

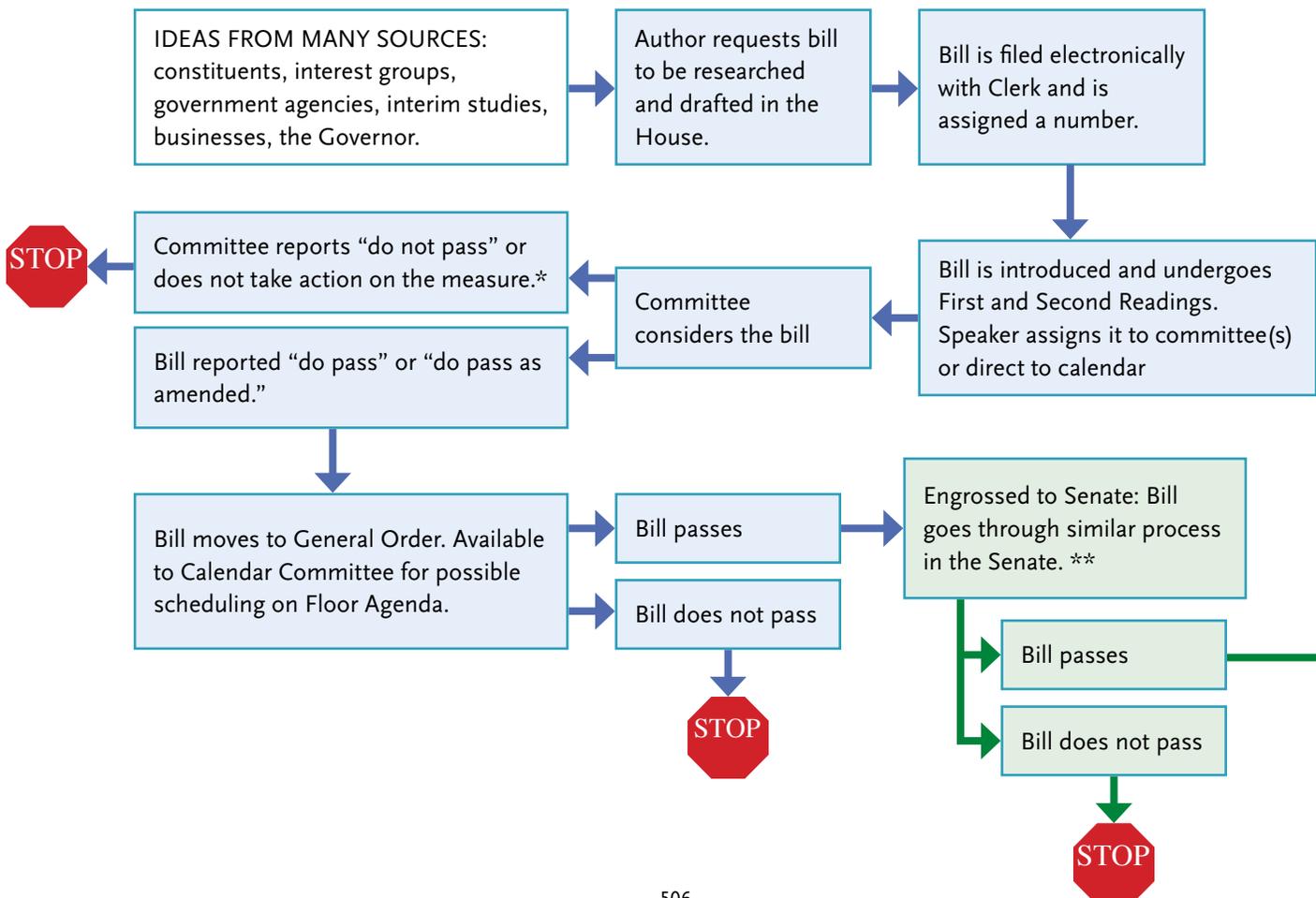
HOW LAWS ARE MADE

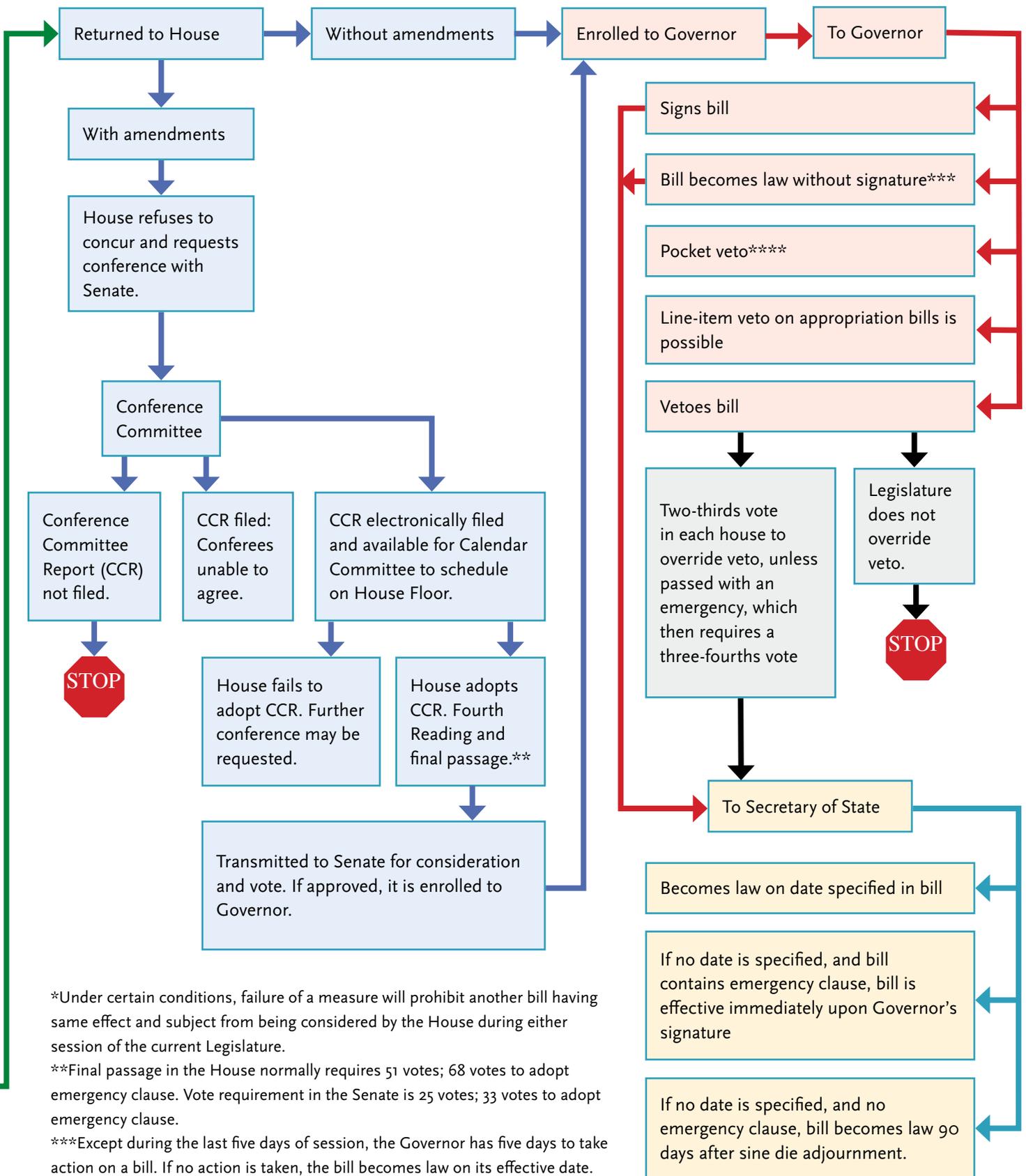
HOW LAWS ARE MADE OR CHANGED BY INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

Citizens of Oklahoma may use the initiative and referendum to write or change laws in the state. The initiative and referendum are two instruments of direct democracy. Through the initiative, voters can write statutes and constitutional amendments that appear on the ballot when enough signatures have been collected on petitions. Voters in twenty-three other states also may use the initiative process to enact legislation or amend the state constitution. The referendum is used to place laws previously approved by the legislature on the ballot.

The referendum and initiative processes are described in Article V of the Oklahoma Constitution, juxtaposed with the description of the structure and function of the legislative branch. To qualify a statutory initiative for the ballot, campaign organizers must collect a number of signatures equal to 8 percent of the legal voters. An initiative proposing a constitutional amendment requires signatures from 15 percent of the legal voters, while a referendum requires signatures from 5 percent. According to Article V, the number of legal voters is the total number of votes cast at the last general election for the state office receiving the highest number of votes. Because Oklahoma’s signature requirements are moderate compared to other states, there have been an average of nine ballot measures per election year. State questions, as the ballot measures are called, are worded so that a “yes” vote changes the status quo.

HOW AN IDEA BECOMES A LAW THROUGH LEGISLATIVE PROCESS





*Under certain conditions, failure of a measure will prohibit another bill having same effect and subject from being considered by the House during either session of the current Legislature.

**Final passage in the House normally requires 51 votes; 68 votes to adopt emergency clause. Vote requirement in the Senate is 25 votes; 33 votes to adopt emergency clause.

***Except during the last five days of session, the Governor has five days to take action on a bill. If no action is taken, the bill becomes law on its effective date.

****No bill may become law after the final adjournment of the Legislature, unless signed by the Governor within 15 days after adjournment.