

P. Glossary

The legislative terminology is adapted from the New Hampshire School Boards Association's *1992 Legislative Handbook and Directory*, the legislative manual of the American Kennel Club, and the *Webster*, the Home Page for New Hampshire state government and agencies and information about NH.

Amendment - an addition or change in a bill. Frequently it is necessary to amend a bill to gain acceptance. Amendments can be proposed at any point in a bill's life until it is approved by the Governor. Amendments can be and sometimes do completely change the focus or effect of a bill. They do not have to be proposed by the bill's sponsor.

Appropriation - an authorization by the legislature for the state treasury to expend monies for a specific purpose as delineated in a bill or statute. Any bill that requires funding to implement its intent is said to require an appropriation.

Biennial Budget - the state's fiscal plan covering a two-year period.

Biennial Legislature - a two-year legislative period

Bill - a proposed law which has been introduced in one or both houses of the legislature. It must survive the entire legislative process and escape the governor's veto before becoming law.

Calendar - a calendar of events published for each day the legislature meets. It will include the date, time and location of committee meetings and hearings on bills plus proposed amendments and listing of bills that will be voted upon on the floor for each day of the session.

Caucus - groups of people, in this case legislators, with common interests (such as party affiliation) which meet regularly to conduct business, including deciding how members will vote on specific bills.

Conference Committee (or committee of conference) - when a bill passes through one house of the legislature in a version different from that which passed the other house a "conference committee" is appointed to arrive at a compromise. Usually the conference committee will consist of an equal number of House and Senate members. Members of this committee are almost always drawn from the legislative committees

that originally heard the bill.

Conference Report - the report of the Committee of Conference shows the version agreed upon by the House and Senate.

Consent Calendar - a calendar of legislative business that is normally comprised of non-controversial measures. A motion to place a bill on the consent calendar requires a unanimous vote by the committee. Bills placed on the consent calendar are acted upon in one all inclusive vote and without debate. Bills may be removed by request of any legislator to be voted upon separately.

Constitutional Amendment Concurrent Resolution - a concurrent resolution which proposes to amend the state constitution. The proposed CACR must pass by a three-fifths vote in both House and Senate before it can be submitted to the voters.

Crossover - the date by which all bills must leave their house of origin to be taken up by the other body.

Division Vote - a method of voting in which members stand and are counted to indicate their vote. The number of votes for and against a motion is recorded but NOT the vote by individual legislator. A division vote is often called for by the Speaker of the House when the result of a voice vote is in doubt.

Drafting - the process whereby an idea becomes a bill. Usually the formal language is written by a legislative assistant to the sponsor or an employee of the Bill Drafting Office.

Executive Session - after a legislative hearing on a bill closes, the committee will meet in "executive session" to debate the merits of the bill and vote on it. Members of the public may attend these sessions, but may not take part in the discussion unless invited to do so.

Final Action - usually refers to the floor action on a bill in which the final vote is taken to pass or kill a bill.

First Reading - the formal reading of a bill by the clerk of a house before consideration by that body for the first time.

Fiscal Note - a fiscal note is a cost estimate attached to a bill to indicate the bill's financial impact to the state, county, city, or town. This note is required by law.

Fiscal Year - an accounting period of 12 months. In New Hampshire the fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30.

Floor (or floor action) - refers to the entire house of the legislature, either the House or the Senate. Bills scheduled for the "floor" or for "floor action" are headed for debate and/or vote by the assembled members of one house of the legislature.

Floor Amendment - a floor amendment is an amendment offered by a Representative, Senator, or legislative committee from the floor of the House or Senate at the time the entire body takes action on a bill.

Governor - the state's highest elected official, the governor has the power to approve or disapprove all bills.

House - refers to the larger house of a "bicameral" (two chamber) legislature. Members are called representatives. When "house" is spelled using the lower case, it refers to either section (i.e. House of Representatives or Senate) of a bicameral legislature.

House Concurrent Resolution - an HCR is a formal expression of the will or opinion of the House and with which the Senate is asked to concur. The HCR often expresses the sense of the General Court on a particular topic.

House Joint Resolution - an HJR is introduced and considered in the same manner as a bill. HJRs will not affect the New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated. If passed by both houses and signed by the Governor, it has the effect of law.

House Resolution - a HR is a formal expression of the will or opinion of the House which is adopted by majority vote. A HR can state an opinion, propose a change in legislative rules, or provide a vote of thanks or censure.

Housekeeping Bill - one that remedies a slight defect in an existing statute. True housekeeping bills are not controversial and therefore should be listed in the consent calendar.

Indefinitely Postponed - this motion kills a bill and does not permit consideration of the bill again in the biennium (first or second year of the session) unless two-thirds of the members vote to do so.

Inexpedient to Legislate - a committee recommendation which if adopted by the House or Senate kills a bill for the session.

