



PUBLIC POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Glossary of Legislative Terms

For more information, please visit <https://www.senate.ca.gov/glossary>.

Act

A bill passed by the Legislature and approved by the Governor.

Amendment

An alteration made, or proposed to be made, in a bill, motion, resolution or clause, by adding, changing, substituting, or omitting language. Amendments must be submitted to Legislative Counsel for drafting.

Appropriation

The amount of money set aside for a specific purpose and designated from a specific source, such as the General Fund, Child Health and Safety Fund, etc.

Author

Member of the Legislature who introduces a legislative measure.

Author's Amendments (Before Committee Hearing)

Amendments submitted by the author of the bill and signed by the chair of the committee to which the bill has been referred. Permits the adoption of amendments by the House without the benefit of a committee hearing and recommendation.

Bicameral

Legislature consisting of two Houses.

Bill

A draft of a proposed law introduced by a Member of the Legislature. (Assembly Bill 4000, AB 4000, Senate Bill 1, SB 1.)

Bill Analysis

A summary of the purpose, content and effect of a proposed measure or amendment for committee and Floor proceedings.

Bill Digest

The legal synopsis of a measure prepared by Legislative Counsel.

Budget

Suggested allocation of State moneys presented annually by the Governor, for consideration by the Legislature; compiled by the Department of Finance, in conjunction with State department heads.

Budget Act

The Budget Bill after it has been signed into law by the Governor.

Budget Bill

The spending proposal for the next fiscal year by the Department of Finance and submitted to the Legislature by the Governor.

Budget Year

The fiscal year that begins July 1 and concludes on June 30 of the following year.

Chapter

After a bill has been signed by the Governor, the Secretary of State assigns the bill a "Chapter Number" such as "Chapter 123, Statutes of 1998," which subsequently may be used to refer to the measure.

Coauthor

Any Member of either House, with the agreement of the author of a bill, may add his or her name on that Member's bill as a coauthor, usually indicating support for the proposed legislation.

Codes

Bound volumes of law organized by subject matter. The code to be changed by a bill is referred to in the title of the bill.

Committee Amendments

Amendments proposed by a Committee or a Committee Member in a Committee Hearing. Adopted by roll call vote of the Committee. May or may not be hostile. Hostile amendments are amendments proposed by another Member or committee that are not supported by the bill's author.

Companion Bill

An identical bill introduced in the other House. This procedure is far more common in Congress than in the California Legislature.

Concurrence

Approval by the House of origin to changes made to one of its bills while it was in the other House. (e.g., Assembly approval of Senate amendments.) If the author is unwilling to move the bill as amended by the others, the author requests "nonconcurrence" in the bill and asks for formation of a conference committee.

Conference Committee

A joint committee composed of six legislators, three from each House, who meet in public session to reconcile differences in the Assembly and Senate versions of a measure, typically the Budget Act. Three Assembly conferees are chosen by the Speaker and three conferees are chosen by the Senate Rules Committee.

Constitutional Amendment

A resolution changing the language of the State Constitution. It may be presented in bill form, by the Legislature or by initiative, which require the populace to vote.

Consultant

A committee professional staff person who is responsible for writing bill analyses.

Daily File

The official document published by each House, showing bills eligible for floor action that day; it also includes a schedule of committee hearings, as well as Officers and Committees of the House.

Deadlines

The dates by which bills must be introduced, heard and enacted. Established by the Constitution, and by Joint, Assembly, and Senate Rules. Delegated Authority Power granted by the Legislature to a State agency to implement and/or enforce a statute, including the power to adopt regulations.

Desk

The desk at the front of the chamber where much of the clerical work of the body is conducted. Also, a generic term for the staff and offices of the Chief Clerk of the Assembly and the Secretary of the Senate.

Double Referred

Legislation referred by the Rules Committee to two policy committees for hearing. Both committees must approve the measure to keep it moving in the process. This is typically used for issue areas that overlap the jurisdiction of more than one policy committee.

Effective Date

As specified by the Constitution, the date when a law takes effect. (Usually January 1st of the following year unless the bill is an urgency measure or another date is specified in the bill.)

Enacting Clause

The phrase at the beginning of each bill which says "The people of the State of California do enact as follows."

