

Glossary of Common Legislative Terms

Appropriation Bill ('A' Bill) – A bill to appropriate funds to finance another bill bearing the same number

Agenda – A daily order of legislative business set by the Speaker

Attorney General's Opinion – A written analysis of a question of law prepared by the Attorney General for the Governor, the head of an executive department, or any State Senator

Biennium – The two year period in which a single Legislature exists. Also, the two fiscal years for which a single Legislature does budget planning and makes appropriations

Bracket – To delay consideration of a bill

Call of the House – A procedure used to compel attendance of unexcused senators in the chamber. Any senator may move for a call of the House and a majority of senators voting is required to place the House under call

Carryover Legislation – Bills and resolutions introduced during the regular session in an odd numbered year and held over for consideration during the regular session in an even numbered year

Chair – The presiding officer. The Lieutenant Governor or Speaker normally serves as chair, but other senators also may preside. The senator presiding is said to be 'in the chair'

Cloture – A parliamentary action to cease debate on a bill and vote immediately on its advancement

Consent Calendar – A portion of the agenda in which relatively noncontroversial bills are considered and quickly advanced to the next legislative stage. Usually a bill on consent calendar can be debated for no more than 15 minutes

Emergency Clause ('E' Clause) – A provision that allows a bill or portion of a bill to take effect immediately after the Governor signs it or after the legislature overrides the Governor's veto

Engrossment – The process of preparing a bill for final reading by incorporating all adopted amendments

Enrollment & Review (E & R) – The process of incorporating adopted amendments into a bill, reviewing the bill for technical and grammatical accuracy, and making recommendations relative to arrangement, phraseology, and correlation

Final Reading – The third and final stage where a bill is considered by the full Legislature. The Clerk reads the entire bill aloud, unless final reading is waived, and Senators vote without debate on whether to submit the bill to the Governor

Fiscal Note – A statement prepared by the Legislative Fiscal Office estimating the effect a bill would have on state and/or local expenditures and revenue

Floor – The area of the legislative chamber where the Senators sit. When a committee advances a bill 'to the floor', that means the bill is being sent to the full Legislature for consideration

General File – The first stage at which a bill is considered by the full Legislature. Bills on General File may be amended, returned to committee, indefinitely postponed, or advanced to Select File

Germane – Relevant to the specific subject of the bill being considered. Any amendment that is not germane is out of order

Hearing – A regularly scheduled committee meeting to receive public comment on proposed bills and resolutions

House Under Call – The term used when all unexcused Senators are required to be in their seats in the chamber and unauthorized personnel must leave the floor

Initiative – The power of the people, through the petition process, to enact laws and adopt constitutional amendments independently of the Legislature

Interim – The period between regular legislative sessions

Interim Study Resolution – A resolution authorizing a committee to study an issue following adjournment of a legislative session

Legislative Bill (LB) – A proposal to create, change, or delete one or more laws

Legislative Journal – Official record of legislative floor action including all motions, the number of yeas and nays on each vote, how each Senator voted on record votes, and more

Legislative Resolution (LR) – A proposal to make a formal expression of opinion, intent, or recognition; amend the state or federal constitution; or authorize a study of an issue during the interim

Line Item Veto – The power of the Governor to make specific reductions in any part of a budget bill passed by the legislature

Priority Bill – A bill that has priority status and generally is considered ahead of other bills in debate. Each senator may select one priority bill, each committee two priority bills, and the Speaker up to 25 priority bills

Record Vote – A Vote on which a record is kept of how each Senator voted. The vote is taken by electronic voting system, and the Senator's name and corresponding vote is then printed in the Legislative Journal

Referendum – The power of the people, through the petition process, to repeal or amend any act or part of an act of the Legislature

Regular Session – The annual legislative session that begins the first Wednesday after the first Monday in January. Regular sessions generally last 90 legislative days in odd numbered years and 60 legislative days in even numbered years

Roll Call Vote – A Vote during which the Senators vote one at a time as the Clerk reads their name. Senators cast their votes verbally and their names and corresponding vote is printed in the Legislative Journal if the house is under call

Select File – The second stage at which a bill is considered by the full Legislature. Bills on Select File may be amended, returned to committee, indefinitely postponed, or advanced to Final Reading

Sine Die – Without setting a future date for reconvening. When the Legislature adjourns sine die, the legislative session is finished for the year

Speaker of the Legislature – The officer of the legislature, elected by other senators, who prepares the daily agenda and session calendar and presides in the absence of the Lieutenant Governor

Special Session – A limited legislative session called for a specific purpose by the Governor or two-thirds (33) of the legislature.

Statement of Intent – A statement prepared by the sponsor of a bill that briefly describes the bill and the reasons why it is being introduced

Veto – The power of the Governor to reject bills passed by the legislature. The Governor has five days, excluding Sundays, to veto a bill. The legislature has an opportunity to override the veto

Veto Override – The power of the legislature to pass a bill over the Governor's veto. A veto override requires the approval of three-fifths (30) of the legislature