

FLORIDA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

GLOSSARY OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS

A

Act – A bill that has passed both houses of the legislature.

Adjournment – The recess of a legislative house until a later stated time or until the time fixed by its rules for reconvening. Sine die adjournment is the final adjournment of a legislative session. Each house recesses after its daily session and adjourns sine die at the end of each session.

Amendment – A proposal to change a procedural motion or proposed legislation. Types and versions of amendments include:

- **Committee amendment** – Recommended changes to a bill, which a committee has agreed upon. Each adopted committee amendment accompanies the bill reported favorably out of committee for floor consideration. When the bill goes to the floor, the committee amendment must be considered before any other amendment may be taken up.
- **Floor amendment** – A proposal offered by one or more legislators for consideration in the respective chamber.
- **Technical amendment** – A non-substantive amendment used to correct errors such as spelling, numbering, incorrect coding or directory language.

Analysis – Sometimes called a bill analysis or staff analysis, it is prepared by the staff of each committee of reference. It summarizes the bill and explains the current law affected by the bill, the likely impact of the bill, any constitutional issues raised by the bill, and committee amendments, if any, are summarized.

Apportionment and redistricting – Legislative action required following each decennial census, fixing the size of each house of the Florida Legislature and drawing legislative and congressional district boundaries to provide representation in the Florida Legislature and the U.S. Congress for the people of the state.

B

Bill – A proposed act filed in either house of the legislature. Types and versions of bills include:

- **Appropriations and Implementing bills** – Bills authorizing the spending of public money. Such bills are effective for one year only.
- **Claim bill** – A bill that presents a claim to compensate a particular individual or entity for injuries or losses caused by the negligence or error of a public officer or agency.
- **Committee bill** – A bill that is the product of a legislative committee rather than by an individual legislator.
- **Committee Substitute** – A bill going through the committee hearing process sometimes has numerous amendments, or the amendments change the original concept of the bill. In these instances the bill is rewritten and becomes a “committee substitute.” The next committee of reference may again rewrite the bill, and more than one bill may be combined. The committee substitute continues to carry the identifying number(s) of the original bill(s) filed.
- **Companion bill** – A bill introduced in one house, which is identical, or similar to a bill introduced in the other house. The use of companion bills allows bills in each body to move through the committee process at the same time.
- **Compare bill** – As used in bill history, bills that have selected provisions that are similar in text.
- **Engrossed bill** – The version of a measure that incorporates adopted floor amendments. The revision is done in the house of origin and engrossed under the supervision of the Secretary of the Senate or the Clerk of the House.

- **Enrolled bill** – A measure approved by both houses and signed by the legislative officers which is sent to the Governor for action and transmittal to the Secretary of State or filed directly with the Secretary of State.
- **Identical bill** – As used in bill history, bills that are identical word-for-word, including titles.
- **Linked bill** – A bill that is contingent upon passage of another bill within the same chamber, e.g., a trust fund bill, a bill providing a public record exemption, or an implementing bill.
- **Proposed Committee Bill** – A bill that represents a committee proposal or interim project. When the proposal is expanded, drafted in bill form, and filed, it becomes a bill.
- **Resolution** – A bill that is not subject to action by the Governor, is not subject to the constitutional one-subject limitation or to the constitutional title requirements, and, except for certain uses of joint resolutions and concurrent resolutions, does not have the effect of law. When adopted by both houses, it is signed by the legislative officers and presented to the Secretary of State. Types include:
 - **Concurrent Resolution** – A resolution that is adopted by both houses and is limited to procedural legislative matters, redistricting, and ratification of federal constitutional amendments.
 - **Senate or House Resolution** – A one-house document used for matters not involving the other house. It is often ceremonial or congratulatory in nature.
 - **Joint Resolution** – A resolution that is the only authorized method by which the legislature may propose amendments to the Florida Constitution. A resolution must pass each house by a three-fifths vote of the membership.
- **Similar bill** – As used in bill history, companion bills that are substantially similar in text or have substantial portions of text that are largely the same.
- **Trust Fund bill** – The State Constitution requires the legislature to periodically review trust funds to determine whether they should be terminated, modified, made exempt from review, or re-created without modification. Florida Statutes, provides the schedule for termination and review of trust funds. Creation of a trust fund requires a three-fifths vote of the membership.

Bill Drafting – The Office of Senate Legal Research and Drafting Services under the Secretary of the Senate or the Bill Drafting Service in the House of Representatives.

Bill history – A chronological listing of all actions that occur on a bill from its introduction to its final disposition.

Bill number – The identifying number given each bill filed for introduction. Since 1990, Senate bills have received even numbers and House bills have received odd numbers. Bill numbers do not carry over from session to session or from a regular session to a special session.

