



THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

# A Citizen's Guide to Participation



## How the Legislative Process Applies to You

Laws passed by the Legislature have a direct impact on your life. They can affect the taxes you pay, the number of students in your child's classroom, and the penalty for drunk driving.

You are important. You have knowledge that can help your legislator. For instance, as a nurse, you would know what happens to people who are turned away from emergency rooms. As a police officer, you would know the toll taken by gang violence. As the parent of a developmentally disabled child, you would know that your child suffers when services aren't available.

### How to Work the Process

#### Get Involved

Your legislator needs to hear from you.

- 1 Get to know your legislator.** Get to know your legislator's staff. If you establish a relationship with your legislator, your letter or visit will have more impact than if you are a stranger.
- 2 Do your homework.** You will be working with people who are experts. If you are proposing legislation, know what your problem is and how you might resolve it. For example, you may think the penalties for drunk driving are not strong enough. First, learn what the current laws are; identify if related legislation has been introduced recently; and, find out who supports and opposes the legislation.

**3 Find out who supports your issue and meet with others who share your common goal.** Establish a unified position. Don't wait until you are meeting with your Senator to argue, for instance, over whether optimal class size is 22 or 28 students.

**4 Know your opposition.** It's important to keep in mind that not everyone shares the same view. When presenting your argument, allow for other sides to the issue. Your legislator will certainly be hearing from those that oppose your viewpoint. Understanding the opposition can be an effective tool if, or when, compromise is needed.

**5 Be prepared to negotiate.** Negotiation is not a negative word. Understanding other viewpoints and where they come from can help develop counter arguments. A bill rarely becomes law in the same form it was introduced. Sometimes it is better to find the middle ground than to lose your bill.

## Communicate Your Position

If you are concerned about an existing bill or issue, let your legislator know. Call the district office. Write a letter. Send an email. Meet with your legislator, or a member of their staff. You have valuable information that can help your legislator decide how to vote.

Here are some guidelines on how to write or e-mail your legislator:

- **Address your letter properly.**

Elected representatives are addressed as "The Honorable" followed by their name.

- **Write about one subject only.**

- **Be brief and to the point.**

A rambling letter that takes up ten pages and never quite gets to the point will not be as persuasive as one that builds a case.

- **Use your own words.** You are the expert. Explain what the impact will be and why your legislator should vote as you ask.

April 4, 2022

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 Blake.

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

## Sample Letter

- **Write legibly.** Your letter doesn't have to be typed.
- **Be courteous.** Most people, including legislators, don't respond positively to threats.
- **Timing is critical.** The best letter in the world won't have much impact if it arrives after your legislator has already voted on the bill.
- **To send e-mail to a specific senator use the following format:**  
SENATOR.LASTNAME@SENATE.CA.GOV

Many legislators use social media as an additional means of communicating with constituents by posting legislative resources and information. Check to see if your legislator uses any social media platforms to engage in conversation with their constituents.

## Visit Your Legislator

- **Be prepared.** Review the information you have learned about your issue.
- **Be on time for your appointment and stay within your allotted time.**  
If you over-stay your welcome, you may have trouble getting an appointment in the future.

## Ask your Legislator for Their Support

- **Avoid arguments.** Remember, you're trying to get your legislator to see the issue from your perspective. Creating an adversary won't help.
- **If you can't answer a question, say so.** Let your legislator know that you will get the information and get back to them. This gives you an opportunity to contact them again and to reinforce your position. Always be honest – even if you think the truth will hurt you. Half truths and withheld information may come back to haunt you. You have two invaluable things to offer – your expertise and your integrity.
- **Ask your legislator for their support.**
- **Leave a written position paper.**
- **Ask for advice on how to proceed.**

## Gather Support

Your legislator has one vote. Encourage other members of your group throughout the state to contact their legislators.

Encourage people outside your group to get involved. Write a letter to the editor of your newspaper. Get on a local radio or TV talk show. Hold a workshop.

