



Legislative Committee: Legislative Resource Guide Glossary of Legislative Terms

Adopted from California State Legislature Glossary of Terms

ACROSS THE DESK

The official act of introducing a bill or resolution. The measure is given to the Chief Clerk or his or her representative at the Assembly Desk in the Assembly Chamber or to the Secretary of the Senate or his or her representative in the Senate Chamber. It then receives a number, is sent to the State Printer, and becomes a public document available in the bill room. Amendments are also “put across the desk.”

ACT

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

ADJOURNMENT

Termination of a meeting, occurring at the close of each legislative day upon the completion of business, accomplished by a successful motion to end session, with the hour and day of the next meeting being set prior to adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT SINE DIE

Literally, “adjournment without day,” meaning no days left; final termination of the two-year legislative session. Regular or special sessions of the Legislature are adjourned sine die at midnight on November 30 of each even-numbered year.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE ACT (APA)

A statute containing required procedures for rulemaking and administrative hearings. (Chapter 3.5, 4, and 5 [commencing with Section 11340] of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.)

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.

AUTHOR'S AMENDMENTS

(Before Hearing) Amendments submitted by the author of the bill to the committee and submitted to the Desk by the Chair of the committee to which the bill has been referred. Permits the adoption of the amendments by the House without the benefit of a committee hearing and recommendation.

AUTHOR'S AMENDMENTS

(At Hearing or on Floor) Amendments in Committee or on the Floor that are supported by the author.

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

(At Hearing or on the Floor) Amendments proposed by another Member in Committee or on the Floor that are not supported by the bill's author.

ANALYSIS OF THE BUDGET BILL

The Legislative Analyst's comprehensive examination of the Governor's Budget; available to legislators and the public about six weeks after the budget is submitted by the Governor to the Legislature.

APPROPRIATION

The amount of money set aside for a specific purpose and designated from a specific source, such as the General Fund or the Environmental License Plate Fund.

APPROPRIATIONS LIMIT

Established by Proposition 4, which was passed by voters in 1979 (Article XIII B, California Constitution), the appropriations limit is the maximum amount of tax proceeds that State or local governments may appropriate in a fiscal year. The limit is adjusted annually but is based on 1986–87 appropriations.

ASSEMBLY

The House of the California Legislature, consisting of 80 Members, elected for two-year terms, from districts apportioned on the basis of population.

AUTHOR

A Member of the Legislature who introduces a legislative measure.

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, prepared for committee or floor proceedings.

BILL DIGEST

The legal synopsis of a measure; prepared by Legislative Counsel (see Digest and Legislative Counsel).

BLUE PENCIL

The California Constitution grants the Governor "line-item veto" authority to reduce or eliminate any item of appropriation from any bill including the Budget Bill. In the 1960's the Governor actually used an editor's blue pencil for the task (see line item veto).

BOND BILL (General Obligation Bonds)

A bill authorizing the sale of State general obligation bonds to finance specified projects or activities; the measure subsequently must be approved by the voters.

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 submitted by the Governor and considered by both houses of the Legislature.

BUDGET TRAILER BILL

See “Trailer Bill.”

BUDGET YEAR

The next fiscal year that begins July 1 and concludes on June 30; the year following the current fiscal year.

CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS

The official compilation of regulations legally adopted by State agencies and filed with the Secretary of State; the recognized source of California administrative law.

CALL OF THE HOUSE

The procedure used to compel attendance of Members and to require those in attendance to remain in the Chamber.

CAPITAL OUTLAY

Funds to be spent acquiring, improving or constructing fixed assets.

CASTING VOTE

The deciding vote the Lieutenant Governor may cast in the case of a tie vote in the Senate.

CAUCUS

(1) A closed meeting of the legislators of one political party. (2) A group of legislators who meet formally because of their interest in specific issues (e.g., Rural Caucus, Women’s Caucus, Latino Caucus, Black Caucus, etc.).

CHAPTER

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

CHAPTERING OUT

When, during a calendar year, two or more bills amending the same code section become law, the bill enacted last (with a higher chapter number) becomes law and prevails over (“chapters out”) the code section in the bill or bills previously enacted. Chaptering out can be prevented with the adoption of “double jointing” amendments (see conflict, double jointing).

CHECK-IN SESSION

On non-Floor Session days, legislators are required to “check-in” with the Chief Clerk or Secretary of the Senate to be added to the roll for attendance purposes. A quorum must be recorded in order for legislative business to be transacted.

COAUTHOR

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

CODES

Bound volumes of law organized by subject matter. The code sections to be amended by a bill are referred to in the title of the bill.

