

GLOSSARY

State legislatures seem to have their own language. It's a vocabulary of words and phrases, abbreviations, chamber talk and corridor clamor in a world of its own. What follows is a listing of many of those elements of legislative speech.

ACT

A bill which has been approved or "enacted" by both houses of the General Assembly and has become a law either with or without the Governor's signature. The acts adopted in each session of the legislature are published annually in bound volumes, called the Session Laws of Colorado. Acts are also compiled, edited and published in Colorado Revised Statutes.

ADHERE

A parliamentary procedure whereby, in response to some conflicting action by the other house, one house votes to stand by its previous action.

ADJOURNMENT

A legislative house either ends its business day by adjourning until a stated time or day or until the time fixed by its rules for reconvening. Neither house may adjourn for longer than 72 hours without the consent of the other. Sine die ("without day") adjournment is the final action of a legislative session.

AMENDMENT

Changes in a bill or other proposed legislation that may be offered either by a committee or an individual legislator in the form of an amendment.

APPORTIONMENT

The act performed immediately following a federal census, of drawing House and Senate district boundaries.

APPROPRIATIONS BILL

A bill authorizing the spending of public money.

BICAMERAL

A legislature with two houses. These houses are identified in Colorado as the Senate and House of Representatives. Only Nebraska has a unicameral (one house) legislature.

BIENNIUM

A two-year period, used to describe the term of a legislature.

BILL

A proposed law to amend or repeal an existing law or create a new law.

BODY

One house of the General Assembly. The term is often used in floor debate to refer to the house where debate is occurring.

CALENDAR

A listing of the bills (and other proposed legislative matters) reported from committees and ready for consideration by the entire membership of the House or Senate. The calendar also lists meetings of committees scheduled for that day or for the next several days. Like the Journal, the calendars are available to the public each day the legislature meets.

CALL OF THE HOUSE OR CALL OF THE SENATE

A motion supported by ten Representatives or five Senators to cause absent members to be compelled to return to the floor of their respective chambers to consider and vote upon important legislative matters. During the call, chamber doors are locked and legislators are not permitted to leave the chambers.

CALL, THE

The proclamation of the Governor or of a two-thirds vote of the members elected to each house convening the General Assembly in special session and stating the necessity for the session. The legislature is restricted to considering only matters pertaining directly to the call.

CARRIED

"Carried" like "adopted", means to consent or accept.

CAUCUS

A caucus is a meeting of members of a political party. Positions, policies, and strategies on pending legislation may be discussed in caucuses.

CHAIR

The chair is a term used to describe the presiding officer. For example, a member inquires, "How did the chair rule on the point of order?" or, responding, "The chair rules the amendment out of order."

CHAMBER

The room in which the Senate or the House of Representatives meets.

CITATION

A specific reference to a section, subsection or paragraph of law or to a portion of a bill.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE

Chief administrative officer of the House of Representatives.

COMMITTEE

A committee is a group delegated to perform specific functions. Legislatures use a number of different committee formats:

A conference committee is appointed by the House Speaker and the Senate President to see what can be done when the houses have agreed in principle but differ in detail on a specific piece of legislation.

When either house meets to debate bills calendared for general orders they are referred to as a committee of the whole.

Joint committees are composed of House and Senate members, or sometimes non-legislators, and generally meet during the period between legislative sessions the interim.

CONCURRENCE

When one house agrees to an amendment adopted by the other house, the action is known as concurrence.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Proposes amendments to the state constitution, or recommends the holding of a constitutional convention, or ratifies proposed amendments to the federal constitution. Concurrent resolutions are treated as bills, except that they do not have the same limits on the time of introduction and rate of dispatch through the legislative process.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Actually two committees, one from each house, meeting together to attempt to work out language acceptable to the Senate and House on some measure upon which agreement could not be reached through committee or floor amendments.

A majority of the members of the committee must agree before the conference committee report may be submitted to the Senate and House. Nether house is obligated to accept the report but usually they do since the alternative could be the failure of the legislation.

CONFIRMATION

The action of the Senate in accepting appointments, typically made by the Governor.

CO-SPONSOR

The legislator introducing a bill is known as the prime sponsor and his name appears first on the bill jacket, on the first page of the bill, and in the journal. Those who "sign on" after third reading with their endorsement of the bill are known as co-sponsors.

C.R.S.

Colorado Revised Statutes, the compilation of Colorado laws.

DEMAND

A seldom used and rarely successful procedure to force a bill out of committee and to the floor of the House or Senate.

DISTRICT

The area from which a Senator or Representative is elected. The boundaries of districts are redrawn in the decennial reapportionments.

DIVISION

A vote, whereby the number of proponents and opponents are counted. It differs from a roll call vote in that a division does not attribute a particular vote to a certain person.

