

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

A Citizen's Guide to Participation



The Impact of Laws on Your Life

Laws passed by the Legislature affect your daily life in significant ways, such as:

- The taxes you pay.
- The number of students in your child's classroom.
- Penalties for actions like drunk driving.

Why Your Voice Matters

You have unique knowledge and experiences that can help your legislator make informed decisions. For example:

- **Nurses** understand the consequences of turning patients away from emergency rooms.
- **Police officers** ensure public safety
- **Parents of developmentally disabled children** see what the lack of services can cause on their children in need.

Your perspective is valuable. Sharing it can make a difference.

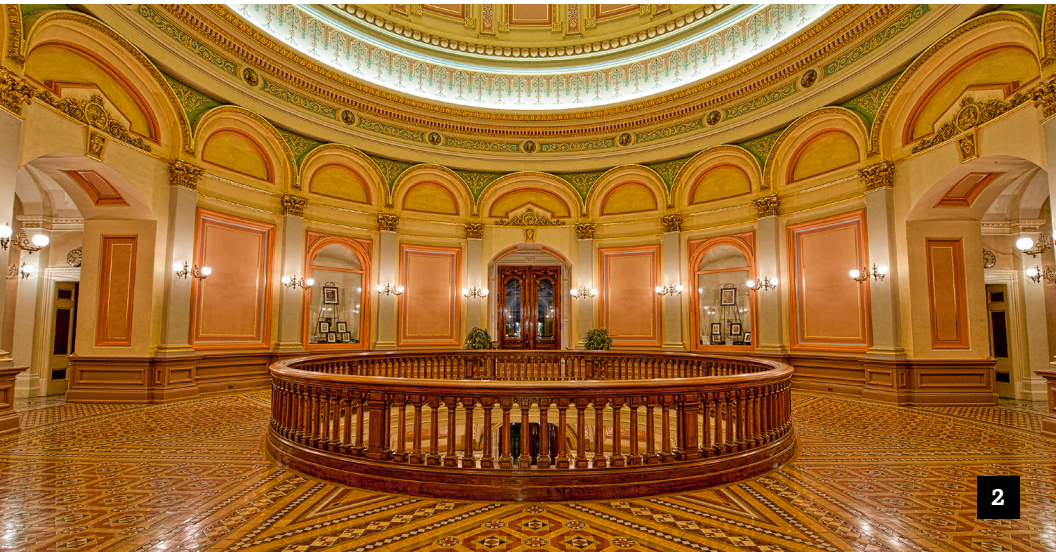
How to Work the Legislative Process

1 Get Involved

- **Build Relationships**:
  - Get to know your legislator and their staff.
  - Establishing a relationship increases the impact of your communication.
- **Do Your Homework**:
  - Understand the problem and propose a solution.
  - Research current laws, recent legislation, and who supports or opposes it.
- **Collaborate**:
  - Find others who share your goals and establish a unified position.
  - Avoid debating details during meetings (e.g., class size debates of 22 vs. 28 students).

2 Understand Your Opposition

- Recognize that not everyone shares your perspective.
- Learn about opposing viewpoints to prepare for compromises or counterarguments.
- Be open to negotiation — it's often necessary to reach a middle ground for your bill to move forward.



How to Communicate Your Position

1 Make Your Voice Heard

- Call your legislator's office.
- Write a letter or send an email.
- Meet with your legislator or their staff.
- Many legislators use social media to share legislative updates and connect with constituents. Look for your legislator's official accounts and use them to stay informed or engage in discussions.

2 Writing or Emailing Guidelines

- **Address your letter properly**: use "The Honorable" followed by their name. Use this format to email a specific senator: SENATOR.LASTNAME@SENATE.CA.GOV
- **Stay focused**: write about one subject only.
- **Be concise**: keep your letter brief and clear to maximize its impact.
- **Use your own words**: share your expertise and explain the specific impact of the issue on your community or life.

By following these steps, you can effectively influence the legislative process and help shape laws that matter to you and your community.

Sample Letter Guidelines

Here's how to write an effective letter to your legislator:

1. **Write Clearly**: Your letter does not need to be typed, but it should be neat and easy to read.
2. **Be Respectful**: A courteous tone is key. Avoid using threats or hostile language, as it discourages productive dialogue.
3. **Send It on Time**: Timing matters. Even the best-written letter won't make an impact if it arrives after your legislator has already voted on the bill.

By following these steps, your communication will be more impactful and increase the likelihood of being heard.

April 4, 2025

Honorable Joe Smith, Chair
Senate Education Committee
1021 O Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Smith:

I am writing to ask you to vote in support of SB 194 by Senator DoGood.

SB 194 would provide programs for low-income neighborhoods to establish community gardens. This would help families like mine grow and eat healthier foods, and it would help families become more self-sufficient and save money.

