

TERMINOLOGY

AMENDMENT – A proposal by a member of the Legislature to alter the language, provisions and/or stipulations in a bill or amendment.

BILLS – Legislative proposals before the Legislature. They are designated as HB in the House of Representatives and SB in the Senate depending on where they originate and by a number assigned in order in which they are introduced during the two-year period.

BILL INTRODUCED – In both the House and Senate, any number of members may join in introducing a single bill or resolution. The first member listed is the prime sponsor; all subsequent members listed are co-sponsors.

BILLS REFERRED – When introduced, a bill is referred to the Committee(s) with jurisdiction over the subject by either the President Pro Tempore or the Speaker of the House.

CALENDAR – An agenda or list of bills awaiting possible action by each chamber.

CAUCUS – A group of legislators from the same party. When meeting behind closed doors to discuss issues they are “caucusing” or are “in caucus.”

COMMITTEE – A division of the House or Senate that prepares legislation for action by the parent chamber, or makes investigations as directed by the parent chamber. The term sometimes connotes a legislative body that keeps unpopular or controversial bills from getting to the floor. For a bill to be “tied up in committee” usually means the chairman doesn’t like the legislation and has decided to sit on it.

FILIBUSTER – A time-delaying tactic associated with the Senate and used by a minority to prevent voting on a bill or amendment that probably would pass if voted on directly.

GERMANE – Pertaining to the subject matter of the measure at hand. All amendments must be germane to the bill considered.

LOBBY – A group seeking to influence the passage or defeat of legislation, either through direct contact with lawmakers or through indirect avenues such as “grassroots” activity. A lobbyist is usually considered a dispenser of reliable information.

MARKING UP A BILL – Going through the contents of a piece of legislation in committee or subcommittee to, for example, consider its provisions in large and small portions, act on amendments to provisions and proposed revisions to language, and insert new sections and phraseology.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE – Under the Constitution, the Lieutenant Governor presides over the Senate.

QUORUM – The number of members whose presence is necessary for the transaction of business.

RECOMMIT TO COMMITTEE – A motion, made on the floor after a bill has been debated, to return it to the committee that reported it. This usually is considered a deathblow to the bill.

RECORDED VOTE – A vote upon which each member’s position is individually made known.

STANDING VOTE – A non-recorded vote used in both the House and Senate. Members for and against the measure stand and are counted, but there is no record of how individual members voted.

STRIKE FROM THE RECORD – If remarks are made on the floor by a member that offend another member, the person who takes offense may request that the Speaker or President Pro Tempore remove the offending words from the Journal, which is the public record of the debate.

TABLE A BILL – Motions to table, or to “lay on the table” are used to block or kill amendments or other parliamentary questions.

VOICE VOTE – In either the House or Senate, members answer “aye” or “no” in chorus, with the presiding officer deciding the result.