Interim Study - a vehicle whereby a bill can be assigned to a standing or special committee for a detailed study between legislative sessions when time pressures are expected to be eased. These committees often include non-legislators invited to serve because they are representative of a group which either has direct expertise or will be directly affected if the bill passes.

Introduction of Bills - bills must be introduced by a member of the legislature serving as the bill's sponsor.

Journal - a printed record of legislative action for each day of the session. The journals are usually available on the next legislative day at the Sergeant-at-Arms' office.

Killed - a bill does not pass.

Law - a rule, act or bill which has been passed by both houses of the legislature and is approved by the governor. It then becomes part of the statute law for the state.

Legislative Committee - a group of senators or representatives who have been assigned to consider proposed bills within one specific subject area such as health and human services.

Legislative Study Committee - a continuing committee comprised of members of the House, Senate and public. It considers proposed bills between regular sessions of the legislature.

Legislature - a representative body of elected officials whose chief functions are the approval or rejection of proposed laws and the approval of the governor's budget.

Lobby/Lobbyist - refers to a group, business or professional association which seeks to influence members of the legislature to vote on certain bills in a manner that coincides with the group's beliefs.

Majority and Minority - a designation based on the relative numbers of either major political party in the legislature. May differ between the House of Representatives and the Senate. The leaders of each group plan strategies, decide tactics for debate on bills, convene caucuses, etc.

Ought to Pass - a recommendation from a committee that a bill should be passed.

Quorum - the number of legislators who must be present in order for a chamber to do business, usually a simple majority.

Reading - the recital of the title of a bill by the clerk as it proceeds through the legislative process. Legislative calendars refer to bills having a first, second and third "reading." No vote to pass or kill a bill can be taken until it has been "read" three times in both the House and the Senate.

Recommit - an action taken by the House or Senate to refer a bill back to committee because the chamber is not ready to consider it in its present form.

Re-Refer - an action taken by the House in the first year of a session to send a bill back to committee for further study. The committee must report the bill out for consideration by the House in the second year of the session.

Resolutions - "concurrent" resolutions may be used to propose an amendment to the state constitution. Resolutions follow the same legislative process as a bill, except that they do not require any action from the governor. "Joint" resolutions require full legislative action and the governor's approval for passage. When passed, joint resolutions have the force of the law, but are normally used for temporary situations, for example, the opinion of the legislature on a current foreign policy matter.

Roll Call Vote - each legislator's individual voice vote is recorded, as opposed to a voice vote of the entire body. Any member may ask for a roll call vote if his or her motion is properly seconded.

Regulations - have the force of law but are not required to go through the legislative process. Governmental agencies having jurisdiction over various areas of law promulgate regulations in accordance with statutory power granted to them by the state. When a change in rules is contemplated, a public hearing will be held to hear testimony which supports or opposes the proposed change. The final decision, as well as enforcement authority, rests with the department head.

RSA (Revised Statutes Annotated) - since 1955, the name of the codified volume of permanent New Hampshire laws.

Rule - a regulation controlling action or procedure of a legislative, administrative or judicial body; or, in the case of a legislature, the rules provide for order and allow for the regular passing of business in a predictable way.

Senate - the smaller (and often more powerful) house of a bicameral legislature. Members are called Senators.

Senate Concurrent Resolution - an SCR is a formal expression of the will or opinion of the Senate and with which the House is asked to concur. The SCR often expresses the sense of the General Court on a particular topic.

Senate Joint Resolution - an SJR is introduced and considered in the same manner as a bill. SJRs will not affect the New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated. If passed by both houses and signed by the Governor, it has the effect of law.

Senate Resolution - an SR is a formal expression of the will or opinion of the Senate which is adopted by majority vote. An SR can state an opinion, propose a change in legislative rules, or provide a vote of thanks or censure.

Session - a convening of the legislature for a specified period of time set by the state's constitution. Special sessions can be called by the governor or by majority vote of the legislators after the regular session has ended.

Sponsor - a member of the legislature who agrees to introduce a bill or a resolution to a legislative chamber for a constituent, agency, or department of government.

Sunset - the term used for legislative review of agencies or programs after the time specified for implementation of a program expires.

Suspension of Rules - a motion requiring a two-thirds vote to remove obstacles to the consideration of a bill or a motion to change the sequence of the legislative process.

Table - a motion to set aside consideration of a bill or measure. It is used to end action on a bill either temporarily, until more support can be mustered, or permanently.

Third Reading - the final passage of a bill, usually accompanied by a motion.

Veto - the return by the governor to the legislature of a bill without his signature.

Without Signature - when the legislature is in session, the Governor has five working days to act on a bill. If the Governor does not sign it or veto it within this time period, the bill shall become law without the Governor's signature. If the legislator has adjourned, and the Governor does not act, the bill does not become law (pocket veto).