Many low-income neighborhoods have limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Without a farmers market nearby, people have to purchase from the local grocery at a higher price.

Please support SB 194. Please keep me informed on this.

Sincerely,

Susan Doe
143 City Street
Small Town, CA 00000

How to Visit Your Legislator and Gain Support

1 Before Your Visit

- **Be Prepared:** Review all relevant information about your issue so you can speak confidently.
- **Be Punctual:** Arrive on time and stick to your scheduled appointment. Staying longer than allotted may make it harder to secure future meetings.

2 During Your Visit

- **Focus on Persuasion:**
  - Stay calm and avoid arguments. The goal is to help your legislator understand your perspective, not to create conflict.
- **Create Talking Points:**
  - Bring up two topics of importance to you.
  - It is ok to not know the answer to questions.
- **Make a Direct Request:**
  - Ask for your legislator's support on the issue.
- **Provide Written Materials:**
  - Leave behind a clear, concise position paper summarizing your points.
- **Ask for Guidance:**
  - Request advice on how to proceed with your advocacy efforts.

3 After Your Visit

- **Build a Network of Support:**
  - Your legislator has one vote, so encourage others in your community to contact their representatives.
- **Engage the Public:**
  - Write a letter to your local newspaper.
  - Speak on a local radio or TV talk show.
  - Host a workshop to inform others and rally support.

By following these steps, you can effectively advocate for your cause and create broader support for the changes you want to see.

Testifying at a Hearing

If you plan to testify on behalf of a bill:

1. **Notify the Author:** Let the bill's author know in advance that you intend to testify.

2. **Prepare in Advance:**
   - Draft clear and concise remarks.
   - Be specific and to the point.
   - Be ready to answer questions.
   - It is OK if you don't know the answer

3. **Be Flexible:** Hearing schedules can change.

4. **Be Respectful:** Politeness goes a long way in making your points heard.

After the Committee Hearing

1. **Next Steps for the Bill:**
   - If the bill passes the committee, it moves to the full house for debate and a vote.
   - Floor sessions are open to the public, but only legislators can participate in the debate.

2. **Opposition in the Second House:**
   - After passing one house, the bill moves to the other house, where opposition may arise.

3. **Governor's Signature:**
   - Once both houses approve the bill, it goes to the Governor.
   - Express your position to the Governor by calling, writing, or emailing.

By participating in committee hearings and effectively communicating your position, you can influence the legislative process and ensure your voice is heard.

Sample Bill

Date bill last amended.

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 6, 2025
AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 11, 2025

Bill Number

SENATE BILL No. 971

Principal Author. If there are coauthors, their names would follow in alphabetical order.

Introduced by Senator Mark Johnsworth

Date bill introduced.

March 3, 2025

Descriptive title of the bill.

An act to add Section 58889.1 to the Food and Agricultural Code, relating to agricultural marketing.

Indicates which code section the bill is amending or adding.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

Legislative Counsel summary of the bill.

SB 971, as amended, Johnsworth. California Marketing Act of 1937.

Existing law permits marketing orders, issued under the California Marketing Act of 1937, to contain provisions for the establishment of prescribed plans for research, advertising, and sales promotion of various agricultural commodities. With specified exceptions, plans to promote the sale of a commodity may not make reference to any private brand or trade name used by a handler of the commodity.

This bill would permit a fruits, nuts or vegetables marketing order sales promotion plan to contain provisions to allocate funds to a handler to promote its private ~~brand~~ *brands* or trade ~~name~~ *names*.

Strikeout indicates words being deleted; italicized wording indicates new portions of bill.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

Simple majority vote bill, must be heard in fiscal committee.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

Enacting clause.

SECTION 1. Section 58889.1 is added to the Food and Agricultural Code, to read:

Actual language that will be codified.

58889.1 Notwithstanding Section 58889, any marketing order

Committee Hearings: How to Support or Oppose a Bill

Supporting or opposing a bill often involvings telephoning, writing, or visiting your legislator or their staff. To further assist in the legislative process, consider attending committee hearings and testifying for or against the bill.

1 Identify the Policy Committee

- Ask your legislator which policy committee has been assigned to review your bill.

2 Review the Committee Analysis

- A committee consultant prepares an analysis of the bill, which includes:
  - Current law.
  - What the bill proposes to do.
  - Background information.
  - Key questions and concerns.
  - A summary of support and opposition.

Committee members rely on these analyses to understand the bill's implications, so submitting a letter of support to the committee can be impactful.

3 Track Hearing Schedules

- Find out when your bill will be heard by:
  - Checking with your legislator or the author's office.
  - Contacting the committee secretary.
  - Referring to the Daily File, available on the Senate website at SENATE.CA.GOV.

4 Understanding the Hearing Process

- The timing of when your bill is heard during a hearing can depend on:
  - The length of the agenda (longer as deadlines approach).
  - Whether committee members present their bills first.
  - The need for extended debate on controversial bills.
- Bills may be rescheduled or carrier over if time runs out.

