

NORTH CAROLINA GLOSSARY OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS

ABSENT -- Not present at a session.

- *Excused absence, Absent with leave*--not present at a session with consent.
- *Not voting, Absent without leave*--not present at a session without consent.

ACT -- Legislation enacted into law. A bill that has passed both houses of the legislature, been enrolled, ratified, signed by the governor or passed over the governor's office, and printed. It is a permanent measure, having the force of law until repealed.

- *Local act* -- Legislation enacted into law that has limited application, affecting fewer than 15 counties.
- *Private act* -- Legislation enacted into law that has limited application.
- *Public act* -- Legislation enacted into law that applies to the public at large, affecting 15 or more counties.

ADJOURNMENT -- Termination of a session for that day, with the hour and day of the next meeting being set.

ADJOURNMENT SINE DIE -- Final termination of a regular or special legislative session.

ADOPTION -- Approval or acceptance; usually applied to amendments, committee reports or resolutions.

AMENDMENT -- Any alteration made (or proposed to be made) to a bill or clause thereof, by adding, deleting, substituting, or omitting.

- *Committee amendment* -- An alteration made (or proposed to be made) to a bill that is offered by a legislative committee.
- *Floor amendment* -- An alternation offered to a legislative document that is presented by a legislator while that document is being discussed on the floor of that legislator's chamber.

APPEAL -- A parliamentary procedure for testing (and possibly changing) the decision of a presiding officer.

APPORTIONMENT -- Establishment of the legislative districts from which members are elected.

APPROPRIATION -- Funds allocated for various departments of government set aside by formal action for specific use. Allows money to be spent; is not actual expenditure record.

AT-LARGE ELECTION -- An election in which candidates are chosen on an individual basis rather than as representatives of a geographically defined, single-member district. At-large elections can be held at the legislative and presidential levels. In the United State of America, some states hold at-large elections for congressional seats, when, for instance, a state's entire population warrants only one representative.

BICAMERAL -- A legislature consisting of two separate chambers, each serving as a check on the other's power.

BIENNIUM -- Two-year term of legislative activity.

BILL -- Draft of a proposed law presented to the legislature for consideration.

BIPARTISAN -- Having an affiliation or association with (or representatives of) both political parties or caucuses in a two party system.

BUDGET -- (1) The suggested allocation of state moneys presented to the legislature for consideration; (2) a formal document that reflects the authorized expenditures of the state.

CALENDAR -- (1) A printed list of proposed legislation that is arranged according to the order of business and is scheduled for consideration by a chamber. (2) Agenda of daily legislative business in a chamber.

CALENDAR DAY -- Literally a day as listed on the Gregorian calendar.

CALL OF THE SENATE OR HOUSE -- Procedure used to compel the attendance of members who are missing from the chamber and to compel those members already in attendance to remain in the chamber.

CARRY-OVER LEGISLATION -- Legislation that is held over from the first year of a legislative biennium to the second year.

CAUCUS -- An informal meeting of a group of the members; most commonly based on political party affiliation, but may have other bases, such as gender, race, geographic location or specific issue.

CENSURE -- An action by a legislative body to officially reprimand an elected official for inappropriate or illegal actions committed by that official while in office. The act of censuring is an official condemnation for inappropriate or illegal actions committed by a public official while holding a position of trust.

CHAMBER -- Official hall for the meeting of a legislative body.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE -- A non-legislator officer who is elected by the members of the House of Representatives to perform and direct the parliamentary and clerical functions of the chamber. Also may be titled "house principal clerk."

CLERK OF THE SENATE -- A non-legislator officer who is elected by the members of the Senate to perform and direct the parliamentary and clerical functions of the chamber. Also may be titled "senate principal clerk."

CODE -- A compilation of laws and their revisions according to subject matter arranged by title, chapter and section. The official code of North Carolina is the North Carolina General Statutes.