Enactment Date

The date the Governor signs the bill.

Enactment or Enacted into Law

The act of passing legislation involves both Houses of the Legislature. A bill moves through the legislative process and if agreed upon by both houses, is sent to the Governor. If the Governor signs the bill or allows it to become law without his signature, it is enacted into law.

Engrossed Bill

Whenever a bill is amended, the printed form of the bill is proofread to make sure all amendments are inserted properly. After being proofread, the bill is "correctly engrossed" and is therefore in proper form.

Engrossing and Enrolling

A nonpartisan unit in each House, responsible for proof-reading all forms of measures. The unit also prepares and delivers bills to the Governor for consideration.

Engrossment

The process of comparing the printed bill to ensure it looks like the original and to verify that any amendments have been correctly inserted.

Enrolled Bill

Whenever a bill passes both Houses of the Legislature, it is ordered enrolled. Upon enrollment, the bill is again proofread for accuracy and then delivered to the Governor. The "enrolled bill" contains the complete text of the bill with the dates of passage certified by the Chief Clerk of the Assembly and the Secretary of the Senate.

Enrollment

When bills are filed with the Governor and resolutions are filed with the Secretary of State once they have been accepted by both Houses.

File

The agenda for the business of the House that is printed daily.

First Reading

The initial introduction of a bill. The clerk assigns it a number and reads its title and sends the bill to be printed. The bill is then referred by the Rules Committee to a standing committee for a future hearing.

Fiscal Bill

Any measure that contains an appropriation of funds or requires a State agency to spend money for any purpose or results in a substantial loss of revenue to the State. The Legislative Counsel determines which bills are fiscal bills, pursuant to Joint Rule 10.5. The designation appears at the end of the Legislative Counsel's Digest. Fiscal bills must be heard by the Assembly and Senate Appropriations Committees in addition to the appropriate policy committees in each House.

Fiscal Committee

The committees in each house that consider appropriations: Appropriations and Budget Committees. All fiscal bills are referred to a fiscal committee. The budget bill is only referred to the Budget Committee. Most other fiscal bills are heard by the Appropriations Committee if they have been approved by policy committees. If the fiscal committee approves a bill, it usually then moves to the Floor.

Floor

(1) That portion of the Assembly or Senate Chamber reserved for Members and officers the Assembly or Senate and other persons granted the privilege of the Floor.

(2) The term used to describe the location of a bill or the type of session, connoting action to be taken by the House. Matters may be said to be "on the Floor."

Floor Manager or Jockey

The legislator responsible for taking up a measure on the Floor. This is usually the bill's author in the House of origin and a Member of the other House designated by the author when the bill is considered by the other House. The name of the Floor jockey in the other House appears in parentheses after the author's name in the Second or Third Reading section of the Daily File.

Germane

Referring to whether an amendment is relevant to the subject matter already being considered in a bill. The Legislative Counsel may opine on germaneness, but the determination of germaneness is decided by the presiding officer, subject to an appeal by the membership.

Governor's Budget

Spending plan for the State presented annually by the Governor in January, for consideration by the Legislature; compiled by the Department of Finance, in conjunction with State department heads.

Gut and Amend

When amendments to a bill remove the current contents in their entirety and replace the contents with different provisions.

Hearing

A committee meeting convened for the purpose of gathering information on a specific subject or considering specific legislative measures.

Held in Committee

A bill fails to get sufficient votes to pass out of committee.

Hijack

An action to delete the contents of a bill and insert entirely new provisions. May occur with or without the author's permission.

Inactive File

The portion of the Daily File containing legislation that is ready for Floor consideration, but, for a variety of reasons, is dormant. An author may move a bill to the Inactive File if they wish to take it up at a later date. Once a bill is on the Inactive File, it requires one day's public notice to place it back on the daily agenda.

Interim

The period of time between the end of the legislative year and the beginning of the next legislative year. The legislative year ends on August 31 in even-numbered years and in mid-September in odd-numbered years.

Interim Study

The assignment of the subject matter of a bill to the appropriate committee for study during the period the Legislature is not in session.

Lay on the Table

A motion to set aside a matter (e.g., amendments) before the House, which may not be taken up again during Floor Session. The motion is not debatable.