How a Bill Becomes a Law

1 Idea Phase

- Every bill starts as an idea, which can come from anyone. To proceed, the idea must persuade a Senator or Assembly Member to author the bill.

2 Drafting and Introduction

- The legislator sends the idea to the Legislative Counsel, where it is drafted into a formal bill. Once completed, the bill is introduced, a process called "putting the bill across the Desk."

3 First Reading

- During the first reading, the bill's number, author, and title are read aloud. It is then sent to the Office of State Publishing and must be printed for three days before action can be taken.

4 Committee Hearings

- The bill is assigned to the appropriate policy committee for its first hearing.
- The committee consultant analyzes the bill, including background information, current law, and raised questions.
- Supporters and opponents testify, and the committee votes to:
  - Pass the bill.
  - Amend and pass it.
  - Amend and re-refer it.
  - Defeat it.
- Bills involving funding must also be reviewed by the Senate or Assembly Appropriations Committee.

5 Second and Third Readings

- After passing the committee, the bill is read a second time and placed on the Second Reading File.
- The third reading includes a full explanation by the author, a debate, and a roll call vote by the full house.
  - Bills requiring funding or urgent measures need a two-thirds vote: 27 votes in the Senate and 54 in the Assembly.
  - All other bills require a simple majority: 21 votes in the Senate and 41 in the Assembly.

6 Repeat the Process in the Other House

- Once passed in the first house (Senate or Assembly), the bill moves to the second house where the process is repeated.

7 Resolution of Differences

- If amended in the second house, the bill must return to the house of origin for agreement.
- If no agreement is reached, the bill goes to a conference committee (three members from each house) to resolve differences.
- If a compromise is reached, both houses vote on the final version.

8 Governor's Action

- Once passed by both houses, the bill is sent to the Governor, who has three options:
  - Sign the bill into law.
  - Allow it to become law without a signature.
  - Veto it (a veto can be overridden by a two-thirds vote in both houses).
- Most bills become effective on January 1 of the following year, except for urgency measures, which take effect immediately upon the Governor's signature.

All committee hearings are open to the public.



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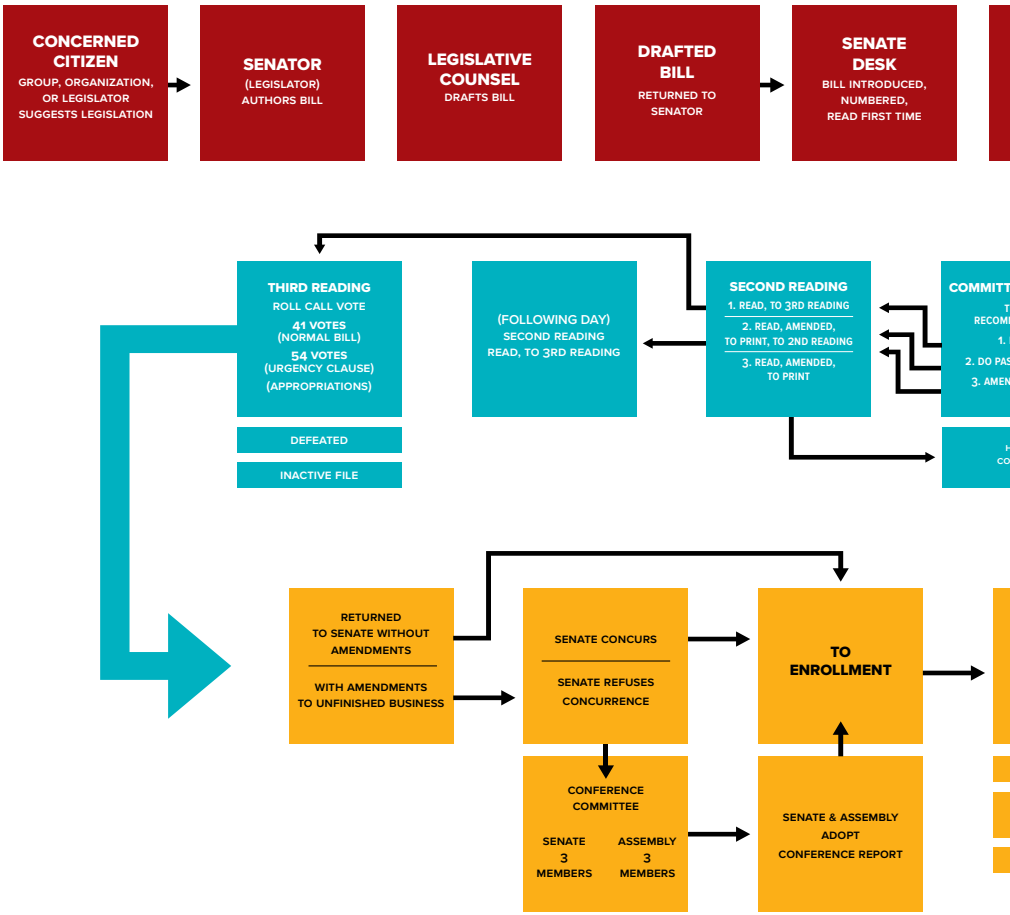

