye, Hamilton, Cuyahoga

On the following slide, identify the part of the bill indicated by the arrow.

A BILL

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Question 4 – Answer

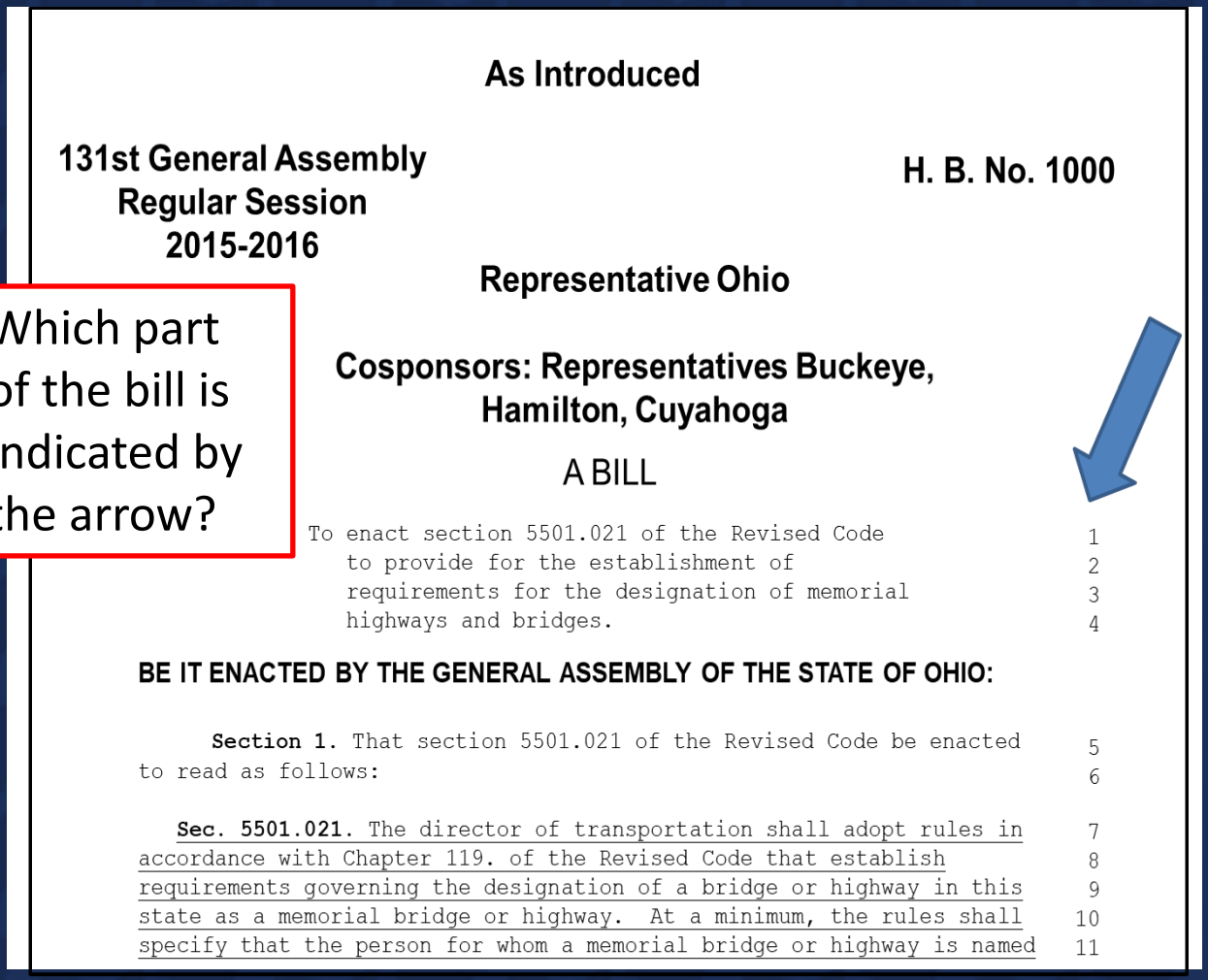
The bill number.

The bill number appears in the upper right-hand corner of the bill's first page.

The Clerk of the chamber in which the bill originates assigns the bill number.

QUESTION 5

Which part of the bill is indicated by the arrow?



As Introduced

131st General Assembly
Regular Session
2015-2016

H. B. No. 1000

Representative Ohio

Cosponsors: Representatives Buckeye, Hamilton, Cuyahoga

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Question 5 – Answer

Line numbers.

Line numbers appear in the right-hand margin and are used to locate text within the bill.

Line numbers are especially important for purposes of amendments to the bill.

Question 6

True or false?

The Ohio Constitution requires that the title of a bill include a list of the Revised Code sections that the bill amends, enacts, or repeals.

Question 6 – Answer

False.

While the Ohio Constitution requires the bill's subject to be clearly expressed in its title, it is not a constitutional requirement that the Revised Code sections be listed there.

Question 7

Which of the following are always specified in a bill's title?

- If the bill levies a tax
- If the bill creates a new taxing district
- If the bill declares an emergency
- If the bill makes an appropriation
- If the bill creates a study committee

Question 7 – Answer

A bill's title must say so if the bill:

- Makes an appropriation
- Levies a tax
- Declares an emergency

Question 8

True or false?

When a bill repeals a section of the Revised Code, the section appears in the bill with its text ~~stricken through~~.

Question 8 - Answer

False.