## Committee Hearings

Supporting or opposing a bill usually means phoning, writing and, perhaps, visiting your legislator or their staff. Can you do more to help get your bill through the Legislature? You can attend hearings and testify on the bill.

Ask your legislator which policy committee your bill has been assigned to. The bill will be analyzed by a committee consultant prior to its hearing. (The analysis includes current law, what the bill does, background information and raises any questions the consultant may have about the bill.) Typically the analysis also includes support and opposition to the bill. Send a letter in support of your bill to the committee.

Analyses are important because committee members read them.

All committee hearings are open to the public. To find out when your bill is scheduled to be heard, check with your legislator. You can also get the information from the author's office, the committee secretary or the Daily File. The Daily File is also available on the Senate Web Site – [WWW.SENATE.CA.GOV](http://WWW.SENATE.CA.GOV). On the day of the hearing, the timing of when your bill will be considered can be influenced by several factors:

- The length of the agenda gets longer as deadlines get closer.
- Committee members usually present their bills last.
- All of an author's bills are heard consecutively.
- Some bills are controversial and require a great deal of debate.

**You have valuable information that can help your legislator decide how to vote.**



# 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

2021-2022 Regular Session

BILL NO: SB 1222  
AUTHOR: Smith  
INTRODUCED: February 20, 2022  
FISCAL COMM: Yes  
HEARING DATE: March 26, 2022  
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.

- The author may decide at the last minute to put the bill over to the next meeting.
- The committee may run out of time and put the remaining bills over to the next meeting.

You can participate in the hearing by testifying on behalf of your bill. If you plan to testify, be sure to notify the author.

- Have a flexible schedule.
- Prepare your remarks in advance.
- Be brief, specific and to the point.
- Be prepared to answer questions. If you don't know the answer, say so.
- Be polite.

After a bill passes the appropriate committee(s), it goes to the full house. Floor sessions are open to the public; however, debate is limited to legislators.

The same process is followed in the other house. Opposition is more likely to surface in the second house.

Once a bill has passed both houses, it goes to the Governor for signature. Let the Governor know your position!



## **Access to Information**

Access to information about your legislator as well as pending legislation is readily available from a number of sources. Your legislator's district office is an excellent resource. Not only can they provide you with information, but getting to know the staff will establish a relationship that will make you a valuable resource to your legislator.

Information available from your legislator includes:

- Copy of bills pending or passed by the Legislature
- Analyses of bills
- Bill status in the legislative process
- Legislative deadlines for current two-year legislative sessions
- Record of votes in committee and on the Floor
- Veto message for bills vetoed by the Governor
- Legislator's biography
- Information on items included in the state budget

All of the above information is available on the Internet. If you don't have a personal computer, you can sometimes get free access through universities, colleges and public libraries.

Please visit the following websites:

California Legislative Information ..... [LEGISLATURE.CA.GOV](http://LEGISLATURE.CA.GOV)

California State Senate ..... [SENATE.CA.GOV](http://SENATE.CA.GOV)

California State Assembly ..... [ASSEMBLY.CA.GOV](http://ASSEMBLY.CA.GOV)

## **Idea**

All legislation begins as an idea. Ideas can come from anyone. The process begins when someone persuades a Senator or Assembly Member to author a bill.

## **Author**

A legislator sends the idea and the language for the bill to the Legislative Counsel where it is drafted into the actual bill. The drafted bill is returned to the legislator for introduction. This is called putting the bill “across the Desk.”

## **First Reading**

A bill’s first reading is when the Clerk reads the bill number, the name of the author, and the descriptive title of the bill. The bill is then sent electronically to the Office of State Publishing. A bill must be in print for 30 days before it can be acted on.

## **Committee Hearings**

The bill then goes to the Senate or Assembly Rules Committee where it is assigned to the appropriate policy committee for its first hearing. Bills are assigned according to subject area. During the hearing the author presents the bill, people testify in support or opposition of the bill, and the committee acts on the bill. The committee can pass the bill, pass the bill as amended, amend and re-refer, or defeat the bill. It takes a majority vote of the membership of the committee to pass a bill. Bills which require money must also be heard in fiscal committee, Senate or Assembly Appropriations.