C

Calendars – Important tools which serve as official notification of bills to be considered, sessions, and committee meetings and hearings. Types and versions of calendars include:

- **Consent Calendar** – A special calendar of noncontroversial bills, passage of which may expedite the work of the legislature.
- **Daily Calendar** – A document containing the schedule of meetings and individual committee agendas, the day's order of business, the special order calendars, bills on second and third reading, and other business.
- **Interim Calendar** – Published periodically during the months between regular sessions, this document contains a list of agendas of committee meetings, prefiled bills and their committee references, and other significant legislative information.
- **Special Order Calendar** – The list of bills on second reading to be taken up in session on a particular day.

Chamber – The large rooms in which the Senate and the House meet. The Senate and the House chambers are located on the fourth floor of the Capitol.

Chapter law – The identifying number assigned by the Secretary of State to a bill that has been enacted into law. The number indicates the year passed and the printing number. For example, chapter 2000-541 represents the 541st law printed in the year 2000. Chapter laws are compiled and published annually in the Laws of Florida.

Citator – A publication provided by the Division of Legislative Information Services of the Office of Legislative Services which shows the status of and a chronological listing of all actions concerning all legislation introduced during a session. The Citator also provides statistics, descriptions by bill number, sponsor reports by member and committee, and indices by statute number affected and by subject.

Clerk of the House of Representatives – The person elected by the House of Representatives to assist the members of the House in the processes of enacting laws and recording that history.

Coding – The underlining of new language and overstriking of deleted existing language in a bill, required by the rules of both houses of the legislature, which indicates changes being made to the text of existing law or an existing constitutional provision.

Committee – A panel of legislators chosen by the respective presiding officers to perform specific functions. Types of committees include:

- **Conference Committee** – A committee composed of members of the Senate and members of the House of Representatives whose sole purpose is to resolve the differences between the two houses on the content of a bill.
- **Joint Committee** – A committee composed of Senate and House members appointed by their respective presiding officers to oversee a specified legislative function.
- **Select Committee** – A committee created for the purpose of studying or investigating a specific matter within a specified time period.
- **Standing Committee** – A committee appointed by the respective presiding officer and given a continuing responsibility over legislation covering specific subject matters.
- **Subcommittee** – A committee within a full committee, which reports and makes recommendations to the full committee.

Conferees – Members of a conference committee.

Conference Committee Report – The report of a conference committee on the bill or bills for which the committee was formed. The report of the conference committee must be either adopted or rejected as a whole by each house.

Consensus Estimating Conferences – An umbrella term designating a group of conference bodies, consisting of members of the legislature, representatives from the Governor's Office, and designees from various state agencies, which meet to develop caseload/workload data and revenue projections to assist in the budgeting and appropriations process.

Constitutional amendment – A joint resolution that proposes an amendment to, or revision of, the State Constitution. After final passage and filing with the Secretary of State, a proposed constitutional amendment is presented to the voters at the next regular general election.

Convene – To assemble the legislature or either house thereof. The annual session of the Florida Legislature begins for a period not to exceed 60 days on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March

E

Effective date – The date upon which an act becomes effective. If a date is not specified in the bill, an act takes effect 60 days after the final adjournment of the legislative session at which it was enacted.

Enacting clause – The State Constitution requires that each bill be prefaced by the phrase: “Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida.”

F

Fiscal Year – The period used for budgeting and accounting. In Florida state government, this is the period from July 1 of one calendar year to June 30 of the next calendar year.

Floor – Synonymous with Chamber or “in session.” Floor action suggests consideration by the entire Senate or House rather than committee action.

Florida Statutes – An edited compilation of general laws of the state.

G

Gallery – The seating area on the floor above the Senate or House chamber where the public may observe a house in session.

H

History notes – A note following each section of the Florida Statutes which contains citations to the section and chapter number of the creating act and each subsequent amendatory act as located in the Laws of Florida.

I

Impeachment – The process of considering removal of an office-holder for charges brought against the office-holder. The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, members of the Cabinet, justices of the Supreme Court, and judges may be removed from office by impeachment. The House of Representatives has the sole power to impeach. It may do so by a two-thirds vote of the members voting. The Senate tries all impeachments, with the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court presiding. A two-thirds vote of the Senate is required to convict. If convicted, the officer is removed from office.

Initiative – An amendment to the State Constitution proposed by a number of electors. An initiative is accomplished by filing with the Secretary of State a petition containing a copy of the amendment proposed which has been signed by a specified number of electors.

Instantaner – Latin for *immediately*. A motion to take up an issue immediately.

Interim – The period between the adjournment of a regular session sine die and the convening of the next regular session.

Introducer – (see *Sponsor*)

Introduction – The reading of a bill (including a committee substitute) the first time in a house of the legislature. Publication of the title of the bill in the journal of a house constitutes its first reading in that house.

