



Missouri Foundation
for Health

LINK PROJECT



Missouri General Assembly: Glossary of Legislative Terminology

Adjourn: The act of closing business, done by a committee or the House or Senate. See also *Sine Die*.

Adoption: A preliminary action of the House or Senate or of a committee in considering amendments and substitutes. Amendments are adopted. Committee substitutes are adopted before they are voted do pass by a committee or perfected by the House or Senate. House or Senate substitutes are adopted before they are perfected or third read by the House or Senate. Conference committee reports are adopted before the bill or amendments they recommend are third read. Ordinarily, the final action on a House or Senate resolution is adoption.

Amendment: A modification of a bill or another amendment, offered in committee (a House or Senate committee amendment), on the floor (a House or Senate amendment), or in conference committee (a conference committee amendment). See also *Perfecting Amendment*.

Appropriations Bill: A bill to appropriate state and federal funds to the uses of state government. The first 25 House bill numbers are reserved for appropriations bills each session.

Bill: An enactment of the General Assembly which (1) changes the law either by adding new statutes, repealing old statutes, or modifying current statutes, or (2) appropriates public money. A bill introduced in the House is called a House Bill (HB) and a bill introduced in the Senate is called a Senate Bill (SB). Bills are numbered consecutively upon introduction starting with the first regular session and continuing through the second regular session.

Calendar: The order of business of the House and Senate. The calendar contains bills, resolutions and reports in various stages of consideration.

Caucus: A voluntary organization of members of the House or Senate. Each chamber has partisan caucuses as well as caucuses organized around geographical and interest groups. The partisan caucuses normally meet in closed session.

Chair: The head of a committee or any person presiding over a meeting of a committee or of the House or Senate.

Chief Clerk: An officer of the House, in charge of monitoring House proceedings and maintaining House records.

Committee: A select group of members with a defined scope of responsibility. See *Conference Committee, Interim Committee, Standing Committee, Joint Committee, Special Committee* and *Statutory Committee*.

Companion Bills: Bills introduced in both the House and the Senate in identical form.

Concurrent Resolution: A resolution that is passed by both the House and the Senate. It may originate in either body. If it has the effect of law, it must be handled like a bill. See also *Resolution*.

Conference Committee: A committee made up of five members of each chamber, appointed to resolve differences between the two chambers on a bill or joint resolution passed by both but in a different form.

Confirmation: Approval of an appointment to office by the Governor. The Missouri Constitution gives this power to the state Senate.

Consent Bill: A non-controversial bill which does not cost anything to implement and does not reduce revenues. There are limitations on amending a consent bill.

Constitutional Majority: The Missouri Constitution requires approval by a majority of members elected to the Senate and to the House for a bill to be considered passed. This is 18 members in the Senate and 82 members in the House.

Co-Sponsor: Used in place of "Sponsor" when two or more members of the House or two or more members of the Senate jointly introduce a bill.

Do Pass (Voted or Reported): A bill that is voted "do pass" is approved by a committee. A bill that is reported "do pass" has been returned by the committee to the full House or Senate with this approval. A bill can also be voted and reported "do not pass", indicating disapproval.

Division of the Question: A dividing of any item of business before a committee or the House or Senate into parts, so that separate votes are held on each part.

Drafting Number (LR Number): A unique number assigned to a bill or amendment indicating the drafting source.

Effective Date: The date on which a bill takes effect. If no effective date is specified, the Missouri Constitution makes the effective date ninety days after adjournment of the session in which the bill was passed. (Effective date for bills passed in a regular session is August 28th.)

Election Contest: A challenge by a person declared the loser in an election for the House. Under the Missouri Constitution, the House is the sole judge of its members and decides election contests.

Emergency Clause: A clause on a bill declaring an emergency and making a bill or part of a bill effective sooner than 90 days after the session in which it is passed. It requires a two-thirds vote of each chamber.

Executive Session: A meeting of a committee to conduct business, usually to vote on bills referred to the committee.