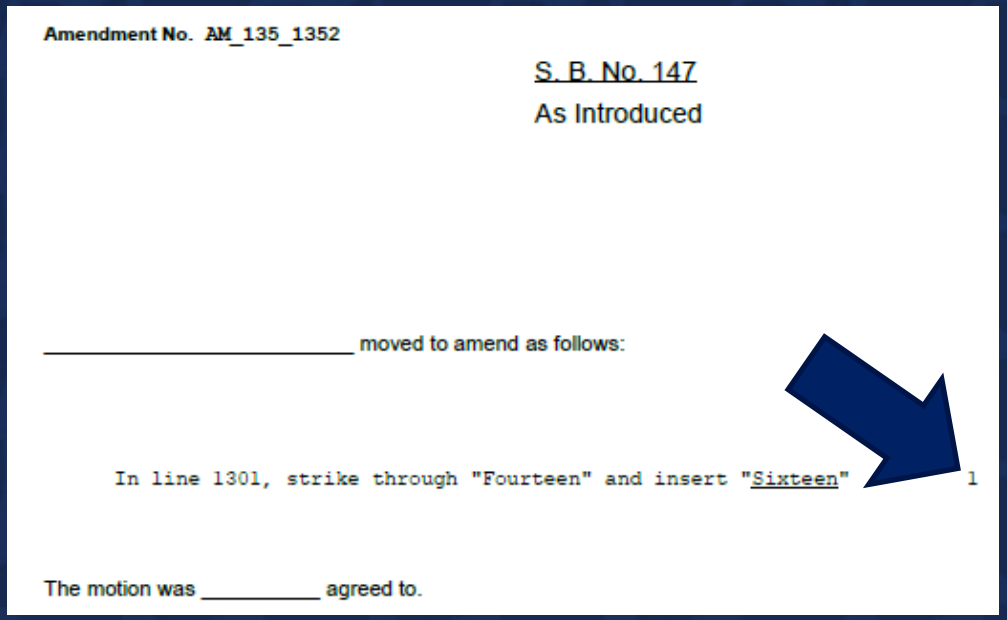
When a bill repeals some of the language in an R.C. section, ~~the language appears stricken through~~.

When a bill repeals an entire R.C. section, the text of the section does not appear in the bill. To see the sections the bill repeals, find the section numbers in the bill's title or repeal clause and look up each section at codes.ohio.gov.

QUESTION 9

True or false?

The arrow is pointing to the line of the bill in which the amendment makes a change.



Amendment No. AM_135_1352

S. B. No. 147
As Introduced

_____ moved to amend as follows:

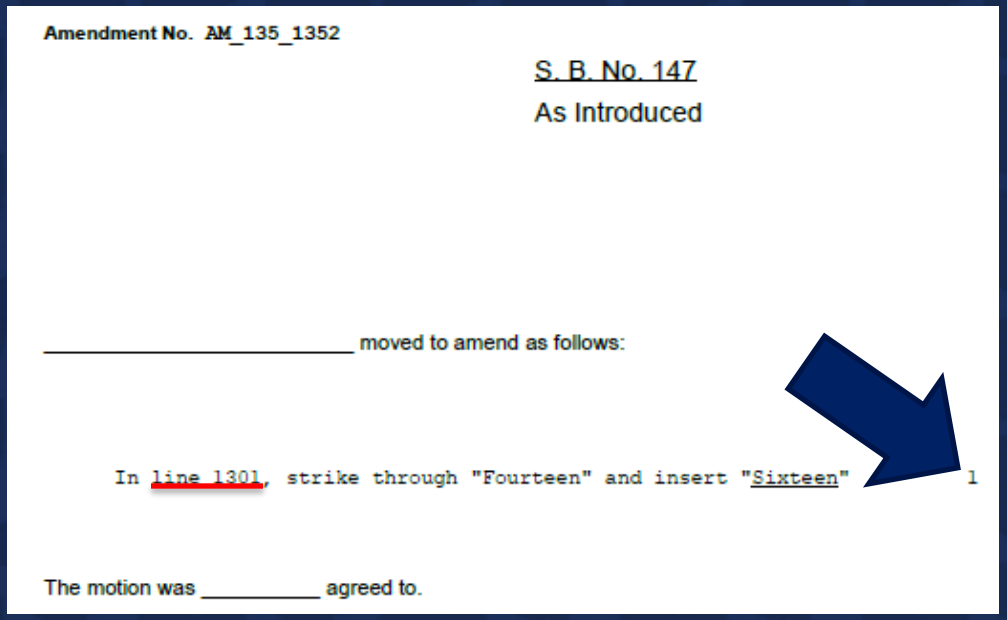
In line 1301, strike through "Fourteen" and insert "Sixteen"

The motion was _____ agreed to.

Question 9 - Answer

False.

The arrow is pointing to the number of a line of the amendment. The amendment makes a change in line 1301 of the bill.



Amendment No. AM_135_1352

S. B. No. 147
As Introduced

_____ moved to amend as follows:

In line 1301, strike through "Fourteen" and insert "Sixteen" 1

The motion was _____ agreed to.

Question 10

True or false?

A legislator offers an amendment to a bill in committee and the committee does not adopt the amendment.

The committee reports the bill and the bill is scheduled for a floor vote.

The legislator may offer the same amendment during floor session.

Question 10 – Answer

False.

An amendment must be drafted to the most recent version of the bill. In order for the legislator to offer the same amendment on the floor, LSC must redraft the amendment to the new version of the bill, As Reported by the Committee.

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS COURSE.

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