Legislative Advocate

A person engaged to present views of a group or organization to legislators, commonly called lobbyists.

Legislative Analyst

Staff Director of the Joint Budget Committee. The Legislative Analyst provides thorough, nonpartisan analyses on the fiscal impact of Governor's Budget.

Legislative Counsel

The attorney for the Legislature, elected jointly by both Houses. The Legislative Counsel and his or her legal staff are responsible for drafting all bills and amendments, preparing a digest (summary) of each bill, providing legal opinions, and generally representing the Legislature in legal proceedings.

Lobbyist

An individual who seeks to influence the outcome of legislation or administrative decisions. The law requires formal registration as a lobbyist if an individual is paid \$2,000 or more in any calendar month, or spends one-third or more compensated time in any calendar month, engaging in activities to influence the outcome of legislation or administrative decision.

Lobbyist Book

The Directory of Lobbyists, Lobbying Firms, and Lobbyist Employers published every legislative session by the Secretary of State; available to the public from the Legislative Bill Room at the State Capitol or the Secretary of State's office. Photos and addresses of lobbyists are included with a list of the clients they represent. Employers of lobbyists are also listed alphabetically. The information is also available on-line at the Secretary

of State's website.

Lower House

The Assembly.

Majority Leader in the Assembly

An officer of the Assembly appointed by the Speaker. Represents the Speaker on the Floor, expedites Assembly Floor proceedings through parliamentary procedures such as motions and points of order. Works directly with the majority party's leadership team, and the Republican Leader, to promote harmony among the membership.

Majority Leader in the Senate

The "number two" issues and political strategist for the Senate's majority party, second in command to the Senate President pro Tempore and elected by the members of the Senate's majority party.

Majority of those Present and Voting

A vote threshold that is determined by the number of Members voting at that time. For example, if 40 Members are voting on the adoption of amendments, a minimum of 21 "aye" votes would be necessary to adopt the amendments.

Majority Whip

One of the Members of the majority party's leadership team in the Assembly or Senate who is responsible for monitoring legislation and securing votes for legislation on the Floor.

May Revision

The updated estimate of revenues and expenditures, submitted by the Governor no later than May 14; replaces the estimates contained in the Governor's Budget submitted in January.

Minority Floor Leader

Elected by the caucus having the second largest membership in the Senate. Generally responsible for making motions, points of order, and representing the minority caucus on the Floor.

Minority Whip

One of the Members of the minority party's leadership team in the Assembly or Senate who is responsible for monitoring legislation and securing votes for legislation on the Floor.

Move a Call

A parliamentary procedure that delays the announcement of the vote on a measure. This action gives a Member additional time to gain more support for his or her bill, or to build opposition. All calls must be "lifted" before the House adjourns that day.

Nonfiscal Bill

A measure having no financial impact on the State and, therefore, not required to be heard in an Assembly or Senate fiscal committee as it moves through the legislative process. Nonfiscal bills are subject to somewhat different legislative calendar deadlines than fiscal bills.

On Call

A roll call vote in a committee or an Assembly or Senate Floor Session before it has been concluded and, therefore, has not been formally announced. Members may continue to vote or change their votes as long as a measure remains "on call." Calls are usually placed at the request of a bill's author in an effort to gain votes. Calls can be lifted by request anytime during the committee hearing or Floor Session, but cannot be carried over into the next legislative day.

On File

A bill on the Second or Third Reading File of the Assembly or Senate Daily File.

On the Floor

The Assembly or Senate Chambers where legislation is considered by the full Assembly or Senate.

Override

An effort to reverse a Governor's veto by a vote of two-thirds of the Members of each House. A successful override requires 54 votes in the Assembly and 27 votes in the Senate.

Pass and Retain

If a Member wishes to wait an additional day before taking up a bill, the Member may ask the House for unanimous consent to pass and retain his or her bill on File until the next legislative day without penalty.

Pass on File

When the House refuses to pass and retain a measure on the agenda, it is passed on file. Whenever a bill has been passed on file twice on two successive legislative days on the Third Reading File, it shall be placed on the Inactive File.

Pass Temporarily

A measure temporarily skipped on the agenda. If the bill's author does not take up the measure by the end of the day, it may be passed on File or passed and retained, keeping its place on the File by unanimous consent.