COLA

Cost-of-living adjustment.

COMMITTEE CHAIR

A Member selected by the Speaker to preside over the proceedings and actions of a specific committee.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The entire Assembly or Senate sitting as a committee to consider any matter properly presented to it.

COMPANION BILL

An identical bill introduced in the other House. This Procedure is less common in the California Legislature than in Congress.

CONCURRENCE

Approval by the House of origin to changes made to a bill while it was in the second House (e.g., Assembly approval of Senate amendments to an Assembly bill). If concurrence is denied, the bill is eligible to be sent to a two-house conference committee (see conference committee).

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

A measure that can be introduced in either House, but must be approved by both Houses and filed with the Secretary of State to take effect. The Governor's signature is not required. These measures usually involve the business of the Legislature (e.g., adoption of the Joint Rules).

CONDITIONAL (OR CONTINGENT) EFFECT

The effect of a bill, or portion thereof, is made dependent upon the occurrence of a specified event (e.g., passage of another measure, securing a federal waiver, receipt of revenues, etc.) (see contingent enactment language).

CONFEREES

Members appointed to a conference committee.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

A joint Assembly and Senate committee composed of six legislators, three from each House. The conference committee meets in public session to reconcile differences between the Assembly and Senate versions of a measure. Three Assembly conferees are chosen by the Speaker; three Senate conferees are chosen by the Senate Rules Committee.

CONFERENCE REPORT

Amendments agreed upon by a majority of a conference committee. Two Members from each House must agree on the conference report in order for the report to be considered by the Houses (see Conference Committee).

CONFLICT

During a calendar year, when two or more bills amend the same code section, they are said to be in conflict. Technical amendments must be taken to each bill prior to its approval by the Legislature in order to ensure that all changes proposed by the enacted bills take effect (see chaptering out, double jointing).

CONSENT CALENDAR

A group of noncontroversial bills passed by a committee to another committee or the full Assembly or Senate. Bills may be placed upon the Consent Calendar if they are reported to the Floor with that recommendation and (1) have received no "no" votes in committee and (2) have had no opposition expressed by any person present at the hearing.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

A resolution changing the language of the State Constitution, adopted by a two-thirds vote of the Legislature or presented by initiative. It requires an affirmative vote of the majority of the electorate to become effective.

CONSULTANT

A professional committee staff person.

CONTINGENT ENACTMENT LANGUAGE

Connects two bills so that one bill will not become operative unless another bill also takes effect (see conditional effect).

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 and Officers and Committees of the House.

DAILY JOURNAL

A publication produced by each House for each legislative day that contains the official record of the Floor Session, vote information, motions, parliamentary inquiries, and letters of legislative intent (see Journal).

DEADLINES

The dates by which bills must be introduced, heard and enacted. Established by the Constitution, and by Assembly, Senate, and Joint Rules.

DIGEST

Prepared by the Legislative Counsel, it summarizes the effect of the proposed bill on current law (see Bill Digest and Legislative Counsel's Digest).

DISTRICT

The area of the State represented by a legislator. Each district is determined by population and is known by a number. There are both Senate districts and Assembly districts.

DISTRICT BILL

Legislation introduced specifically on behalf of a legislator's district, generally affecting only that district.

DO PASS

An affirmative recommendation made by a committee; moves a bill to the Floor or to the next committee, as specified, without amendment.

DO PASS AS AMENDED

An affirmative recommendation made by a committee; moves a bill to the Floor or to the next committee, as specified, providing the language of the bill is changed as specified.

DOUBLE JOINTING

Double jointing refers to technical amendments necessary when two or more bills propose to amend the same code section (i.e., are in conflict). Double jointing prevents the problem of chaptering out (see Chaptering Out, Conflict).

DOUBLE REFERRED

Legislation referred by 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.

DROPPED

When an author has decided not to pursue the passage of a bill.

EFFECTIVE DATE

As specified by the Constitution, the date when a law takes effect. The date is usually January 1 of the following year, unless the bill is an urgency measure or specifies another date.

ENACTMENT OR ENACTED INTO LAW

The act of passing legislation involves both Houses. 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.

ENACTMENT DATE

The date the Governor signs a bill.

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.

ENGROSSMENT

The process of comparing the printed bill to ensure it is identical to 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

Occurs when bills are filed with the Governor and resolutions are filed with the Secretary of State, after they have been accepted by both Houses.

EXPUNGE

A motion to delete from the record any reference to a specific action. The motion must be made on the day the vote is taken.

EXTRAORDINARY SESSION

A special legislative session called by the Governor to address only those issues specified in the proclamation. Measures introduced in these sessions are numbered chronologically with a lower case “x” after the number (e.g., AB 28x); they take effect generally the 91st day after adjournment of the special session.