J

Journal – The official legal record of the proceedings of the Senate or the House of Representatives. Each legislative house publishes a journal for each day of session. The Journal records only the formal action in the legislature and committees. Its contents include titles of bills introduced and considered, a record of members' votes on issues, as well as motions and other business before the legislature.

L

Law – An act becomes a law when the Governor either approves it or fails to sign or veto it within the period specified in the State Constitution. An act can also become a law when a subsequent legislature overrides a veto by the Governor. While the legislature is in session, the constitution allows a 7-day period following presentation of a bill to the Governor within which to sign or veto the bill. If the legislature adjourns sine die before an act is presented to the Governor or while an act is in the Governor's possession, the Governor has 15 days following the date of presentation in which to take action.

Laws of Florida – A verbatim publication of the general and special laws enacted by the Florida Legislature in a given year and published each year following the regular session of the legislature. It presents the laws in the order in which they are numbered by the Secretary of State, as well as resolutions and memorials passed by the legislature.

Legislature – Florida's bicameral legislature, composed of the 40-member Senate and the 120-member House of Representatives. Each house is the sole judge of the qualifications and elections of its members and has the power to choose its own officers and establish its own rules of procedure. Either house may initiate legislation on any subject. Senators serve 4-year, staggered terms and representatives serve 2-year terms.

Lobbyist – One who encourages, directly or indirectly, the passage, defeat, or modification of any legislation.

M

Message – Communication by one house to the other house concerning action taken on a bill. Each bill, and any amendments to it, is transmitted from one house to the other accompanied by a document (Message) that states the action taken on the bill.

Motion – A formal request made by a legislator on the floor or in a committee meeting to take some procedural action. The rules of each house determine the importance of a motion, whether it may be debated, and the vote required for adoption of the motion.

O

One-subject rule – The constitutional requirement, imposed by section 6 of Article III of the State Constitution, that every law shall embrace but one subject and matter properly connected therewith.

Open meetings – Section 4(e) of Article III of the State Constitution provides that specified legislative meetings shall be open and noticed to the public. All legislative sessions are open to the public except executive sessions of the Senate.

P

President of the Senate – The presiding officer of the Senate, having been designated by the majority party in caucus and then elected by the full membership of the Senate for a term of two years at the organization session.

President Pro Tempore of the Senate – A senator who is chosen by the President and elected by the full membership of the Senate for a term of two years at the organization session.

Proclamation – The proclamation issued by the Governor or the Senate President and House Speaker jointly to call the Florida Legislature into a special session. It states the reason for the session, the issues to be addressed during the session, and the length of the session. Also referred to as "the Call."

Proviso – In a general appropriations bill, language used to qualify or restrict a specific appropriation.

Public Review Period – A 72-hour public-review period required by the State Constitution before final passage of general appropriations bills as well as a bill increasing state revenues.

Q

Quorum call – A call made by the presiding officer to establish the presence of a majority for the lawful transacting of business.

R

Ratification – The act approving an amendment to the United States Constitution.

Reading – Each bill or proposed constitutional amendment must receive three readings on three separate days in each legislative house before it can be passed (unless waived by a two-thirds vote of the members for readings on the same day). These readings are:

- **First Reading** – The bill is introduced and its title is published in the journal; sometimes first reading takes place during a chamber session.
- **Second Reading** – After favorable reports by all committees of reference, the bill is available for placement on the calendar. When it is considered on the floor, it is read a second time. Debate occurs and amendments may be considered. If amendments are adopted, the bill is engrossed.
- **Third Reading** – Debate on final passage occurs; a two-thirds vote is required to amend at this stage.

Roll call – The calling of names of members of the Senate or the House, either to determine the presence of a quorum or to act upon a matter before that house. In the chamber, the roll is recorded by an electronic voting machine.

Rules – Each house determines its own process for conducting its business and adopts rules at the beginning of each legislative term.

S

Secretary of the Senate – The officer specified in section 2 of Article III of the State Constitution and elected by the Senate to serve at its pleasure who is responsible for assisting the officers, members, and staff of the Senate in the detailed processes by which laws are enacted.

Sergeant at Arms – The person charged with enforcing the directions of the President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Sergeant's office is responsible for the security of the respective legislative body and maintenance of property of that house.