Passage

Favorable action on a measure before either House.

Policy Committees

Certain Standing Committees are Policy Committees, which hear and make

recommendations to the Assembly on legislation. Legislation is referred to Policy Committees by the Assembly Rules Committee; following consideration and vote by the Policy Committee, legislation moves to the next step in the legislative process. By their vote, Committees recommend to the full Assembly passage of a bill, passage of a bill with amendments, re-refer a bill to another committee, or to hold the bill without recommendation.

President of the Senate

The State Constitution designates the Lieutenant Governor as President of the Senate, allowing them to preside over the Senate and cast a vote only in the event of a 20-20 tie.

President pro Tempore of the Senate

Highest ranking leader and most powerful Member of the Senate; also chairs the Senate Rules Committee. Elected by all Senators at the beginning of each two-year session. Latin for "for the time."

Presiding Officer

The Member who presides over a legislative Floor Session. In the Assembly, the presiding officer can be the Speaker, Speaker pro Tempore or any other Assembly Member appointed by the Speaker. In the Senate, the presiding officer can be the President, President pro Tempore, or any other Senator appointed by the President pro Tempore.

Principal Coauthor

A legislator singled out to share credit along with the author of a bill or resolution.

Privilege of the Floor

Permission given, by the presiding officer, to view the proceedings from the Floor of the chamber, rather than from the gallery. Members make this request on behalf of relatives, constituents, and guests.

Put Over

An action delayed on a legislative measure until a future date without jeopardy to the measure.

Reading

Presentation of a bill before the House by reading its title. The Constitution requires a bill's title be read three times in each House prior to its passage. A bill is either in First, Second, or Third Reading until it is passed by both Houses.

Recess

(1) An official pause of any length in a committee hearing or Floor Session that halts the proceedings for a period of time but does not have the finality of adjournment.

(2) A break of more than four days in the regular session schedule such as the "Spring recess," etc.

Reconsideration

A motion that, if carried, allows a measure that failed to be heard again in committee or on the Floor.

Referendum

The method, used by members of the public, by which a measure adopted by the Legislature may be submitted to the electorate for a vote. A referendum petition must be signed by electors equal in number to 5 percent of the vote for all candidates for Governor at the last gubernatorial election.

Referral

Bill referrals are made by the Assembly and Senate Rules Committees to standing committees of their respective Houses.

Regulation

A rule made by a state agency to carry out a legislative or administrative mandate. A legally adopted regulation has the force of law.

Rule Waiver

A specific exemption of the rules sought from the Assembly, Senate, or Joint Rules by an Assembly Member or Senator; formal permission must be sought and received. For every rule, there is a rule waiver.

Rules

Those standards and procedures which govern the operation of either or both Houses. There are Standing Rules of the Assembly, Standing Rules of the Senate, and Joint Rules.

Second Reading

Each bill introduced must be read three times before final passage. This is the first order of business on the Daily File. The House approves or denies committee recommendations at this stage. This is usually accomplished without debate or vote.

Second Reading File

The portion of the Daily File that lists measures that has been reported out of committee. Measures which will be going to the Floor for consideration will stay on the Second Reading File for one day (without amendments) or two days (with amendments) before moving to the Third Reading portion of the File.

Secretary of the Senate

Principal parliamentarian and record keeper for the Senate, elected by Senators at the beginning of each two-year session. The Senate Secretary and his or her staff are responsible for publishing the Senate daily and weekly publications.

Section

A portion of the California Codes. The text of these sections are set forth in bills and

proposed to be amended, repealed, or added.

Select Committees

A Select Committee is a subcommittee of the Assembly General Research Committee. Select Committees may hold informational hearings, request information, issue reports, and otherwise serve as resources to the Assembly. They do not hear or make recommendations on legislation.

Senate

The upper House of the California Legislature consisting of 40 Members elected from districts apportioned on the basis of population, one-half of who are elected or re-elected every two years for four-year terms.

Sergeant-At-Arms

Staff responsible for maintaining order and providing security for legislators. The Chief Sergeant-at-Arms in each House is elected by a majority of the Members of that House at the beginning of every legislative session.