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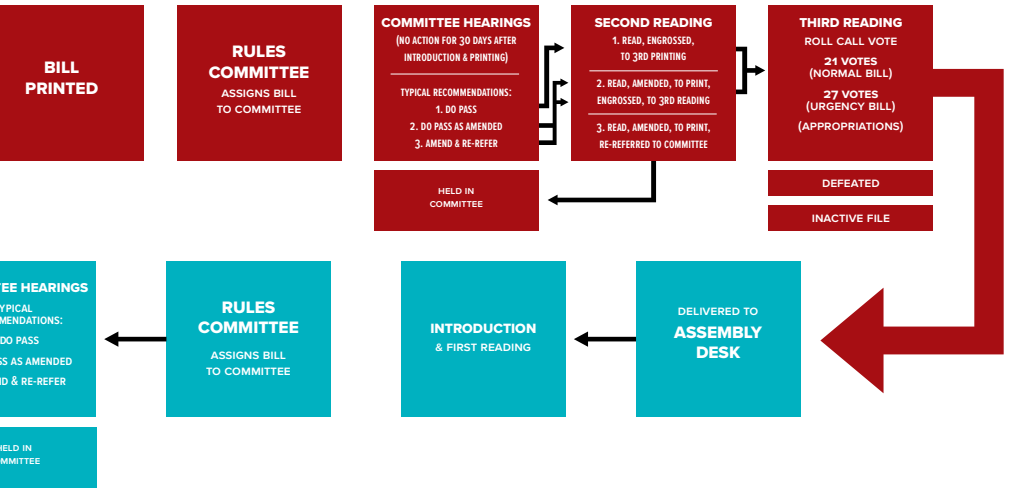

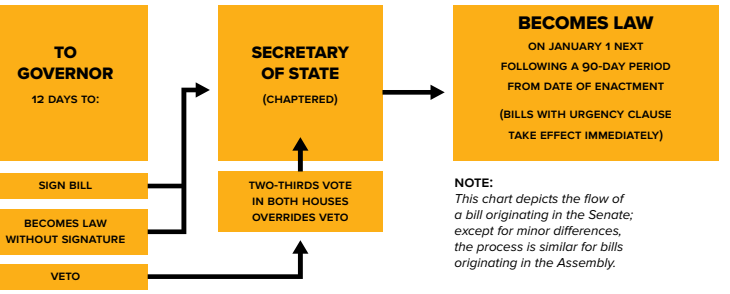

NOTE:
This chart depicts the flow of a bill originating in the Senate; except for minor differences, the process is similar for bills originating in the Assembly.

Access to Information and Legislative Process Overview

Understanding how to access information and navigate the legislative process is crucial for effective civic participation. Here's a breakdown of key resources and how legislation progresses through the California Legislature.

Access to Information

Your legislator's office is an excellent resource for learning about legislation and government actions. They can provide:

- Copies of current and past bills.
- Analyses of bills.
- Updates on the status of a bill in the legislative process.
- Legislative deadlines for the current session.
- Voting records from committees and floor sessions.
- Veto messages from the Governor.
- Information on your legislator's biography and items in the state budget.

Online Resources: If you prefer online access, the following websites provide all this information:

- California Legislative Information: **LEGINFO.LEGISLATURE.CA.GOV**
- California State Senate: **WWW.SENATE.CA.GOV**
- California State Assembly: **WWW.ASSEMBLY.CA.GOV**

Legislative floor sessions and committee hearings are available for viewing and listening on the Senate website live and from the media archives.



Sample Committee Analysis

The analysis includes current law, what the bill does, background information and raises any questions the consultant may have about the bill.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Jane Doe, Chair
2025-2026 Regular Session

BILL NO: SB 1222
AUTHOR: Smith
INTRODUCED: February 20, 2025
FISCAL COMM: Yes HEARING DATE: March 26, 2025
URGENCY: No CONSULTANT: Mary Jones

SUBJECT: After-school programs.

SUMMARY
This bill establishes new minimum grants and requires grantees to report evidence of quality improvement, and to submit social, behavioral, or skill development outcomes.

BACKGROUND
State-funded after-school programs
Current law establishes the After-School Education Program consisting of before and after school academic enrichment. Each school that establishes a program is eligible to receive a 3-year grant.

STAFF COMMENTS
1) Minimum grant. This bill establishes a new minimum grant amount to assist small programs with low attendance to generate funding sufficient to operate.

