

LEGISLATIVE GLOSSARY

AMENDMENT - a change to an existing bill. Amendments can be as simple as changing a few words or as complex as re-writing the entire bill.

BILL - a written proposal to create or change a law. Most bills can become a law only if two-fifths of the members elected to each chamber vote for it.

BUDGET – A bill that determines the state’s taxes and spending. Budget bills generally begin in the House.

CALENDAR - A list of bills that have had one reading and are ready for a second reading (to become a law, bills must have three readings).

CHAMBER - the official room for meetings of a legislative body, for example, the Senate Chamber or House of Representatives Chamber in the Capitol building.

COMMITTEE - a group of legislators assigned to consider an issue or question.

COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES – A group of legislative leaders that assigns each bill to the appropriate committee for study.

CONSTITUTION - an important written document that tells what the duties and powers of a government is and guarantees certain rights to the people who live within the area it governs.

CONSTITUTIONAL MAJORITY – Half of all the members of a chamber plus one. A constitutional majority is needed to pass certain types of bills as well as to override a governor’s veto.

DISTRICT - an area of the state where a senator or representative serves a certain number of people.

FLOOR – Where each chamber meets. The term is also used to refer to each chamber as a whole, such as “sending a bill to the House floor.”

GENERAL ASSEMBLY - the entire body of senators and representatives who make our laws; also called the legislature.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - the chamber or room in the Capitol where official meetings of Kentucky’s representatives are held.

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

LAW - a bill that has been accepted by both the Senate and House of Representatives and signed by the Governor. Everybody has to obey laws.

LEGISLATOR - a senator or representative; a lawmaker.

LOBBYIST - a person who tries to persuade legislators to vote a certain way on a bill.

MEDIA - newspaper, television, and radio reporters who keep the public informed through their reports or articles about what our legislators are doing.

ORDERS OF THE DAY – A list of bills and resolutions that are ready in each chamber to be debated and/or adopted that day.

OVERRIDE - when a majority or a specified number of legislators vote against a governor's veto of a bill. An override makes a bill into a law without the governor's signature.

PRESIDENT - the senator who is chosen as the leader of the Senate. He or she presides over business in that chamber.

RULES - a code of procedure that each house uses to govern its business.

RULES COMMITTEE - a group of legislative leaders and other members that prepare the Orders of the Day.

SENATE - the chamber or room in the Capitol where official meetings of Kentucky's senators are held.

SESSION - a regular session is the time every year required by the Constitution when the General Assembly meets to make laws. An extraordinary session or "special" session may be called by the governor for a specific purpose.

SIMPLE MAJORITY – Half of all the votes cast, plus one.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE - a representative chosen as the leader of the House of Representatives; he or she presides over business in that chamber.

STATUTE – Another word for a law.

VETO – The governor's rejection of a bill passed by the General Assembly. If each chamber then approves the bill again by a constitutional majority vote, the veto is overridden and becomes law.