Filibuster: A delaying of action by extending debate. It occurs in the Senate, where members have the right to unlimited debate. In the House, a member is limited by rule to fifteen minutes of debate on a bill or amendment.

Filing: A legislator files a bill with the Chief Clerk of the House or Secretary of the Senate.

Fiscal Note: An estimate of the effect a bill will have upon state and local revenues.

Fiscal Year: A twelve month period by which financial planning and accounting is done. The fiscal year for Missouri state government begins July 1 of each year and is referred to by the number of the calendar year in which it ends.

Floor Leaders: Each party selects a floor leader. The majority floor leader controls the order of business of the chamber. The minority leader represents the interests of the minority party. See also *Majority Party* and *Minority Party*.

General Revenue: State revenues which are not designated for a specific use but which may be appropriated for any legal use.

Germane: Pertaining to the subject matter of the item of business being considered. Amendments are required to be germane to the bill to which they are offered.

Grandfather Clause: A provision in a bill which exempts persons or entities from the bill on the basis of their status on a certain date, usually the effective date of the bill.

Handler: The legislator who manages a bill on the floor of the House or Senate. In the chamber of origin, the handler is either the sponsor or, in the case of a committee substitute, a member designated by the chair of the committee from which the committee substitute was reported. In the other chamber, it is the Representative or Senator chosen by the sponsor or, in the case of a committee substitute, a member designated by the chair of the committee from which the committee substitute was reported.

Hearing: A meeting of a committee of the House or Senate to receive testimony from the public on a bill or topic.

Impeachment: An indictment of a statewide elected official or a state judge for crime or misconduct in office. The constitution gives the power of impeachment to the House of Representatives.

Inquiry: A member asking questions of another member in the course of floor debate. A member must consent to being inquired of.

Interim: The period of time between the adjournment of one session of the General Assembly and the convening of the next regular session (June through December).

Interim Committee: A committee established to meet during the interim, usually to consider legislation on a particular topic.

Joint Committee: A committee made up of both members of the House and members of the Senate. These are normally interim or statutory committees.

Joint Resolution: An enactment of the General Assembly that places a proposed amendment to the state constitution before the voters for approval or that approves an amendment to the U. S. constitution. If introduced in the House it is a House Joint Resolution. If introduced in the Senate it is a Senate Joint Resolution.

Joint Rules: Procedural guidelines adopted by the House and the Senate to govern interaction between the two bodies.

Joint Session: A session of both the House and Senate. Joint sessions are held in the House chamber and are normally called to hear the Governor or the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Journal: The record of the proceedings of the House and the Senate.

Line Item: A specific appropriation within an appropriation bill.

Line Item Veto: A veto by the Governor of a line item.

Lobbyist: A person who attempts to influence the legislative process as a part of his or her job or under hire by someone else.

Majority: One more than half of any body. See also *Constitutional Majority*.

Majority Party: The party holding a majority of the seats in the House or the Senate.

Minority Party: A party holding less than a majority of the seats in the House or the Senate.

Perfecting Amendment: In the House, a technical amendment that is offered after a bill has been perfected. A perfecting amendment can also be offered in one chamber on a bill that has been returned to it by the other chamber.

Perfection: The process of considering a bill in which the bill is subject to amendments. At the conclusion of this process, upon a favorable vote, a bill is order perfected and printed, which means that any amendments adopted are incorporated into the printed bill.

Personal Privilege: A right of a member to speak on a matter of personal concern.

Point of Order: A challenge to the procedure that is being followed or to the germaneness of an amendment or substitute.

President: The Lieutenant Governor is the President of the Senate. The only power the President has is to preside over Senate business and over joint sessions and to vote in case of a tie.

President Pro Tem: The leader of the Senate, elected by the Senate. The full title was originally President Pro Tempore, which means Temporary President.

Previous Question: A motion to end debate on the matter before the chamber.

Privileged Motion: A motion that takes precedence over other motions and must be acted upon when offered.

Quorum: The number of members required for a body to do business. The rules of each chamber set this number for committees. The state constitution requires a majority of members to be present for the House and the Senate to conduct business.