SUPPORT
After School Coalition
Alameda County Superintendent of Schools
Boys & Girls Club of North San Mateo County
California Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs
California Library Association

OPPOSITION
None on file.

Glossary of Legislative Terms

The following ABBREVIATIONS are commonly used by the California Legislature:

AB Assembly Bill
SB Senate Bill
ACA Assembly Constitutional Amendment
SCA Senate Constitutional Amendment
AJR Assembly Joint Resolution
SJR Senate Joint Resolution
ACR Assembly Concurrent Resolution
SCR Senate Concurrent Resolution
HR House Resolution (Assembly)
SR Senate Resolution

ACROSS THE DESK: official act of introducing a bill or resolution. The measure is given to the Chief Clerk at the Assembly Desk or the Secretary of the Senate at the Senate Desk. It then receives a number and becomes a public document available online or in the bill room.

ADJOURNMENT: a motion to end session for that day, with the hour and day of the next meeting being set prior to adjournment or by rule.

ADJOURNMENT SINE DIE: "Adjournment without day." The final termination of a regular or special legislative session.

ACT: a bill passed by the Legislature.

ADOPTION: approval or acceptance of motions, amendments or resolutions.

ADVISE AND CONSENT: confirmation by the Senate of certain appointees of the Governor.

AMENDMENT: formal proposal to change the language of a bill after it has been introduced.

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

APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR: signature of the Governor on a bill passed by the Legislature.

ASSEMBLY: the lower house of the California Legislature, consisting of 80 Members, elected from districts apportioned on the basis of population, who, under term limits, can serve six two-year terms.

AUTHOR'S AMENDMENTS: submitted by the author of a bill and signed by the chair of the committee to which the bill has been referred. Permits the adoption of amendments by the house without the formality of a committee hearing and recommendation.

BICAMERAL: a legislature consisting of two houses.

BILL: a proposed law introduced in the Assembly or Senate and identified with a number.

BILL ANALYSIS: a document that must be prepared by committee staff prior to hearing the bill in committee. It explains how a bill would change current law and may mention support and opposition from major interest groups.

BUDGET: suggested allocation of state moneys presented annually by the Governor for consideration by the Legislature; compiled by the Department of Finance, in conjunction with directors of state departments.

CALL OF THE HOUSE: directive by the presiding officer, on motion from the Floor, empowering the Sergeant-at-Arms to lock the chamber, and to bring in the absent Members, to vote on a measure under consideration; action on such being suspended until motion to lift call is made, at which time an immediate vote must be taken.

CAUCUS: a group of legislators who formally meet because of their common interest in particular issues. Sometimes called on the basis of party affiliation.

CHAMBER: the Assembly or Senate Chamber where Floor sessions are held.

CHAPTER: after a bill has been signed by the Governor, the Secretary of State assigns the bill a Chapter Number, such as Chapter 1234, Statutes of 2019, which is subsequently used to refer to the measure rather than the bill number.

CHAPTER OUT: provisions of one chaptered bill amends the same code section as another chaptered bill. The bill with the higher chapter number prevails. Chaptering out can be avoided with the adoption of "double jointing" amendments.

COAUTHOR: any Member of either house, with the agreement of the author of a bill, may add their name on that Member's bill as a coauthor, usually indicating support for the proposal.

CODES: bound volumes of law organized by subject matter. The code to be changed by a bill is referred to in the title of the bill.

CONCURRENCE: one house approving a bill as amended in the other house. If the author is unwilling to move the bill as amended by the other house, the author requests nonconcurrence in the bill and asks for the formation of a conference committee.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION: a measure introduced in one house which, if approved, must be sent to the other house for approval. The Governor's signature is not required. These measures usually involve the business of the Legislature.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE: usually composed of three legislators (two from the majority party, one from the minority party) from each house who meet in public session to forge one version of similar Senate and Assembly bills. Assembly conferees are chosen by the Speaker; Senate conferees are chosen by the President pro Tempore of the Senate.

CONFERENCE REPORT: amendments to a bill proposed by the conference committee that reconciles differences in the Assembly and Senate versions of a measure. The report must be approved by both houses.

CONSENT CALENDAR: a group of noncontroversial bills passed by a committee or the full Assembly or Senate on one vote.

CONSTITUENT: citizen residing within the district of a legislator.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT: a resolution affecting the Constitution, adopted by the Legislature or presented by initiative, requiring an affirmative vote of the electorate to become effective.

CONVENE: to assemble, call together a meeting. The Legislature convenes daily, weekly, and at the beginning of a session as provided for by the Constitution.

DAILY FILE: publication produced daily by each house listing their official agendas, including a schedule of committee hearings and bills eligible for floor action.

DAILY JOURNAL: a daily publication produced by each house which contains roll call votes on bills heard in policy committees and bills considered on the Floor and other official action taken by the body. Any official messages from the Governor are also included. A Member may seek approval to publish a letter in the Journal on a specific legislative matter.