COMMITTEE -- A body of members appointed by the presiding officer (or another authority specified by the chamber) to consider and make recommendations concerning disposition of bills, resolutions and other related matters.

- *Conference committee* -- A committee composed of members from the two houses specifically appointed to reconcile the differences between House and Senate versions of a bill or bills.

- *Interim committee* -- A committee established to study or investigate certain matters between annual or biennial legislative sessions and to report to the next regular session.
- *Joint committee* -- A committee composed of members from both chambers.
- *Standing committee* -- A committee appointed with continuing responsibility in a general issue area or field of legislative activity.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE -- Either house of the legislature sitting in its entirety as a committee to consider bills or issues.

COMMITTEE REPORT -- Official release of a bill or resolution from committee with (or without) a specific recommendation, such as "pass", "pass as amended" or "do not pass."

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE -- A bill offered by a committee in lieu of another bill that was originally referred to the committee for consideration; technically, the committee substitute is an amendment to the original bill.

CONCURRENCE (TO CONCUR) -- Action by which one house agrees to a proposal or action that the other chamber has approved.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST -- Untenable position that threatens the ability of a legislator to vote impartially due to some personal interest in a legislative issue.

CONSTITUENT -- A citizen residing within the district of a legislator.

CONSTITUTION-- A written instrument embodying the fundamental principles of the state that guarantees powers and duties of the government and guarantees certain rights to the people.

CONVENE -- When the members of a chamber gather for the meeting of the legislature daily, weekly and at the beginning of a session as provide by the constitution or law.

DEBATABLE -- Open to parliamentary discussion or argument.

DEBATE -- Discussion of a matter according to parliamentary rules.

DECORUM -- Proper order, etiquette and conduct of members during a floor session.

DIED IN COMMITTEE -- The defeat of a bill by not returning it from committee to the house for further action.

DILATORY -- Deliberate use of parliamentary procedure to delay.

DISSENT -- Difference of opinion; to cast a negative vote.

DISTRICT -- That division of the state represented by a legislator distinguished numerically or by geographical boundaries.

DIVISION -- A method of voting; a request that members stand or raise hands to be counted when the outcome of a voice vote is unclear or in dispute.

DIVISION OF A QUESTION -- Procedure to separate a matter to be voted upon into two or more questions.

EFFECTIVE DATE -- A law generally becomes effective, or binding, either upon a date specified in the law itself or, in the absence of such a date, 60 days after adjournment of the biennial session.

ELECTION -- Act of selecting a person to fill an office.

EMERGENCY CLAUSE -- A statement in a bill that indicates the act shall take immediate effect.

ENACTING CLAUSE -- That clause of an act that formally expresses the legislative sanction. In North Carolina the constitutionally required enacting clause reads, "The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:"

ENGROSS -- The process of by which adopted amendments and other changes are incorporated into a bill as it makes its way through the Senate or House.

ENGROSSED EDITION -- The version of a bill as passed by one house with the floor amendments worked into it.

ENROLL -- The process of changing a bill which has passed both chambers into its final format for transmission to the governor.

ENROLLED EDITION -- The final version of a bill, which has passed both chambers, and is reprinted in preparation for the signatures of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. After these confirmatory signatures, the enrolled bill goes to the Governor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION -- A session excluding from the chamber or committee room all persons other than members and essential staff personnel.

EXCUSED -- Absent with the permission of the body or the presiding officer.

FILIBUSTER -- The prolonged discussion of a bill to delay legislative action.

FIRST READING -- The first presentation of a bill or its title for consideration; also may be called Introduction.

FISCAL -- Dealing with state revenues and expenditures.

FISCAL NOTE -- A fiscal note seeks to state in dollars the estimated amount of increase or decrease in revenue or expenditures and the present and future implications of a piece of pending legislation. Only General Assembly members can request fiscal notes.

FISCAL YEAR -- An accounting period of 12 months. The North Carolina fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30.

FLOOR -- That portion of the legislative chamber reserved for members and officers of the assembly or other persons granted privileged access.