EFFECTIVE DATES

A law generally becomes effective, or binding, either upon a date specified in the law, or in the absence of such date, upon signature of the governor.

ENACTING CLAUSE

The Constitution requires that each law be prefaced by the phrase "Be it Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado." An amendment to strike the enacting clause "kills" a proposed law.

ENGROSSED BILL

When a bill has been amended in the house in which it was first introduced, it is written to show the amendments adopted. This version is known as the engrossed bill.

ENROLLED BILL

After both houses have agreed upon the language of a bill, it is called an enrolled bill. This is then signed by officers of the House and Senate and sent to the Governor for signature.

EX OFFICIO

An officer who serves in one position by virtue of holding another. The person may or may not be a voting member.

FIRST READING

This occurs when a bill is officially introduced into one of the houses of the legislature, read by title by the reading clerk, and noted in the journal.

FISCAL NOTE

A fiscal note states the estimated amount of increase or decrease in revenue or expenditures for the present and future of a bill. Each bill with fiscal implications must have a fiscal note before being acted upon by a committee of reference.

FLOOR, THE

This is synonymous with the House or Senate chamber, as when a Senator or Representative says, "I'm going to the floor." Or, in stating an intention to speak at a floor session, "I'm going to take the floor." A member is declared to have the floor when the presiding officer recognizes him for the purpose of speaking.

GRANDFATHER CLAUSE

A provision in a bill which exempts a person from a proposal's coverage based on the person's present status.

HB

House Bill.

HCR

House Concurrent Resolution.

HEWI

An acronym for the Health, Environment, Welfare, and Institutions Committee.

HJR

House Joint Resolution.

HM

House Memorial.

HOUSEKEEPING BILL

A bill of no significance beyond the codifying or updating of laws eliminating obsolete sections. However, some "housekeeping bills" go beyond a simple cleaning up of the law. As a result, the term, particularly when used to preface an explanation of the bill by a floor sponsor, may cause a close scrutiny of the measure by the sponsor's colleagues.

HR

House Resolution.

INITIATIVE

Procedure used by citizens to originate a change to the law or state constitution.

INTERIM

The period between regular legislative sessions is known as the interim. Committees appointed to study a problem during this period are known as interim committees.

INTERN

A volunteer, often a college student, who assists a legislator during the session.

ITEM VETO

The Governor has the power to selectively veto items in appropriations bills. Usually, this means items in the Long Bill, which is the major funding bill for the operations of state government for a fiscal year.

JOINT RESOLUTIONS

Joint Resolutions pertain to the transaction of the business of both houses, establish investigating committees composed of members of both houses, or express the will or sentiment of both houses on any matter.

JOURNAL

The official record of the proceedings of each house. The House and Senate issue their own on a daily basis during the session. The journals record only highlights of what has happened in the legislature, including the titles of bills introduced, committee actions, and the way members voted on bills after the floor debate. The journal is not a verbatim record.

LAW

The final product of the legislative process. It is the end result of the introduction of a bill, its passage by both houses, and its approval by the Governor (or the overriding by the Legislature of his veto), and its recording by the Secretary of State. A statute is a law after it has been organized, by topic, into the compiled body of laws known as Colorado Revised Statutes.

LEGISLATIVE DAYS

Legislative days are regarded the same as calendar days; each day after the session starts and until adjournment is counted as a legislative day even though the General Assembly may not be meeting on a particular day, such as a Saturday or Sunday.

LINE-ITEM

An item which appears in an appropriations bill on a separate line.

LOBBY

The term derives from the fact that lobbyists usually frequent the areas (lobbies) adjacent to the chambers of the Senate and the House, either seeking to buttonhole legislators as they walk to and from the chambers or await legislative action which might affect their interest. Individual citizens may also "lobby" their legislators on matters of concern to them. The House and Senate require the registration as a lobbyist of persons (except legislators and authorized staff) who seek to encourage the passage, defeat or modification of legislation.

OUT OF ORDER

A departure from parliamentary procedure, or a violation of rules.

PINK BOOK

A pocket sized directory listing names of legislators, their addresses, occupations, and committee assignments. It also lists the names of House and Senate employees.

POINT OF ORDER

An objection raised by a legislator that one of the rules is being or has been violated.

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

A motion to postpone indefinitely (PI) a bill has the same effect as moving to kill a measure.

PRESIDENT

The presiding officer in the Senate. He is designated by the majority party in caucus and then elected by the body for a term of two years. He may be reelected. The President refers bills and other legislation to committees. He presides over the meetings of the Senate, recognizes those members who wish to speak, accepts motions, and signs all legislative acts (passed bills and resolutions), and vouchers for payment from Senate funds.

PRIME SPONSOR

The first legislator to sign a bill for introduction is known as the "prime sponsor." The prime sponsor's name appears first not only on the original bill but on the printed act.

