



Kentucky Legislature

Glossary of legislative terms

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A

ABSENCE, EXCUSED - Not present, with consent of body.

ACTS - The volume of bills enacted at one session; published by the Legislative Research Commission.

ADJOURN (motion to) - An action to discontinue proceedings for the day; a privileged motion non-debatable, not subject to amendment, and requires for its adoption the assenting votes of a majority of the members present and voting.

ADJOURNMENT SINE DIE - Adjournment without a day. This action ends a session, since no time is set for reconvening.

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION - An enactment of law by an executive branch agency or department, under authority granted by the General Assembly.

ADMINISTRATION BILL - Legislation introduced at the behest of the Governor, usually sponsored by the majority floor leader.

ADOPTION - Approval or acceptance; usually applied to resolutions or amendments

AMEND (motion to) - An action to modify the contents of a bill or question under consideration; the motion to amend is in order at any time prior to final passage, unless the previous question has been ordered.

AMENDMENT - Any alteration made or proposed to be made in a bill, motion or clause thereof, by adding, substituting or deleting.

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CHAMBER - A legislative, judicial or deliberative assembly.

CLINCHER - Procedural act by which a chamber agrees that it shall require the consent of a majority of its members to reconsider a just-adopted bill. "I move the clincher" is an abbreviated way of saying: "I move that the vote by which House Bill 100 was adopted be reconsidered, and that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table. Since the rules require a majority of the members elected (20 in the Senate, 51 in the House) to bring a motion off the table, the clincher helps assure that the just-adopted bill will not be reconsidered.

COMMITTEE - A group of legislators, usually members of the same house, assigned to consider some issue or question and submit a report on its recommendations for action by the body which created it.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT - An amendment to a bill which is attached to the bill by a committee and made a part of the committee's report on the bill.

COMMITTEE CHAIR - The presiding officer of a committee.

COMMITTEE, CONFERENCE - A joint committee of senators and representatives directed to reach agreement on legislation on which the two house are unable to agree.

COMMITTEE, INTERIM JOINT - A committee composed of all members of a Senate standing committee and all members of a House standing committee, which meets between sessions as a subcommittee of the Legislative Research Commission.

COMMITTEE REPORT - The document by which a committee submits its recommendations to its parent body

COMMITTEE REPORT - The document by which a committee submits its recommendations to its parent body.

COMMITTEE, SPECIAL - A committee established to consider only one issue, and which ceases to exist after submitting its report.

COMMITTEE, STANDING - A committee established to function for the entire session, to consider any questions the body cares to submit to it.

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - A bill offered by a committee in lieu of a bill it has considered; technically, the committee substitute is an amendment to the original bill.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - Resolution of the entire house membership into a single committee.

COMPANION BILL - A bill which is identical to a bill having been introduced in the opposite house.

CONCUR - Action by one house to agree to modifications of its legislation by the opposite house.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST - Threat to the public interest by a private interest; usually the position of a legislator unable to vote impartially due to some personal interest in a legislative matter.

CONSENT CALENDAR (or consent orders) - A list of bills having had one (or two) reading(s), and on which members in attendance are presumed to vote yes unless they indicate a negative vote prior to the call of the roll.

CONSTITUENT - A citizen who resides in the district of a legislator.

CONSTITUTION - A written instrument defining and limiting the duties and powers of a government, and guaranteeing certain rights to the people who are subject to the edicts of such government.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT - A proposal to modify a constitution in some manner.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION - An assemblage convened for the purpose of writing or rewriting a Constitution.

CONSTITUTIONAL MAJORITY - One more than half of the members of a deliberative body.

CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICER - An officer selected by a legislative body in compliance with a constitutional provision that it do so; in Kentucky these officers are clerk, assistant clerk, enrolling clerk, sergeant at arms, doorkeeper, cloakroom keeper, janitor and page.

CONTESTED SEAT - Assertion by two or more persons of the right to represent a given district in a legislative assembly.

CONTINGENCY FUND - Money appropriated (to the governor in Kentucky) to meet expenses which are unforeseen at the time of budget preparation.

CONVENE - The assembly or meeting of a legislative body, on the periodic basis provided by law.

CO-SPONSOR - A sponsor of a bill or resolution who is not the principal sponsor.

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DEBATE - Discussion or a question according to parliamentary rules.

DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATION - An appropriation to compensate for an impending deficit in an account budgeted for the preceding time period.

DILATORY - Designed to cause delay.

DISCHARGE PETITION - A notice filed one day in advance of an attempt to take a bill or resolution from a committee.

DISSENT - Disagreement, or the cast of a negative vote.

DISTRICT - The area or division of the governed territory which is represented by an individual member of its legislative body.

DIVISION - A method of voting by way of a show of hands or by standing; provides a count without a roll call.

DIVISION OF A QUESTION - The separation of one item to be voted on into two or more items to be voted on.

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EFFECTIVE DATE - The date on which a legislative measure begins to function as a part of the law; in Kentucky, most legislation becomes effective 90 days after sine die adjournment.

ELECTION - The process of selecting a person to occupy an office, by way of balloting.

EMERGENCY CLAUSE - Provision in a bill that it become effective immediately upon approval by the governor rather than 90 days after adjournment.

ENABLING ACT - Legislation permitting an entity which depends upon the legislative body for its power to take a certain action.

EN BLOC VOTING - To consider several questions in a single vote; or to vote as a unit on a particular question, as when all senators present are presumed to vote yes en bloc on consent bills.

ENACTING CLAUSE - The clause preceding any legislative measure which expresses formally the legislative sanction of the body promulgating the enactment.

ENGROSSMENT - The act of perfecting an item of legislation in accordance with any amendments which have been adopted to it since its origin.

ENROLLMENT - The act of comparing a printed bill to be transmitted to the governor with the original introduced bill with all amendments, so as to ascertain their identical form.

EXECUTIVE ORDER - Action by the governor in implementing executive authority under the law

EXECUTIVE SESSION - A meeting of any deliberative body which excludes from attendance any person who is not a member of the body or one of its essential staff.

EX OFFICIO - The holding of an office or assumption of a duty by virtue of holding a particular office, as when the majority floor leader is by virtue of that office an ex-officio member of the Legislative Research Commission.

EXPUNGE - Action to delete certain portions of the official record of a governmental body.

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FILE - A collection of documents belonging in the same or similar category; or the act of presenting a paper or document to an official entity such as a court or legislative body.

FISCAL NOTE - An attachment to a bill or resolution indicating its impact on state finances.

FLOOR - The area of a legislative chamber which is occupied by the members and staff of the body.

FLOOR AMENDMENT - An amendment filed with the clerk to be considered on third reading of the bill to which it has been filed.

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GALLERY - The area of a legislative chamber from which the proceedings may be viewed by spectators; usually a balcony or other raised area.

GENERAL ORDERS - A list of measures eligible for debate, amendment and voting on a given day without reference to a particular time of day or place in the order of business.

GERMANENESS - The relevance or appropriateness of a particular question, usually an amendment.

GERRYMANDERING - The act of drawing legislative district boundaries so as to gain partisan or fractional political advantages.

GOVERNOR'S PROCLAMATION - The document issued by the governor to convene an extraordinary session of the legislative body.

GRANDFATHER CLAUSE - Exemption from regulation for certain persons having engaged in the regulated activity for a specified period of time prior to the effective date of the regulatory legislation.

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HEARING - A meeting, usually of a committee, at which testimony on a question or issue is accepted, whether from the public generally or from invited witnesses.

HOPPER - Colloquial name given the repository for bills awaiting introduction; in Kentucky such bills are filed with the clerk.

HOUSE - One body of deliberation in a legislature; customarily a shortened name for the House of Representatives.

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IMMUNITY - Constitutionally, legislators are privileged from arrest, except for certain offenses, and may not be brought to question for remarks made in speech or debate on the floor.

IMPEACHMENT - A legal procedure, originating in the legislative branch of government, by which public officials may be removed from office by reason of misconduct.

INITIATIVE - A procedure by which the general public may present and require consideration of legislative proposals.

INTERIM - The period of time between sessions of a legislature.

INTRODUCTION - The presentation of a bill or resolution to the legislative body for its consideration.

INVOCATION - The prayer preceding each daily session of a legislative body.

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JOINT SPONSORSHIP - A procedure in the Kentucky House of Representatives whereby several members may sponsor legislation without one being a principal sponsor, and each bearing equal responsibility as endorsing the measure.

JOURNAL - The official, written record of the proceedings of a legislative body.

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KENTUCKY REVISED STATUTES (KRS) - The official title of statute law in Kentucky; each bill creates, amends, or repeals a section of the KRS.