## **Second and Third Reading**

Bills passed by committees are recommendations to the house as a whole. When a committee passes a measure, they are recommending that the body accept the proposal. Upon passage by the committee, the measure is placed on the Second Reading file and is given its second reading. It remains on the Second Reading file for one legislative day and then moves to the Third Reading file. When a bill is read the third time, it is explained by the author, discussed by the Members and voted on by a roll call vote of the full house. Bills which require money, or which take effect immediately, require a two-thirds vote in each house – 27 votes in the Senate and 54 in the Assembly. All other bills require simple majority votes of 21 and 41 respectively.

## **Repeat Process in Other House**

Once the bill has been approved by the house of origin, it proceeds to the other house where the procedure is repeated.



# Sample Bill

Date bill last amended.	AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 6, 2022 AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 11, 2022
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, 2022
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 SB 971, as amended, Johnsworth. California Marketing Act of 1937.
Legislative Counsel summary of the bill.	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.
Strikeout indicates words being deleted; italicized wording indicates new portions of bill.	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 <del>brand</del> <i>brands</i> or trade <del>name</del> <i>names</i> .
Simple majority vote bill, must be heard in fiscal committee.	Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.
Enacting clause.	The people of the State of California do enact as follows:
Actual language that will be codified.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>SECTION 1. Section 58889.1 is added to the Food and Agricultural Code, to read:</li><li>3 58889.1 Notwithstanding Section 58889, any marketing order</li></ol>

## Resolution of Differences

If a bill is amended in the second house, it must go back to the house of origin for concurrence, which is agreement on the amendments. If agreement cannot be reached, the bill moves to a two house conference committee to resolve differences. Three members of the committee are from the Assembly and three are from the Senate. If a compromise is reached, the conference report is voted upon in both houses.

## Governor

If the bill is passed, it goes to the Governor. The Governor has three choices. They can sign the bill into law, allow it to become law without their signature, or veto it. A governor's veto can be overridden by a two-thirds vote in both houses. Most bills go into effect on January 1 of the next year. Urgency measures take effect immediately upon being signed by the Governor and chaptered by the Secretary of State.

## Senate on the Internet: [www.senate.ca.gov](http://www.senate.ca.gov)

The Senate Home Page contains the following information:

### Senators

E-mail addresses, phone numbers, district maps, biographies, legislation, committee memberships, etc. for each Senator.

### Legislation

Bill text, analyses, status, history and votes for each bill, and the California Codes and Statutes. You can subscribe to be e-mailed changes in bills when they occur.

**All committee hearings are open to the public.**



**Committees, Offices and Caucuses**

Membership, staff, addresses and phone numbers, meeting schedules and policy jurisdiction for each committee. Other offices of the Senate and Caucuses.

**Publications**

Legislative deadlines and calendar, also the Senate Daily File and Senate Histories.