PRINTED BILL

The bill as introduced before any amendments are made to it.

QUORUM

The Constitution requires a majority of the members elected to a house to be present for the transacting of legislative business. Thus, a quorum is a majority. However, a smaller number may adjourn from day to day and compel the attendance of absent members.

RECALL

When a house of the General Assembly seeks return of a bill from the other house or from the Office of the Governor.

RECESS

Recess is the period of time that the General Assembly or either of its houses are not in session after once having been convened. Recess includes stated periods, such as those for lunch, and informal periods, when the members await the presiding officer's call to return. An informal recess may be necessitated by a caucus, or while the House awaits the arrival of the Senate for a joint session.

REENGROSSED BILL

The bill as passed on third reading in the house of introduction and including all amendments adopted by that house. The reengrossed bill is transmitted to the second house.

REVISED BILL

The bill passed on second reading in the second house. It includes any amendments made to the bill on second reading by the second house.

REREVISED BILL

Includes amendments made by the second house on third reading. The rerevised bill is transmitted back to the house of origin for any action that it may have to take on the bill or for enrollment and transmittal to the Governor for his action.

ROLL CALL

The calling of the names of members of the House or Senate or a committee to determine the presence of a quorum or to act upon a matter. In the House the roll is taken by machine.

SECOND READING

The stage where initial floor debate occurs.

SESSION

This term has two meanings. A session may be the daily meeting of the senate or house. It may also be the regular, special, or organization session, meaning the whole period for which the legislature has been called together. Two annual or "regular" sessions make up a General Assembly. Thus the 57th General Assembly included the 1989 regular session and the 1990 regular session.

SESSION LAWS

The Session Laws of Colorado, usually one or two bound volumes are published each year and contain the work product (acts, resolutions and memorials) of that year's session of the General Assembly.

SEVERABILITY CLAUSE

A severability clause provides that should a court declare one portion of a law invalid, it is the stated intention of the General Assembly that the remainder should stand.

SINE DIE

"Sine die" means "without day." Adjournment sine die is the action which concludes a session of the General Assembly. A joint resolution is adopted by the two houses to fix the hour of adjournment sine die.

SJR

Senate Joint Resolution.

SPEAKER

The presiding officer of the House of Representatives. He is designated as speaker by the majority party in caucus and then elected by the full membership of the House for a term of two years. He may be reelected. The Speaker appoints the members of all committees and designates the chairman and vice chairman of each. He assigns bills and other legislation to committees. He presides over the meetings of the house, recognizes those members who wish to speak, accepts motions at his pleasure, and signs all legislative acts and vouchers for payment from house funds. He also designates temporary presiding officers who serve in his absence.

SPECIAL SESSION

A session of both houses, called by the Governor or on its own initiative, where the General Assembly meets to carry out legislative business.

SPONSOR

A bill's sponsor is understood to be the legislator who introduced it, although he may have done so at the request of someone who is not a member of the General Assembly. There is always one House and one Senate sponsor for each bill. The Governor may recommend the passage of a bill, but only a member of the legislature may introduce a bill.

SUNRISE

This describes the legislative procedure for evaluating the requests of organized professional or occupational groups to be regulated by the state of Colorado.

SUNSET

"Sunset" involves the periodic review of state agencies that exercise the state's regulatory authority over occupations. Agencies are terminated by specified dates unless their life is extended by legislative action. See Title 2, Article 3, part 12, C.R.S., 1983.

SUNSHINE

The Colorado sunshine law has three parts: a public official's disclosure provision, a part on the regulation of lobbyists, and an open meetings law. The act was adopted in 1972. See Title 24, Article 6, C.R.S., 1983.

TITLE

The Colorado constitution states that no bill, except general appropriation bills, shall pass containing more than one subject, which must be clearly expressed in its title.

TRIBUTES

Nonlegislative actions which do not require introduction in the House or Senate or discussion or debate by either chamber. Tributes usually take the form of expressing the congratulations, recognition, appreciation, greetings or sentiment of the General Assembly.

VETO

After both houses have passed a bill, and it becomes an act, the Governor has the constitutional right to veto the measure. If he receives the act during a legislative session, the Governor has ten days to make his decision. The vetoed bill, with a statement by the Governor of his objections, is returned to the legislative house in which the bill originated. If readopted by a two-thirds vote of the members present in each house, the act becomes law despite the Governor's objections. If he receives the bill after the legislature has adjourned for the year, the Governor has 30 consecutive days to act.

VETO MESSAGE

The letter the Governor sends to the legislature giving his reasons for rejecting (vetoing) a bill after it has passed the House and Senate.

VOTE

The Colorado constitution requires the recorded yeas and nays of individual members on the final passage of all legislation. A voice vote is sufficient for adoption of amendments and some other matters, although a roll call can be demanded.