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L

LAY ON THE CLERK'S DESK (motion to) - An action to place a measure in a position of temporary postponement.

LAY ON THE TABLE (motion to) - An action to declare a measure defeated.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE OR AGENT - A person, usually under hire, engaged in representing a particular interest or group of interests before the legislature; commonly referred to as a lobbyist.

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST - A staff person engaged to determine the effects of legislation, and assist a committee in its deliberations.

LEGISLATOR - A member of the legislature

LEGISLATURE - A deliberative, representative assembly formed by constitution to enact change in statute law; usually the term legislature refers to the state level of government.

LOBBYIST - See Legislative advocate.

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I

MAJORITY CAUCUS CHAIRMAN - A member affiliated with the majority party, who is responsible for convening the caucus of one party, and presiding over its deliberations.

MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER - A member affiliated with the majority party, designated to act for the party during the proceedings on the floor.

MAJORITY PARTY - The political party whose members occupy at least one more than half of the total membership of the body.

MAJORITY WHIP - A member affiliated with the majority party, designated to assist the floor leader during proceedings on the floor.

MASON'S MANUAL - A volume of parliamentary law and procedure providing a basis for ruling on questions of order in the General Assembly.

MEMBERS-ELECT - Persons having been elected members of a legislative body, but not yet having been sworn into office.

MEMORIALIZE - To address or petition another agency or entity of government.

MESSAGE - An official communication from beyond the body which is read into and made a portion of its journal.

MINORITY FLOOR LEADER - The minority party officer corresponding to the majority floor leader.

MINORITY REPORT - A report filed by those members of a committee in the minority relative to the decision of the majority of the committee; the minority report may be adopted in lieu of the majority report.

MINUTES - The written record of proceedings of a deliberative body.

MOTION - A proposal, usually oral, made to the presiding officer calling for specific action by the body; the motion is the principal tool used to conduct legislative business.

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NOMINATION - The placement of a person's name in consideration for election or appointment to an office.

NON-DEBATABLE - Those subjects or motions which under parliamentary rules may not be discussed or debated.

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O

OATH OF OFFICE - Oath or vow taken by public officials prior to being seated and taking up their official duties.

OMBUDSMAN - An official, usually appointed, charged with the duty of receiving and investigating public complaints, and directing action thereon by the responsible agency.

ORDER OF BUSINESS - The defined routine of procedure in the legislative body each day; may be deviated from only by suspension of the rules.

ORDERS OF THE DAY - A list of bills and resolutions scheduled for third reading, debate, amendment and vote on a particular day.

OUT OF ORDER - The offer of an improper motion, amendment or question to a deliberative body.

OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE - A committee, usually legislative, created to maintain a review of some aspect or operation of government, usually related to the executive branch.

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P

PAIRS, OR PAIRINGS - An arrangement between two members by which they agree to be recorded as voting on opposite sides of an issue, and be absent when the vote is taken.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY - A question posed to the presiding officer for clarification of a particular point in the proceedings.

PASSAGE - The approval of a bill or resolution by way of an affirmative vote.

PER DIEM - A basis of compensation for services, from day to day.

PETITION - A formal, written request submitted by an individual or group to some official body or agency.

PINK SHEET - The colloquial term applied to the form used for technical or typographical changes to bills in Kentucky without benefit of amendment; this form originates in the Legislative Research Commission.

POINT OF ORDER - The calling of attention to a breach of order or the rules.

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE - Defense of the rights, reputation or conduct of a legislator in his or her official capacity.

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY (motion to) - Action to prevent consideration of a measure for the remainder of the session, unless a constitutional majority sustains a motion to reconsider the matter.

POSTPONE TO A FIXED TIME (motion to) - To defer consideration of a question until a time specified in the motion.

PRECEDENT - Previous evidence or example for action or decision of a question.

PREFILED BILL - A bill filed prior to the session, for public discussion and printing.

PRESIDENT - The presiding officer in the Senate.

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE - The Senator, elected by the Senate, chosen to preside in lieu of the President when such officer is absent or unable to preside.

PRESIDING OFFICER - The person designated to preside over the proceedings of a legislative body.

PRESSURE GROUP - A group or organization which attempts to influence action on legislation.

PREVIOUS QUESTION (motion for) - Action to prevent additional debate on or amendment of a question, and to cause an immediate vote on the matter at issue.