**Audio and Media**

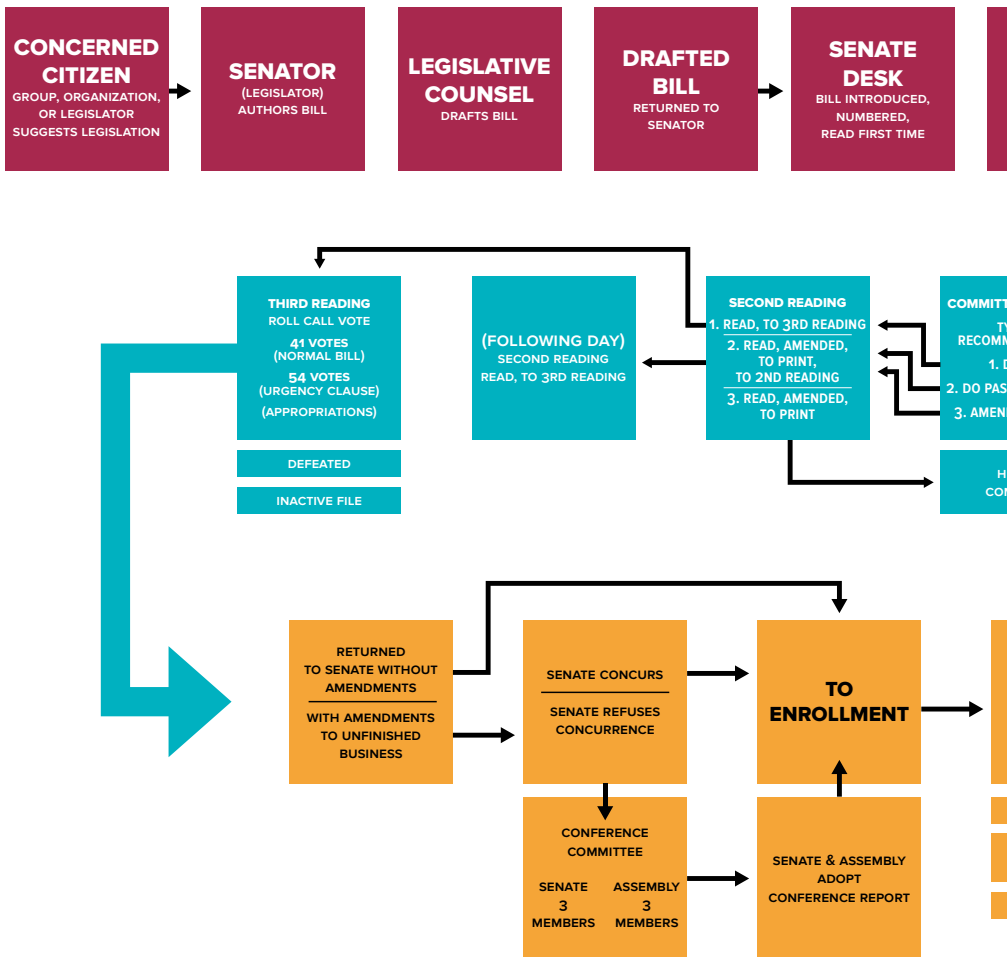
Schedules of when floor sessions and committee hearings are broadcast. You can listen to audio of these events over the Internet.

**Senate Standing Committees**

<b>COMMITTEE NAME</b>	<b>ROOM</b>	<b>TELEPHONE</b> <i>(916 area code)</i>
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 (Capitol) .....	410	651-4106
Energy, Utilities and Communications (1021 O St.).....	3350	651-4107
Environmental Quality (1021 O St.) .....	3230	651-4108
Governance and Finance (State Capitol) .....	407	651-4119
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 (1021 O St.) .....	3310	651-4110
Judiciary (1021 O St.).....	3240	651-4113
Labor, Public Employment & Retirement (1021 O St.) .....	6740	651-1556
Legislative Ethics (1020 N St.) .....	554	651-1507
Military and Veterans Affairs (1020 N St.).....	251	651-1503
Natural Resources and Water (1021 O St.).....	3220	651-4116
Public Safety (1020 N St.) .....	545	651-4118
Rules (Capitol).....	400	651-4120
Transportation (Capitol).....	405	651-4121