Session – The term is used to refer both to a particular day's meeting of the Senate or the House and to the entire period for which the legislature has been convened. Types of sessions include:

- **Executive Session** – Section 4(b) of Article III of the State Constitution provides that the Senate may resolve itself into executive (closed) session for the sole purpose of considering a person's appointment to office or removal or suspension from office.
- **Extended Session** – A regular or special session that has been prolonged beyond its allocated time in order to complete action on introduced legislation. Extension requires a three-fifths vote by members of each house. Additional business may be considered only by a two-thirds vote of the membership of each house.
- **Joint Session** – The annual session held the first day of the regular session in the House chamber and attended by members of both houses, the Governor, the Cabinet, members of the Supreme Court, and invited guests. The purpose of this session is for the Governor to inform the legislature concerning the condition of the state, propose such reorganization of the executive department as will promote efficiency and economy, and recommend measures in the public interest. Joint sessions are also held on other occasions.
- **Organization Session** – Section 3(a) of Article III of the State Constitution directs the legislature to convene on the 14th day after the general election, solely for the purpose of organizing. Organizing includes the taking of the oath by members, the election of officers, the appointment of committees, and the adoption of the rules.
- **Regular Session** – This is the name given to the annual session that begins on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March each year for a period not to exceed 60 consecutive days.
- **Special Session** – Special sessions may be called by Proclamation of the Governor or by Joint Proclamation of the Senate President and the House Speaker for the purpose of considering specific legislation, and shall not exceed 20 consecutive days unless extended by a three-fifths vote of each house.

Sine die – Latin for *without day*. The motion to "adjourn sine die" is the last action of a session of the legislature. Each house may adjourn on its own motion.

Speaker of the House of Representatives – The presiding officer of the House of Representatives, designated by the majority party in caucus and then elected by the body for a term of two years at the organization session.

Speaker Pro Tempore of the House of Representatives – A member of the House of Representatives who is designated by the majority party in caucus and then elected by the body. The Speaker pro tempore presides over the House of Representatives at the request of the Speaker or in the absence of the Speaker.

Sponsor – The legislator who files a bill for introduction or the committee that votes to file the bill for introduction. The sponsor's name appears first on the bill, in the journal, and in any material dealing with the bill. This term is often used interchangeably with *Introducer*. A co-sponsor is a legislator who signs a bill in addition to the sponsor. If a bill becomes a committee substitute, the first-named sponsors and all others then become co-sponsors.

Summary – The brief explanation of the contents of a bill which is prepared by a house's bill drafting office and which appears at the end of each bill filed for introduction.

T

Temporarily postponed – "*Temporarily postponed*," "*temporarily passed*," or "*TP'd*" refer to the postponing of consideration of an bill or other legislative matter that is on the agenda.

Term limits – Section 4 of Article VI of the State Constitution provides that specified elected officials may not seek reelection "if, by the end of the current term of office, the person will have served . . . in that office for eight consecutive years."

V

Veto – Objection by the Governor to an act passed by the legislature, which objection kills the act unless it is reenacted later by a two-thirds vote of both houses.

Veto, Line item – Power of the Governor to selectively veto items in a general appropriations act or any specific appropriation in a substantive act containing an appropriation.

Veto override – Action by the legislature to set aside the Governor's objections to an act. It takes two-thirds of the members voting in each house to override a veto.

Vote – The Constitution requires the recorded yeas and nays on final passage of legislation. Types of votes include:

- **Extraordinary vote** – Certain measures require more than a simple majority vote for passage; thus such measures are said to require an "extraordinary vote." For example, it takes two-thirds of the members voting to override the Governor's veto or to move to waive the readings of a bill on separate days.
- **Favorable vote** – The necessary majority of the legislators in either house vote for the legislative matter before them.
- **Tie vote** – An equal number of legislators in either house vote for and against a bill, amendment, or motion, thereby killing the measure.
- **Unfavorable vote** – An issue fails to receive the necessary number of favorable votes.
- **Voice vote** – An oral vote is allowed on some issues such as motions, amendments, and resolutions. A voice vote cannot be used for passage of bills or joint resolutions.

Vote board – The electronic voting displays located in each chamber which show how legislators are voting on a measure before the body

W

Waive the rules – The process, requiring a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting, of setting aside certain rules in order to take certain action.

Withdraw – To remove a bill, amendment, or other legislative matter from a committee or from further consideration by the body.

Without objection – A phrase used by the presiding officer to indicate that he or she is disposing of a matter without taking a roll call vote of the members, assuming that the action taken is approved unanimously.

COMMON ACRONYMS

CS or C1 - Committee Substitute

CS/CS or C2 - Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute

E - Engrossed Bills

E1 or 1st ENG - First Engrossed

E2 or 2nd ENG - Second Engrossed

ER - Enrolled Bill

F.S. - Florida Statutes

H - House

HB - House Bill

HCR - House Concurrent Resolution (SCR for Senate)

HJR - House Joint Resolution (SJR for Senate)

PCB - Proposed Committee/Council Bill

S- Senate

SB - Senate Bill

TF - Trust Fund

WD - Withdrawn