Session

The period during which the Legislature meets. The California legislative sessions is biennial -- it occurs over a two-year period.

Sine Die

Final adjournment, the end of session. Latin for "without day."

Speaker

The highest ranking officer of the Assembly; usually elected by the Assembly Members at the beginning of each two-year legislative session. The Speaker or his or her designee presides over Floor Session. The Speaker's powers and duties are established by the Assembly Rules.

Speaker pro Tempore

An officer appointed by the Speaker that presides over Floor Sessions in the absence of the Speaker.

Special Order of Business

Occasionally a bill is of such importance that advance notice is given about when it will be considered in the full Assembly or Senate. A request for a Special Order of Business may be made during a Floor Session by requesting unanimous consent to set the bill as a Special Order on a specific date and time. This assures adequate time for debate and allows all Members the opportunity to be present. When a bill will be heard as a Special Order of Business in committee, it is so noticed in the Assembly Daily File.

Sponsor

The legislator, private individual, or group who developed a piece of legislation and advocates its passage.

Spot Bill

A bill that amends a code section in a non-substantive way. A bill may be introduced to assure that a germane vehicle will be available at a later date. Assembly Rules provide that a spot bill cannot be referred to a standing committee by the Rules Committee prior to receiving substantive amendments.

Standing Committees

Created pursuant to Assembly Rules, the Standing Committees consider legislation, the state budget, and internal legislative matters, as determined by their jurisdictions. Jurisdictions are set by the Assembly Rules Committee. Standing Committees must meet specific standards for notice, analyses, quorums, and voting.

State Auditor

Staff Director of the Joint Audit Committee. The Auditor General audits the financial condition of State agencies.

Statutes

Compilation of all enacted bills, chaptered by the Secretary of State in the order in which they become law.

Stop the Clock

The term used to describe the process of continuing business after a time deadline has passed.

Subcommittee

A subgroup of a full committee, composed of committee members from both parties.

Table

To set aside. Typically used to dispense with, or set aside, amendments to a bill rather than vote "aye" or "no" on them. A motion to table is nondebatable and once made, must be voted upon.

Tax Levy

Any bill that imposes, repeals, or materially alters a State tax. The Legislative Counsel determines whether a bill is a tax levy and so indicates this information in the title, digest, and body of the bill. Tax levies have different legislative deadlines than do other measures.

Term Limits

Members first elected to the State Legislature on or after the passage of Proposition 28 in November of 2012 may serve 12 years in either the Assembly or Senate, or a combined length of service in both the Assembly and Senate, so long as the combined terms do not exceed 12 years of service. Members elected to the State Legislature prior to the passage of Proposition 28 may serve a maximum of three two-year terms in the Assembly and two four-year terms in the Senate as established by the passage of Proposition 140, in November of 1990.

Third House

Lobbyists and legislative advocates.

Third Reading

Each bill introduced must be read three times before final passage. The stage at which bills are eligible for Floor debate and final vote.

Third Reading Analysis

A summary of a measure ready for Floor consideration. It contains most recent amendments and information regarding how Members voted on the measure when it was heard in committee.

Third Reading File

The portion of the Daily File that lists the bills that is ready to be taken up for final passage.

Title

That portion of a measure which identifies the subject matter of a measure and the code section it will affect.

Upper House

The Senate.

Urgency Clause

Language in a bill which states the bill will take effect immediately upon enactment. A Floor vote on the urgency must precede a vote on the bill. A two-thirds vote is required for adoption of the urgency clause and for passage of the bill.

Urgency Measure

A bill affecting the public peace, health, or safety and requiring a two-thirds vote for passage. An urgency bill becomes effective immediately upon enactment.

Veto

The formal action of the Governor disapproving a measure by returning it to the House of origin. The Governor's veto may be overridden by two-thirds vote of each House. The Governor can also exercise a line-item veto, where the amount of an appropriation is reduced or eliminated, while the rest of the bill is approved.

Voice Vote

A vote that requires only an oral "aye" or "no" with no official count taken. The presiding officer determines whether the "ayes" or "noes" carry.

Whip

A party officer charged with monitoring Floor activity of caucus members.

Withdraw From Committee

A floor vote to compel the discharge of a bill from committee.