DIGEST: a brief statement, by the Legislative Counsel, of the effect of a proposed measure on existing law.

DISTRICT: that division of the State represented by the legislator, distinguished numerically and determined on the basis of population.

DO PASS: the affirmative recommendation made by a committee in sending a bill to the Floor for final vote.

DO PASS AS AMENDED: passage recommended providing certain changes are made.

DOUBLE JOINTING: technical amendments that will prevent the amended bill from "Chaptering Out" the provisions of another bill.

DOUBLE REFER: legislation recommended for referral to two policy committees rather than one for hearing.

ENACTING CLAUSE: by statutory provision, each proposed law must be preceded by the phrase "The People of the State of California do enact as follows."

ENGROSSMENT: comparison of printed bill to assure that amendments are properly inserted. The official proofreading which follows Second Reading and/or the adoption of any amendments.

ENROLLED BILL: whenever a bill passes both houses of the Legislature, it is ordered enrolled. In enrollment, the bill is proofread for accuracy. The enrolled bill contains the signatures of the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the Assembly certifying the bill's authenticity. Upon certification, the bill is delivered to the Governor.

EX OFFICIO: (lit., out of or because of one's office) the holding of a particular office by reason of holding another; for example, the Lieutenant Governor is an ex officio member of the University of California Board of Regents.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: a committee meeting restricted to only committee members and specifically invited guests.

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 bill number (i.e., 28x); they take effect 91 days after adjournment of the special session if signed by the Governor.

FILE: daily printed program or agenda of business before the house and its committees.

FINAL HISTORY: final compilation of the Senate and Assembly Histories showing final disposition of all measures, together with tables, indexes and other information.

FIRST READING: each bill introduced must be read three times before the final passage. The First Reading of a bill occurs when the measure is introduced.

FISCAL COMMITTEE: the Appropriations Committee in the Senate and Assembly to which all fiscal bills are referred if they are approved by policy committees. If the fiscal committee approves a bill, it then moves to the Floor.

FLOOR: the Assembly or Senate Chambers.

FLOOR MANAGER: the legislators responsible for taking up a measure on the Floor. This is always the bill's author in the house of origin and a Member of the other house designated by the author when the bill is considered by the other house. The name of the Floor manager in the other house appears in parenthesis after the author's name in the Second or Third Reading section of the Daily File.

FLOOR PASS: no visitor may observe the respective houses from the rear of the Chambers without a pass. Senate passes are issued by the President pro Tempore's office; Assembly passes are issued by the Speaker's office. Passes are not required for the viewing area in the gallery above the Chambers.

GALLERY: balconies of the Chambers from which visitors may view proceedings of the Legislature.

GERMANE: this question refers to whether a proposed amendment is relevant to the subject matter already being considered in a bill.

HEARING: a committee meeting convened for the purpose of gathering information on a specific subject or considering specific legislative measures.

HIJACK: an action to take over a bill and insert a new author and new provisions.

HISTORY: a publication that gives a comprehensive list of all actions taken on every bill. It is published in volumes, weekly, by each house.

HOUSE: legislative body, either the Senate or Assembly in California; not limited solely, as in Washington, DC, to the lower house.

HOUSE RESOLUTION: a document that is the expression of one house. House resolutions are generally used to amend house rules or to create committees.

INACTIVE FILE: the portion of the Daily File containing legislation that is ready for Floor consideration, but, for a variety of reasons, is dormant. Any author may move a bill to the Inactive File and subsequently move it off the Inactive File at a later date.

INITIATIVE: a method of legislating that requires a vote of the people instead of a vote of the Legislature for a measure to become law. In order to qualify for a statewide ballot, statutory initiatives and constitutional amendment initiatives must be signed by a specified number of registered voters. For exact figures, visit the Secretary of State's website at WWW.SOS.CA.GOV.

INTERIM: the period of time between the end of the first legislative year and the beginning of the second legislative year. The legislative year ends on August 31 in even-numbered years and the middle of September in odd-numbered years.

INVOKE THE CONSTITUTION: an action taken only in cases of emergency, requiring a $^{2}/_{3}$ vote of the house, whereby the requirement of reading a bill on three separate days is temporarily dispensed with in relation to a specific measure.

ITEM VETO: the Governor's refusal to approve a portion or item of a bill; however, the remainder of the bill is approved.

JOINT RESOLUTION: expresses an opinion about an issue pertaining to the federal government; forwarded to Congress for its information. Requires the approval of both Assembly and Senate but does not require the signature of the Governor to take effect.

JOINT SESSION: meeting of the Assembly and Senate together, usually in the Assembly Chambers. The purpose is to receive special information such as the Governor's State of the State address.

JOURNAL: official chronological record of the proceedings of the respective houses, printed daily in pamphlet form, certified, indexed and bound at the close of each session.