RSMo: Abbreviation for Revised Statues of Missouri, the codification of Missouri laws.

Reading: A term used to indicate a step in the legislative process. First reading occurs when a bill is introduced, second reading when it is referred to committee and third reading when it is approved by a constitutional majority of a chamber.

Reconciliation: Bills must pass the House and Senate in the exact same form. This is the process by which differences in the House and Senate version of the bill are reconciled. This is done either through one chamber's concession or a conference committee. Both chambers must vote on the product of a conference committee.

Reconsider: A motion to reopen a question that has been previously decided.

Referendum: A vote of the people upon a law already enacted by the General Assembly or upon a proposal to change the law.

Referral to Committee: The Missouri Constitution requires that every bill be referred to committee. In the House, the Speaker and, in the Senate, the President Pro Tem make the referrals. Once a committee has a bill referred to it, it may hold a hearing on the bill and recommend the bill to the full chamber with amendments or a substitute.

Resolution: An act of the House or Senate or of both together that ordinarily has no effect of law. It may (1) commend an achievement, expresses an opinion, (2) urge another entity – such as the U.S. Congress – to take some action, or (3) take some internal action – such as establishing a committee. See also *Concurrent Resolution* and *Joint Resolution*.

Roll Call: The taking of votes by individual member either in committee or in the full chamber. In the House chamber, roll calls are conducted by electronic means. In the Senate, they are done by orally polling senators one at a time. The Missouri Constitution requires the House and the Senate to take a roll call vote ("a vote by yeas and nays") on final passage of a bill, on adoption of conference reports, and on concurrence in amendments by the other chamber, but grants any five members the right to have a roll call on any question (Mo. constitution Article III, Sections 26 and 27). House and Senate roll calls are recorded in the House and the Senate. Committee roll calls are recorded in minute books kept by each committee and filed in the Missouri State Archives at the end of each year.

Rules: The procedural guidelines adopted by the House for its business and the Senate for its business.

Secretary of the Senate: An officer of the Senate who monitors Senate floor proceedings and maintains the records of the Senate.

Session: That part of the year when the General Assembly may meet to conduct business. The regular session is January through May. The session in odd-numbered years is called the first regular session; that in even-numbered years is called the second regular session. See also *Special Session* and *Veto Session*.

Sine Die: The final adjournment of a session of the General Assembly, literally, without day. For a regular session, this must occur no later than May 30th.

Speaker: The presiding officer of the House and normally leader of the majority party of the House. The Speaker is elected by the House.

Speaker Pro Tem: An officer of the House who presides in the absence of the Speaker. The full title was originally Speaker Pro Tempore which means Temporary Speaker.

Special Committee: In the House, a committee established by the Speaker.

Special Session: A session of the General Assembly called by the Governor or by two-thirds of the members of the House and Senate to consider specific business.

Sponsor: The member of the House or the member of the Senate who introduces a bill. The sponsor is sometimes called the author. See also *Co-sponsor*.

Standing Committee: A committee established by the Rules.

Statutory Committee: A committee established by law.

Substitute: A replacement for the item of business under consideration. There are substitute amendments and substitute bills. If a substitute bill is offered by a committee it is called a committee substitute. If a substitute is offered when the bill is being perfected, it is called a House Substitute or a Senate Substitute. If it is offered by a conference committee it is called a Conference Committee Substitute.

Testify/Testimony: See *How to Testify Before a Legislative Committee* packet.

Title: A part of a bill which gives notice of the subject of the bill and the sections of current law that will be affected by the bill.

Truly Agreed and Finally Passed (TAFP): The chamber must pass identical forms of the bill for it to be TAFP. This is the final action on the bill, sending it to the Governor or Missouri voters.

Veto: The rejection by the Governor of an act of the General Assembly.

Veto Session: A session of the General Assembly to consider overriding vetoes of the Governor. If any bill is vetoed late in or after the end of a regular session, a veto session is held starting on the Wednesday following the second Monday in September. A person who attempts to influence the legislative process as a part of his or her job or under hire by someone else.