FILE NUMBER

The number assigned to a measure in the Assembly or Senate Daily File. The file number changes each day as bills move on or off the Daily File. File numbers are assigned to measures on second and third reading and unfinished business. Legislation is taken up on the Assembly or Senate Floor in chronological order according to file number. Items considered on the Floor are referred to by file number.

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 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 COMMITTEES

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 referred only 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 the bill, it usually then moves to the Floor.

FISCAL DEADLINE

The date by which all bills with fiscal implications must be reported out of fiscal committee. Any fiscal bill missing the deadline is considered “dead” unless it receives a rule waiver allowing further consideration.

FISCAL YEAR

The 12-month period during which a budget is in effect. The State fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30 of the following year. The federal fiscal year begins October 1 and ends September 30 of the following year.

FLOOR

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

The legislator responsible for taking up a measure on the Floor; 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 heard there. The name of the Floor Manager in the second house appears in parentheses after the author’s name in the Daily File.

FOUR-DAY FILE NOTICE

Joint Rule 62(a) requires bills set for hearing in the committee of first reference to be noticed in the Daily File for four days prior to hearing. Subsequent committees of reference require a Daily File notice of two days.

GOVERNOR’S BUDGET

A 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.

GRANDFATHERING

A legal exemption whereby a situation is governed by an old law while a new law applies to all future, similar situations.

GUT AND AMEND

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

HEARING

A committee meeting convened for the purpose of considering and acting upon or gathering information on a specific subject.

HELD IN COMMITTEE

When a bill fails to get sufficient votes to pass out of committee, it is held in committee.

HELD UNDER SUBMISSION

An action taken by a committee when a bill is heard in committee and there is an indication that the author and the committee members want to work on or discuss the bill further, but there is no motion for the bill to progress out of committee. This does not preclude the bill from being set for another hearing.

HELD WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION

An action taken by a committee when a bill is heard in committee and there is no indication that the committee wants the bill to progress out of committee. There is no motion for the bill to progress out of committee. This does not preclude the bill from being set for another hearing.

HIJACK

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

HOUSE

Refers to either the Senate or the Assembly in California.

HOUSE OF ORIGIN

The House in which a measure begins; the Assembly is the House of Origin for all Assembly measures. As opposed to the "Second House"—the house which hears measures following the House of Origin.

HOUSE RESOLUTION

A measure by the Assembly used for stating policies, such as the House Rules, and expressing views of the House. House Resolutions require adoption by a majority vote of the Assembly.

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 he or she wishes to take it up at a later date. Once a bill is on the inactive file, one day's public notice is needed to place it back on the agenda.

INITIATIVE

A method of lawmaking that requires a vote of the people instead of a vote of the Legislature in order for a measure to become law. To qualify for a statewide ballot, statutory initiatives must receive signatures of voters equal to 5% of the votes cast for all candidates for Governor at the last gubernatorial election. Constitutional amendment initiatives must receive signatures equal to 8% of the same number of votes.

INTERIM

The period of time between the adjournment of the first year of the biennium and the reconvening of the second year of the biennium.

INTERIM STUDY

The assignment of the subject matter of a bill to the appropriate committee for study during the interim recess.

JOINT COMMITTEE

A committee composed of equal numbers of Assembly Members and Senators.

JOINT RESOLUTION

A resolution expressing an opinion about an issue pertaining to the federal government; forwarded to Congress for its information. Joint resolutions require the approval of both the Assembly and Senate but do not require approval by the Governor.

JOINT SESSION

The Assembly and Senate meeting together, usually in the Assembly chamber. The purpose is to receive special information such as the Governor's State of the State Address.

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

Staff director of the Joint Budget Committee. The Legislative Analyst provides a thorough, nonpartisan analysis of the fiscal impact of the Governor's Budget.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

The attorney for the Legislature, elected jointly by both houses. The Legislative Counsel and his or her legal staff is 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.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

A brief summary of the changes the proposed bill would make to current law. The digest is found in the beginning of each bill (see Bill Digest).

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

The President of the Senate; designated by the State Constitution to preside over the Senate and cast a vote only in the event of a tie. If the Governor cannot assume his or her duties or is absent from the State, the Lieutenant Governor assumes the role of the Executive for the remainder of the term or during the absence.

LINE ITEM VETO

See Blue Pencil.

LOWER HOUSE

The Assembly.

MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER

In the Assembly, the Majority Floor Leader is an officer of the Assembly appointed by the Speaker. He or she represents the Speaker on the floor and, in conjunction with the Presiding Officer, expedites Assembly Floor proceedings through parliamentary procedures such as motions and points of order. The Majority Floor Leader works directly with the Speaker pro Tempore, other members of the majority party's leadership team, and the Minority Leader, to facilitate positive interaction between the Members during floor sessions. In the Senate, the Majority Leader is a party leader chosen by the majority party caucus.

MAJORITY OF THE HOUSE

Quorum requirement of one more than half of the qualified members sitting at that time. For example, if there are four vacancies in the Assembly, 39 members would make a majority of the house.

MAJORITY OF THOSE PRESENT AND VOTING

A vote threshold 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 VOTE

A vote of more than half of the legislative body considering a measure. The full Assembly requires a majority vote of 41 and the full Senate requires 21, based on their memberships of 80 and 40, respectively.

MAJORITY WHIP

A member of the majority party's leadership team in the Assembly or Senate, 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.

MEASURE

Any bill, resolution, or constitutional amendment that is acted upon by the Legislature.

MINORITY FLOOR LEADER

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

MINORITY WHIP

A member of the minority party's leadership team in the Assembly or Senate, responsible for monitoring legislation and securing votes for legislation on the Floor.

MOTION

A formal request for action made by a legislator during a committee hearing or Floor Session.

MOTION TO RECONSIDER

A parliamentary procedure which, if adopted, reverses an action previously taken and returns the question before the body for another vote.

MOTION TO RE-REFER

This motion is utilized to send a measure from one committee to another. A motion to re-refer a bill or resolution from one committee to another committee may be made during the regular order of business. Debate is allowed as to the propriety of the re-referral, and requires 41 or more votes in the Assembly, 21 or more votes in the Senate.

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 or opposition to a bill. 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 later legislative calendar deadlines than fiscal bills.

OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW (OAL)

The independent executive branch agency charged with reviewing state agency rulemaking and regulations for compliance with procedures and standards set forth in the rulemaking portion of the administrative Procedure Act (APA).

ON CALL

A roll call vote in a committee or in 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 at any time during the committee hearing or Floor Session, but cannot be carried over into the next legislative day (see Move a Call).

ON FILE

A bill on Second or Third Reading or Unfinished Business awaiting Concurrence; listed in the Assembly or Senate Daily File.

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

When a bill stays on File until the next day without penalty. 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.

PASS ON FILE

When the House refuses to “Pass and Retain” a measure on the agenda, it is “Passed on File.” Although the bill remains on the agenda for the next day, if it is not taken-up the second time, it will automatically 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 penalized or retain its place on File by unanimous consent. (See Pass on File.)

PER DIEM

Literally means “per day.” It is the daily expense money rendered to legislators.

POLITICAL REFORM ACT OF 1974

Proposition 9 created the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) to enforce political campaign, lobbying, and conflict of interest laws in the state of California, similar to what the Federal Elections Commission does at the federal level. Part of these reforms included creation of gift limits, lobbyist reporting requirements, and regulation of state official fundraising activities. Any bills that amend this Act have a two-thirds vote requirement for passage and are subject to a 12-day waiting period before final passage of each house. See Elections Code, Sections 81012.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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

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, the President pro Tempore, or any other Senator appointed by the President pro Tempore.

PRINCIPAL COAUTHOR

A Member of either the house of origin or the second house, singled out to share credit as a coauthor below the author of a measure.

PUT OVER

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

QUASI-LEGISLATIVE

The term applied to the action or discretion of public administrative officers or agencies to make law, primarily through rulemaking.

QUORUM

The minimum number of legislators needed to begin conducting official business in committee or on the Floor. A quorum is one more than half of the entire body.

QUORUM CALL

Transmitting the message that Members are needed to establish a quorum so proceedings can begin.

READING

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

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.

RECONSIDERATION

A motion that, if carried, allows a measure that failed or passed 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 to five percent of the total vote for all gubernatorial candidates in the last gubernatorial election.

REFERRAL

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

RE-REFERRAL PURSUANT TO A.R. 77.2 OR S.R. 29.10

A bill that has been substantially amended may be re-referred to a committee by the Assembly Speaker (A.R. 77.2) or Senate Rules Committee (S.R. 29.10). Under these rules, the presiding officer of either house can re-refer a bill to committee without consent from the body. A motion to object is out of order.

REGULATION

A rule made by a state agency to carry out a legislative or administrative mandate. Must meet specified standards for adoption. A legally adopted regulation has the force of law.

RESOLUTION

An opinion expressed by one or both houses which does not have the force of law. Concurrent and joint resolutions are voted on by both houses but do not require the Governor's signature.