PRIVILEGED MOTION - motions to which a special status is applied, whereby such take precedence if offered while other matters are pending.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR - Authorization for members of the general public to visit the floor, granted usually for the day.

PROCEDURE - Rules and traditional practices of the respective houses of the legislature.

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QUORUM - The number of members of a legislative body which must be present to transact business.

QUORUM CALL - Action to require a call of the roll to determine the presence of a quorum.

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R

RATIFY - To approve and make valid.

READING - Each bill to be enacted in Kentucky must have three readings, at length, in each house.

REAPPORTIONMENT - Redrawing legislative district boundaries so as to provide equality of representation.

RECALL - To cause removal of a legislative enactment or public official by popular action.

RECEDE - To undo action previously taken.

RECESS - Intermission during a daily session, usually for caucus or committee meetings.

RECOMMIT (motion to) - Action to send a measure to committee after it has been previously reported.

RECONSIDER (motion to) - Action to re-take a vote; the motion may be offered only by a member having voted previously on the prevailing

RECONSIDER (motion to) - Action to re-take a vote, the motion may be offered only by a member having voted previously on the prevailing side.

REFER - To send a measure or question to committee.

REFERENDUM - Submission of a question to decision by the electorate.

RESCIND - To annul or undo an action previously taken.

REPEAL - To delete and make of no effect.

REPORT - To communicate opinion or recommendations.

RESOLUTION, CONCURRENT - Expression of opinion or request by both houses of a legislature, without the force of law.

RESOLUTION, JOINT - To enact matters of law not to be made a portion of the statutes.

RESOLUTION, SIMPLE - Expression or request by one house.

RESOLVING CLAUSE - Language in a resolution defining the action taken.

REVENUE - The yield of taxes and other sources of public moneys.

REVISION - The process of inserting the enactments of a session into existing statute law.

RIPPER BILL - A colloquial term applied to legislation designed to harm a particular person or bill.

ROLL CALL - To determine a vote on a question by taking of names in favor and opposed.

RULES - A code of procedure adopted by each house of a legislature to govern its operations.

RULING OF A CHAIR - A decision by the presiding officer concerning a question of order or procedure.

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S

SECTION - A division of a bill or statute, separated according to topic covered or action taken.

SENIORITY - Length of service as bearing on duties or functions.

SESSION, EXTRAORDINARY - A session convened by call of the Governor; Usually called a "special session".

SESSION, REGULAR - A session convened on a regular basis by way of constitutional provision as to its date and length.

SIMPLE MAJORITY - A majority of those voting on a question.

SINE DIE - See ADJOURNMENT.

SPEAKER - The presiding officer of the House of Representatives.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE - The member of the House of Representatives elected to preside in the absence or inability of the Speaker.

SPECIAL ORDER - An action predetermined to occur at a specific time on a specific date.

SPONSOR - The legislator responsible for presenting an item of legislation to the body

STATIONERY ALLOWANCE - each member is given an allowance per session for the purchase of stationery.

STOPPING THE CLOCK - An occasional tactic on the final evening of a regular session whereby the proceedings continue into the following day, with the clock and journal continuing to indicate occurrences of action on the preceding day.

SUNSET LEGISLATION - A law requiring termination of a particular agency or program on a predetermined date, unless justification for continuance is presented to the legislature prior to such occurrence.

SUSPEND THE RULES - Action to negate the application of a particular rule of procedure; the rule and purpose must be stated in the motion to suspend.

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T

TERM OF OFFICE - The period of time for which a person is elected or appointed to occupy an office or position.

TITLE - A caption indicating the subject matter of a bill or resolution, required by the Constitution.

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U

UNANIMOUS CONSENT - A vote, by voice, expressing adoption of a question without dissent or objection.

UNICAMERAL - A legislature composed of one house.

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V

VETO - Rejection of an enactment without authority to modify; usually the prerogative of the Governor.

VETO OVERRIDE - Authority of the legislature to overturn a rejection of legislation by the Governor.

VOICE VOTE - A method of voting whereby only a vocal response to a question is indicated.

VOTE - A decision on a question by a member of a deliberative body, either affirmative or negative.

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W

WITHDRAW - To recall, remove or delete a question from consideration.

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Y

YIELD - A parliamentary term referring to the cession of the floor by one member to another.

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