LAW: the rules adopted by formal governmental action that govern our lives in various respects.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE: an individual engaged to present the views of a group or organization to legislators, and required by law to register with and be certified by the Secretary of State. Commonly called lobbyist.

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST: Legislature's independent fiscal advisor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL: selected and appointed jointly by both houses. The Legislative Counsel directs the drafting of proposed legislation and acts as the Legislature's lawyer.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST: the digest is a brief summary of the changes the proposed bill would make to current law. The digest is found on the front of each printed bill.

LIS (Legislative Information System): LIS is maintained by the Legislative Data Center under the direction of the Legislative Counsel. It is a database which contains information such as bill status, bill text, bill analyses, votes and other useful information for bill tracking.

LOWER HOUSE: the Assembly.

MOTION: a formal proposal offered by a Member while the house is in session, usually presented orally, that a certain action be taken or determination be made.

MOTION TO RECONSIDER: a parliamentary procedure which, if adopted, places the question in the same status it had been prior to the vote on the question.

OFFICERS: that portion of the legislative staff elected by the Membership at the beginning of a session. In the Assembly, the Speaker, Speaker pro Tempore, Chief Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms; in the Senate, the President pro Tempore, the Secretary of the Senate and the Sergeant-at-Arms.

ON FILE: a bill on the Second or Third Reading file of the Assembly or Senate Daily File.

PASSAGE: favorable action on a measure before either house.

POINT OF ORDER: motion calling attention to a possible breach of order or of rules.

POLICY COMMITTEE: each house of the Legislature has a number of committees referred to as "policy" committees. As bills are introduced in each house, the Rules Committee assigns each to a policy committee. The policy committee sets up public hearings on the bills, conducts hearings and following such testimony, votes on whether or not to recommend passage of the bill to the Floor of the respective house.

POSTPONE: motion to delay action on matters before the house.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE: the State Constitution designates the Lieutenant Governor as President of the Senate. The Lt. Governor presides over the Senate upon invitation and only to cast a deciding vote in the event of a tie. The last time a deciding vote was cast was 1996.

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE: (lit., for the time); elected by the Senate; Chair of Rules Committee; secures efficient disposition of Senate business; has same powers as President in the latter's absence.

PRESIDING: the management of proceedings during session by the Speaker, Speaker pro Tempore, or Member appointed by the Speaker; or by the President, President pro Tempore, or any Senator called to the Chair by the President pro Tempore.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR: permission to view proceedings from the Chamber Floor, rather than the gallery. Request made by a legislator to the presiding officer, on behalf of constituents, relatives, and guests for such permission.

PUT OVER: when an action is delayed on a legislative measure until a future date without jeopardy to the measure.

QUORUM: number of Members required to be present before business can be transacted in committee or on the Floor. A quorum is half the body plus one; 21 in the Senate and 41 in the Assembly.

REAPPORTIONMENT AND APPORTIONMENT: division of the State into districts from which representatives are elected.

READING : presentation of a bill before either house by reading the title, a stage in the enactment of a measure. A bill, until passed, is either in process of First, Second or Third reading, no matter how many times it has actually been read.

RECONSIDERATION: motion which, when granted, gives rise to another vote annulling or reaffirming an action previously taken.

REFERENDUM: power of voters to reject a measure adopted by the Legislature by collecting enough signatures to place it on the ballot.

RESOLUTION: an opinion expressed by one or both houses which does not have the force of law. Concurrent resolutions 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. Committee roll calls are conducted by the committee secretary who calls each Member's name in alpha order with the Chair's name last. Assembly roll calls are conducted electronically with each Member pushing a button from their assigned seat. Senate roll calls are conducted by the Reading Clerk who reads each Senator's name in alpha order.

RULES: methods of procedure: Joint Rules governing relationship between and affecting matters between the two houses; Standing Rules adopted by each house, for its own governance; usually adopted at the beginning of each session.

SECOND READING: each bill introduced must be read three times before final passage. Second Reading occurs after a bill has been reported from committee or amended.

SECRETARY OF THE SENATE: an officer of the Senate, elected by the Membership to serve as chief parliamentarian and keeper of legislative records, responsible for the accurate drafting of bills and their preparation for presentation to the Governor. Manages ministerial tasks to ensure the orderly conduct of the business before the Senate, and retention of legislative records for public use. Serves as the Executive Officer of the Senate, in charge of the day-to-day administration of the house. Oversees Rules Committee staff by managing operations, property, fiscal affairs, and human resources, and provide support to Rules Committee Members in processing gubernatorial appointments, assigning bills, and establishing legislative procedures.

SENATE: the upper house of the California Legislature, consisting of 40 Members elected from districts apportioned on the basis of population, one-half of whom are elected or re-elected every two years. Under term limits, Members can serve three four-year terms.