ROLL CALL

A vote of a committee or the full Assembly or Senate indicating the vote of each Member present and voting (as opposed to a "voice vote"). Committee roll calls are conducted by the committee secretary, who calls each Member's name in alphabetical order with the Chair's name called either first or last. Assembly Floor roll calls are conducted electronically with each Member pushing a button from his or her assigned seat. The green button designates "aye" and the red button designates "no." Senate roll calls are conducted by the Reading Clerk who reads each Senator's name in alphabetical order; the Senator voices his or her vote.

RULEMAKING

The exercise of power granted by the Legislature to a state agency to adopt regulations to implement, interpret, or make specific the law enforced or administered by it, or to govern its procedure.

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.

RULE WAIVER

A specific exception sought from the Assembly, Senate, or Joint Rules by an Assembly Member or Senator; formal permission must be sought and received.

SECOND READING

Each bill introduced must be read by title three times before final passage; this is the first order of business on the Daily File. The House approves or denies committee recommendations at Second Reading, usually without debate or vote.

SECOND READING FILE

The portion of the Daily File that lists measures that have 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 Third Reading.

SESSION

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

SINE DIE

Final adjournment. Literally, “without days,” the end of session (see Adjournment Sine Die).

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 in the Assembly Rules.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The Speaker pro Tempore is appointed by the Speaker. He or she is an officer of the House who presides over Floor Sessions in the absence of the Speaker. As the presiding officer, the Speaker pro Tempore guides the Members through the daily business of the house, responds to parliamentary inquiries, and issues rulings on points of order when necessary.

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

Occasionally a bill is of such importance that advanced notice is given about when it will be considered in the full Assembly, Senate, or committee. 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 spot bill may be introduced to ensure that a germane vehicle will be available at a later date. Assembly Rules provide that a spot bill cannot be referred to a committee by the Rules Committee without 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 (see Fiscal Committees).

STATE MANDATE

Chapter 1406, Statutes of 1972, first established the requirement for the State to reimburse units of local government for all costs mandated by the State. These costs may result from either legislative acts or administrative regulations that impose a new program or demand an increased level of service in an existing program. Proposition 4 of 1979 (Gann Initiative) incorporated this requirement into Section 6 of Article XIII B of the State Constitution.

STATUTES

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

SUBCOMMITTEE

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

SUNSET DATE

A date included in a measure which causes the act to “sunset,” or become ineffective, after a certain date.

SUSPENSE FILE

A bill or set of bills, with a fiscal impact, set aside in Appropriations Committee by a majority of Members present and voting. These bills may be heard at a later hearing.

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. 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 slightly different legislative deadlines than do other measures.

THIRD HOUSE

Refers to Lobbyists.

THIRD READING

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

THIRD READING FILE

The portion of the Daily File that lists the bills that are ready to be taken up for final vote on the Assembly or Senate Floor.

THIRD SET

The third date scheduled by a committee for hearing a bill after two prior settings as requested by the author. If the measure is not successfully moved from committee after its third set, it is dead. Hearing date changes made by the committee chairperson do not count toward the set total.

THIRTY-DAY PROVISION

The 30-day waiting period following a bill’s introduction before a bill may be heard or acted upon by the Legislature. The waiting period is required by the State Constitution and the Joint Rules, and can be waived by a three-fourths vote (60 in the Assembly; 30 in the Senate).

TITLE

That portion of a measure which identifies the subject matter of a measure and the code sections it will affect (see Bill Title).

TRAILER BILL (or BUDGET TRAILER BILL)

Legislation that implements specific changes to the law in order to enact the State Budget. Generally, a separate “trailer bill” is needed for each major area of budget appropriation, such as transportation, human services, education, revenue, etc. These bills are generally negotiated as part of the entire budget package each fiscal year.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT

The consent (permission) of all those Members present, absent any objection, debate, or vote; for example, unanimous consent granted to suspend the four-day File notice requirement to hear a bill in committee.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The section of the Daily File that contains bills pending concurrence in amendments taken in the second House, vetoed by the Governor, conference reports, and certain other motions.

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 clause must precede a vote on the bill. A two-thirds vote is required for adoption of the 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 its House of origin. The Governor’s veto may be overridden by a 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. A line-item veto may also be overridden by a two-thirds vote in each House (see Blue Pencil).

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.

W.O.R.F.

An acronym for the term “without reference to file.” Since the rules of both houses require bills to be listed on the day’s agenda, a measure that is not listed in the official agenda would have to be taken up “without reference to file.” The Assembly or Senate may suspend the rules to take up a “WORF” item.