

Glossary of Legislative Terms

- **Act:** A bill which has both houses of the General Assembly in identical form and becomes law, with or without the Governor's signature.
- **Adjournment:** Suspension of a legislative session. "Adjournment until a day certain" is a temporary suspension of proceedings during a session; "adjournment sine die" marks the final closing of a session.
- **Administrative Floor Leader:** A legislator chosen in each house by the Governor to introduce and support bills favored and initiated by the Governor or his/her administration.
- **Appropriation:** A budget act which authorizes spending of public money for specific purposes.
- **Bill:** A proposed law usually proposing changes or additions to the existing statutory law.
- **Caucus:** A group of legislators who associate together on the basis of membership in a political party or common interests, and meet to discuss policy and strategy and coordinate their legislative efforts.
- **Clerk of the House:** The Chief administrative officer of the House of Representatives. Though not a representative, the Clerk is a full-time staff official whose duties include: receiving and printing all bills introduced in the House, recording all votes taken on the floor, and certifying the daily record of legislative action on bills and resolutions.
- **Code:** A collection of government statutes and their revisions. A state's "code" is usually found in a series of volumes organized by subject matter. Search the **Georgia Code** by keyword to identify existing statutes/laws.
- **Committee:** See standing committee, conference committee, and committee of the whole)
- **Committee of the whole:** A designation for either house when its entire membership meets as a committee to study matters under relaxed house rules to permit more informal discussion.
- **Conference committee:** Composed of members appointed from both houses to reconcile differences in versions of a specific bill once separate versions of the bill have passed each respective house.
- **Constitutional majority:** The Georgia Constitution requires a majority (50% + 1) of the entire membership (regardless of how many are actually present) to vote for the passage of bills and resolutions which will have effect of law. *Note: 91 yea votes are needed to pass general bills.* In contrast, many motions on procedural matters require only a "simple majority" or a majority of those present and voting.
- **Enrollment:** Preparation of a bill in its final and official form to show the precise language of the measure as passed by houses.
- **Hopper:** The symbolic name for the place where legislators file bills for introduction with the Clerk of the House or Secretary of the Senate.
- **Journal:** The official record of legislative proceedings in each house.
- **Law:** A general term usually used for official acts and statutes of the legislature.
- **Legislative Counsel:** The staff office which provides bill drafting, legal counseling, reference and other legal assistance and services to members of the General Assembly.
- **Lobbying:** Attempts by a person or group acting on behalf of others to influence legislation.
- **Majority Floor Leader:** That member chosen by each house's majority party caucus to manage the passage of those bills it favors.
- **Motion:** A formal proposal made by a legislator to take some type of procedural action, such as adjourning or holding a roll call vote.
- **President of the Senate:** The title of the Senate's presiding officer, the **Lieutenant Governor**.
- **President Pro Tempore:** The senator elected by the other members of the Senate to take the place of the President in case of absence, disability, or resignation.
- **Quorum:** The minimum number of members required to be present to perform house business. In the General Assembly, the quorum for each house is a majority (50% + 1) of its total members.
- **Readings of a bill:** The actual reading of a bill on three separate days in each house, required by the Constitution before a bill can be debated, amended and voted on by the house.

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- **Roll call vote:** Votes that are tabulated electronically and appear on voting boards on each side of the house. These votes are retained as a permanent record.
- **Rules of each house:** The procedural rules or guidelines adopted by each house to govern its legislative conduct and action.
- **Secretary of the Senate:** The chief administrative officer of the Senate, equivalent to the Clerk of the House, with the same status and duties. [Click here](#) for more.
- **Speaker of the House:** The presiding officer of the House, a member of that body, is elected every two years. The many powers of this office include appointment of committees and their officers and assignment of bills to committee. [Click here](#) for more.
- **Speaker Pro Tempore:** That member of the House elected to preside in the Speaker's absence.
- **Committee:** A committee made up of legislators which studies proposed legislation in some general field of legislative activity (e.g. agriculture, education, etc.) and recommends to the full membership whether that legislation should be supported or not. Click here for more: [Senate](#) | [House](#)
- **Statute:** The written permanent law formally enacted by the legislature.
- **Veto:** The Governor's disapproval of a bill passed by the General Assembly. Unless overridden by a two-thirds vote of the total membership of each house, a veto prevents a bill from becoming law.
- **The "Well":** The podium at the floor level where legislators address the house membership to speak in favor of or against pending legislation.
- **Yeas & Nays:** A roll call vote which indicates which legislator voted in favor (yea) or against (nay) a bill. General bills must receive 91 yea votes to pass; proposed constitutional amendments require 120 yea votes to pass.