GALLERY -- Balconies of the chamber from which visitors may view the proceedings of the legislature.

GERMANENESS -- The relevance or appropriateness of amendments or substitutes.

HEARING -- Public discussion and appearance on a proposal or bill; usually scheduled by a committee.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES -- 120 members who serve a term of 2 years. Members must have lived in their districts 1 year before election.

IMPEACHMENT -- Procedure to remove from office a public official accused of misconduct.

INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT -- A form of adverse disposition of a proposal for that session of the legislature.

INSERT -- Add language to a bill or resolution.

INTERIM -- The interval between the long and short sessions of the legislature.

INTRODUCER -- The legislator who presents a bill or resolution for consideration; may be joined by others, who are known as cointroducer; also may be called sponsor.

INTRODUCTION -- The formal presentation of a proposal after it has been drafted.

JOINT RULES -- Parliamentary rules governing joint procedures or operations of the Senate and House.

JOINT SESSION -- A combined meeting of the Senate and House in one chamber.

JOURNAL -- An official chronological record of the actions taken and proceedings of the respective chambers.

LEGISLATIVE DAY -- A day on which either chamber convenes (or both chambers convene) to conduct official business.

LEGISLATIVE INTENT -- Purpose for which a measure is passed.

LEGISLATIVE LIAISON -- Person appointed to communicate between legislators and other government agencies.

LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT -- Scrutiny of executive branch programs and performance by the legislature.

LEGISLATIVE SERVICE AGENCY -- Nonpartisan legislative branch agency providing services such as legal and bill drafting, impartial research and information or technical services.

LEGISLATOR -- Elected member of a legislative body.

LEGISLATURE -- The branch of state government responsible for enacting laws.

LINE ITEM -- Numeric line in an appropriation or budget bill.

LINE ITEM VETO -- An action taken by a governor to prevent the enactment of an item of an appropriation bill. The North Carolina governor does not have this type of veto.

LOBBYIST -- A representative of a special interest group whose function is to influence legislation affecting his special interest.

MAJORITY LEADER -- A member of the majority political party designated to be a leader.

MAJORITY PARTY -- The political party having the greatest number of members in the legislature or in either chamber.

MAJORITY REPORT -- Recommendation of action on a measure that is submitted by a majority of the members of a committee.

MEASURE -- General term for bill, resolution or memorial.

MEMBER ELECT - Member who has been elected, but who has not yet taken the oath of office or who is not yet officially serving.

MEMBERS PRESENT -- The term used to refer to those members who are actually present at a daily session.

MEMORIAL -- The method by which the legislature addresses or petitions Congress and other governments or governmental agencies; method by which the legislature congratulates or honors groups or individuals.

MINORITY LEADER - A member of the minority political party designated to be leader.

MINORITY PARTY -- The political party having fewer numbers of members in the legislature or in either chamber.

MINORITY REPORT -- A report that reflects the thinking of the members not favoring the majority position or action on an issue.

MINUTES -- Accurate record of the proceedings of a meeting in chronological order.

MOTION -- Formal proposal offered by a member of a deliberative assembly.

NONPARTISAN -- Having no association or affiliation with a political party or caucus.

OATH OF OFFICE -- Oath taken by members-elect of the legislature prior to being seated and embarking upon official duties.

ORDER OF BUSINESS -- The defined routine of procedure in the legislative body each day.

OUT OF ORDER -- Not being conducted under proper parliamentary rules and procedures.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY -- Question posed by a member to the presiding officer for clarification of the procedure or business before the house.

PARTISAN -- Associated or affiliated with a single political party or caucus.

PER DIEM -- Literally, per day; daily expense money rendered to legislators or staff.

PETITION -- Formal request submitted by an individual or group of individuals to the legislature.

POINT OF ORDER -- A question by a member to the presiding officer calling attention to a breach of order or of the rules.

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY -- A means of disposing of an issue by not setting a date on which to consider it again.