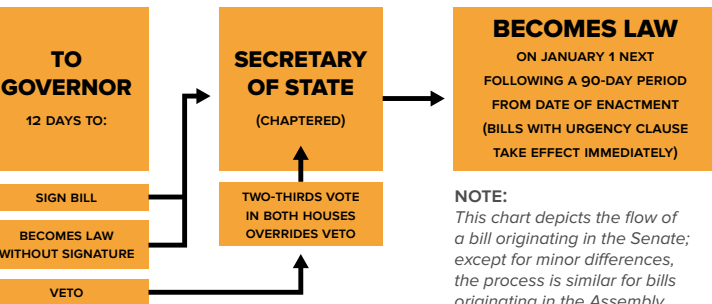
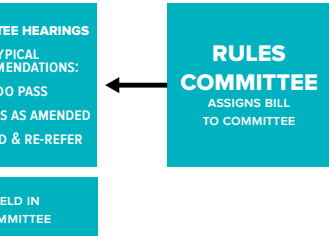
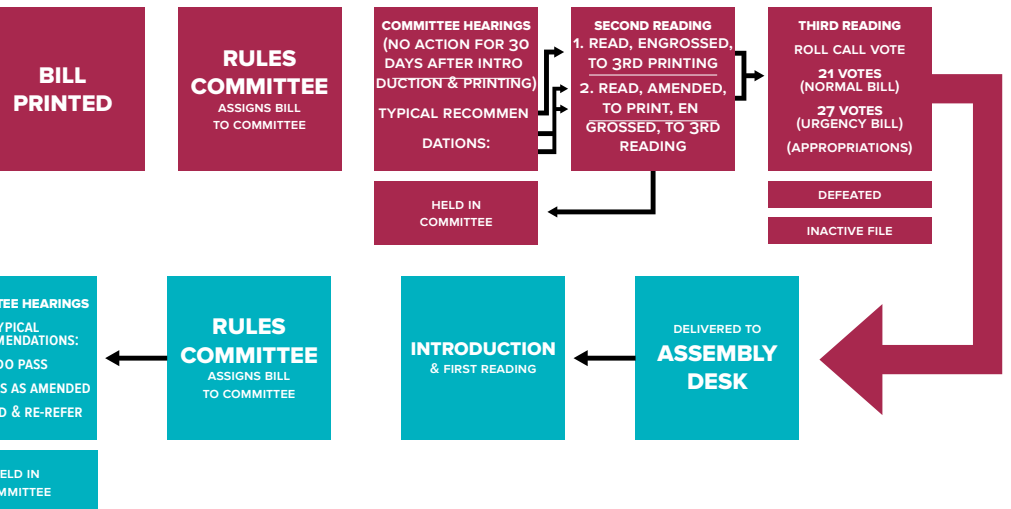
# HOW A BILL BE CALIFOR

A chart showing the route a bill takes



# COMES LAW IN ORNIA

through the California Legislature.



**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.

## **Citizen's Guide**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Glossary of Terms. Information on the legislative process.

## **Quick Links**

Links to government web sites, including Congressional district information.

## **Streaming Media**

The California Senate streams live video and audio from all Floor sessions and regularly scheduled committee hearings. At any given time the Senate can stream up to 6 different events. Two of these live streams are fully-produced programs with live camera switching and graphics. The other four are camera-wide views from the back of the Committee Rooms. After completion of a Floor session or committee hearing, video is made available for viewing from the Media Archive page at [WWW.SENATE.CA.GOV](http://WWW.SENATE.CA.GOV).

The Senate also streams LegiSchool Project Town Hall meetings. The LegiSchool Project is a bipartisan collaboration between the Legislature and California State University. The purpose is to develop an issues-oriented civics curriculum for high school students and teachers.

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



# Glossary of Legislative Terms

**ABBREVIATIONS** - The following abbreviations are commonly used by the California Legislature:

<b>AB</b>	Assembly Bill
<b>SB</b>	Senate Bill
<b>ACA</b>	Assembly Constitutional Amendment
<b>SCA</b>	Senate Constitutional Amendment
<b>AJR</b>	Assembly Joint Resolution
<b>SJR</b>	Senate Joint Resolution
<b>ACR</b>	Assembly Concurrent Resolution
<b>SCR</b>	Senate Concurrent Resolution
<b>HR</b>	House Resolution (Assembly)
<b>SR</b>	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 sometimes mentions 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 nonconcurrency 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 the 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.

**GERMANS** - 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](http://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 two-thirds 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 in 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 two-thirds 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, two-thirds, three-fourths, and four-fifths.

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.

Two-Thirds Vote - a vote of at least two-thirds of the legislative body considering a measure. The full Assembly requires a two-thirds vote of 54 and the full Senate requires 27, based on their memberships of 80 and 40 respectively.

Three-Fourths 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.

Four-Fifths Vote - to amend the Tobacco Tax and Health Restoration Act of 1988 (Proposition 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.



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