SESSION: period during which the Legislature meets: Regular: the biennial session at which all classes of legislation may be considered; Extraordinary: special session, called by and limited to matters specified by the Governor; Daily: each day's meetings; Joint: meeting of the two houses together.

SINE DIE: adjournment "without day" being set for reconvening. Final adjournment.

SPEAKER: highest ranking Member of the Assembly; elected by all Assembly Members at the beginning of each two-year legislative session.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE: (lit., for the time); substitute presiding officer, taking the chair on request of the Speaker, in their absence; elected by the body at each session.

SPOT BILL: measure introduced without substance, to be used at a later date.

STATUTES: compilation of all enacted bills, chaptered by the Secretary of State in the order in which they became law, and prepared in book form by the Office of State Publishing.

THIRD HOUSE: lobbyists/legislative advocates.

THIRD READING: each bill introduced must be read three times before final passage. Third Reading occurs when the measure is taken up on the Floor of either house for passage.

THIRD READING ANALYSIS: a summary of a measure ready for Floor consideration. Contains most recent amendments and information regarding how Members voted on the measure when it was heard in committees. Senate Floor analyses also list support or opposition information on interest groups and government agencies.

TITLE: a brief paragraph, identifying the subject matter and preceding the contents of a measure.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: that portion of the Daily File that contains measures awaiting Senate or Assembly concurrence in amendments taken in the other house. Also contains measures vetoed by the Governor for a 60 calendar day period after the veto not counting recess. The house where the vetoed bill originated has 60 calendar days to attempt to override.

UNICAMERAL: a legislature consisting of one house.

UPPER HOUSE: the Senate.

URGENCY CLAUSE: a bill which contains an urgency clause takes effect upon the Governor's signature and being chaptered by the Secretary of State. A vote on the urgency clause must precede a vote on the bill and requires a $^2/_3$ vote for passage.

VETO: the Governor's refusal to approve a measure sent by the Legislature.

Item veto: Governor may reduce or eliminate items of appropriation while approving rest of bill. May be overridden.

VOTE: there are four categories of votes: majority, $^2/_3$, $^3/_4$, and $^4/_5$.

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.

$^2/_3$ Vote: a vote of at least $^2/_3$ of the legislative body considering a measure. The full Assembly requires a $^2/_3$ vote of 54 and the full Senate requires 27, based on their memberships of 80 and 40 respectively.

$^3/_4$ Vote: the Constitution requires that a bill may not be heard or acted upon until the 31st day after introduction. This requirement may be dispensed with by 30 votes or more in the Senate and by 60 votes or more in the Assembly.

$^4/_5$ Vote: to amend the Tobacco Tax and Health Restoration Act of 1988 (Prop. 99) required 32 votes or more in the Senate and 64 votes or more in the Assembly.

WHIP: the party officers charged with monitoring Floor activity of Caucus Members.



Senate Standing Committees

COMMITTEE NAME	ROOM	TELEPHONE (916 area code)
Agriculture (1020 N St.)	583	651-1508
Appropriations (Capitol)	412	651-4101
Banking and Financial Institutions (1020 N St.)	522	651-4102
Budget and Fiscal Review (1020 N St.)	502	651-4103
Business, Professions & Economic Dev. (1021 O St.)	3320	651-4104
Education (1021 O St.)	6740	651-4105
Elections and Constitutional Amendments (1020 N St.)	533	651-4106
Emergency Management (1020 N St.)	549	651-1547
Energy, Utilities and Communications (1021 O St.)	3350	651-4107
Environmental Quality (1021 O St.)	3230	651-4108
Governmental Organization (1020 N St.)	584	651-1530
Health (1021 O St.)	3310	651-4111
Housing (1021 O St.)	3330	651-4124
Human Services (1020 N St.)	521	651-1524
Insurance (1020 N St.)	258	651-4110
Judiciary (1021 O St.)	3240	651-4113
Labor, Public Employment & Retirement (1021 O St.)	6740	651-1556
Local Government (Capitol)	407	651-4119
Military and Veterans Affairs (1020 N St.)	251	651-1503
Natural Resources and Water (1021 O St.)	3220	651-4116
Privacy, Digital Technologies, and Consumer Protection (1020 N St.)	568	651-1548
Public Safety (1020 N St.)	545	651-4118
Revenue and Taxation (Capitol)	410	651-4117
Rules (Capitol)	400	651-4120
Transportation (Capitol)	405	651-4121

Additional Resources at senate.ca.gov

SENATOR INFORMATION: Contact details, maps, biographies & legislative activities.

LEGISLATION TRACKING: Access bill texts, status updates, voting history, and more. You can subscribe to email alerts for updates.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION: Membership, staff, schedules, and policy jurisdictions.

PUBLICATIONS: Legislative deadlines, daily files, and historical records.

AUDIO & MEDIA: Listen to live or recorded floor sessions and committee hearings.

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