PRECEDENT -- Interpretation of rulings by presiding officers on specific rules; unwritten rules that are established by custom.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE -- The Lt. Governor serves as Senate President and presides over the daily session. The Senate President does not vote except to break a tie.

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE (PRO TEM) OF THE SENATE -- The officer elected by the Senate to preside in the absence of the Senate President and to exercise other duties set out in the Senate Rules.

PRESIDING OFFICER -- Person designated to preside at a legislative session.

PREVIOUS QUESTION -- A motion to close debate and bring the pending question or questions to an immediate vote.

QUORUM -- When a legislative body is assembled, the minimum number of members required to transact business.

QUORUM CALL -- A method used to establish the presence of a majority for the lawful transacting of business.

RATIFY -- To approve and make valid.

READING -- Presentation of a bill before either chamber by the reading the bill, its title or its number. A formal procedure required by constitution and rules that indicates a stage in enactment process.

REAPPORTIONMENT -- Redrawing legislative district boundaries to provide equality of representation; also may be called redistricting.

RECESS -- Intermission in a daily session; intermission from one day to the next.

REFERRAL -- The assigning or referring of a bill to committee.

REPEAL -- A method by which a legislative action is revoked or annulled.

RESOLUTION -- A document that expresses the sentiment or intent of the legislature or a chamber, that governs the business of the legislature, or a chamber, or that expresses recognition by the legislature or a chamber.

ROLL CALL -- Names of the members being called in alphabetical order and recorded; used to establish a quorum or to take a vote on an issue before the body.

RULES -- Regulating principles or methods of legislative procedure.

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

SENATE -- 50 members who serve a term of 2 years. Members must be 25 years old when elected; have lived in NC as a citizen for 2 years; and have lived in their district 1 year before election.

SENATE PRINCIPAL CLERK -- A non-legislator officer appointed or elected by the members of the Senate to perform and direct the parliamentary and clerical functions of the Senate.

SENIORITY -- Recognition of prior legislative service.

SESSION -- (1) Period during which the legislature meets; (2) the daily meeting of the Senate or House.

- *Regular session* -- The annual (or biennial) meeting of the legislature required by constitution.
- *Special (or extraordinary) session* -- A special meeting of the legislature that is called by the governor (or the legislature itself) and limited to specific matters.

SIMPLE MAJORITY -- One more than half of those voting on a question.

SINE DIE -- Literally, "without day;" usually, adjournment without a day being set for reconvening; final adjournment.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE -- Presiding officer of the House of Representatives elected by the House.

SPONSOR -- The legislator who presents a bill or resolution for consideration; may be joined by others, who are known as cointroducer; also may be called introducer.

STATUTE -- A formal enactment of the legislature of a more permanent nature. The term "statute" is used to designate written law, as distinguished from unwritten law.

STATUS OF BILL -- The progress of a bill at any given time in the legislative process. It can be in committee, on the calendar, in the other house, etc.

STRIKE OUT -- The deletion of language from a bill or resolution.

SUNSET -- Expiration date of a measure.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION -- Adjustment of funds allocated by the original appropriation.

SUSPENSION OF THE RULES -- Parliamentary procedure whereby actions can be taken that would otherwise be out of order.

TERM OF OFFICE -- Period of time for which a person is elected.

TITLE -- A concise statement of the subject and the contents of a bill.

UNICAMERAL -- A legislature with only one chamber.

VETO -- Action by the governor to disapprove a measure. The North Carolina governor has had veto power from 1997 to date.

VETO OVERRIDE -- Vote by the legislature to pass a bill over a governor's veto.

VOICE VOTE -- Oral expression of the members when a question is submitted for their determination. When asked by the presiding officers, members respond "aye" or "nay." The presiding officer then decides which side prevailed.

VOTE -- Formal expression of a decision by the body.

YEAS AND NAYS -- Recorded vote of members on an issue.

YIELD -- To relinquish the floor to another member to speak or ask question.