

Acts of Assembly

The compilation of all legislation passed by the General Assembly and signed into law, and certain resolutions agreed to by the General Assembly.

Adjournment

Termination of a session for that day, with the hour and day of the next meeting being set prior to adjournment.

Adjournment Sine Die

The final adjournment of a legislative session. The Latin translation is - without a day, an indefinite period.

Amendment

A change made to legislation in committee or on the chamber floor that adds, revises, or deletes language to the legislation.

Amendment, Constitutional

A resolution which affects the Constitution and is passed by two General Assembly sessions separated by a general election of the House of Delegates, and requires final approval by voters at a general election.

Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute

A substantive redrafting of legislation that incorporates the changes in a new version. A substitute can be offered by a standing committee, on the chamber floor, by a conference committee, and by the Governor.

Biennium

A two-year term of legislative activity.

Bill

A proposal to amend, repeal, or add sections to the Code of Virginia or Acts of Assembly.

Bill Status

The database system for tracking legislation and the daily activities of the House of Delegates and the Senate.

Budget

Recommended appropriations of state revenue presented by the Governor to the General Assembly for their consideration during the legislative session.

By Request

A member may add “by request” to his name when introducing a bill, which indicates that the bill has been introduced at the request of a constituent, a governmental agency or an organization.

Calendar

Daily printed agenda of business for each house. Also contains scheduled committee meetings and public hearings.

Caucus

An informal meeting of a group of members, most often called on the basis of party affiliation or regional representation.

Chapter

A bill passed and signed into law.

Charter Bill

Legislation relating to powers of counties, cities, and towns specifically granted by the General Assembly. Charters and changes thereto are not codified and are only found in the Acts of Assembly.

Code of Virginia

A compilation of laws of the Commonwealth. The Code is arranged alphabetically by subject and each subject heading is referred to as a “Title.”

Committee Actions

Reported - a majority of the committee approves the bill and it is reported to the floor. The bill may be reported out in several forms; without amendment, with amendment(s), or an amendment in the nature of a substitute. A bill may also be reported and referred to another committee.

Passed By Indefinitely (PBI) - allows the committee to bring the legislation back prior to the committee deadline; however, in most cases, this action defeats the bill.

Stricken - the bill is removed from the docket. Frequently occurs at the request of the patron.

Carry Over - bills introduced in even-numbered sessions for further action or study during the interim. A carryover bill retains its original assigned number.

No Action - no motion is made on the bill and it dies at the time of the committee deadline.

Failed to Report (Defeated) - the committee rejects a motion to report out a bill.

Conflict of Interest

A position taken by a legislator to vote on a matter which threatens the ability of a legislator to vote impartially due to some personal interest in a legislative issue (House Rule 69 & Senate Rule 36).

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.

Dillon Rule

Restricts local government authority to enact ordinances. Local government only have powers granted in the Virginia Constitution and/or passed by the General Assembly.

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.

Docket

A list prepared by the committee clerk of all legislation pending before a standing committee.

Effective Date

Date which a Chapter of the Acts of Assembly becomes a law.

All laws become effective on July 1 in the year passed unless otherwise specified. Laws passed at Special Session become effective on the first day of the fourth month following adjournment unless otherwise specified.

Emergency Clause

Due to an emergency, the law is effective when signed by the Governor.

Engrossed

A legislative stage when a bill passes the second reading in the House of origin. If amended, the engrossed version of the legislation is printed incorporating all agreed to amendments.

Enrolled

Legislation which has passed both the House of Delegates and the Senate. It has been signed by the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate. It has been sent to the Governor, but not yet signed. Once signed, the bill becomes a law and is a Chapter of the Acts of Assembly.

Fiscal Year

A 12 month accounting period

Floor

That portion of the chamber reserved for members, staff and other persons granted the privilege of the floor.

Floor Leader

Refers to majority and minority leadership in each house.

Gallery

Balconies of each chamber from which visitors may view proceedings of the respective houses.

Germaneness

The relevance or appropriateness of amendments or substitutes.

Interim

The interval between annual sessions.

Journal

The compilation of legislative actions and proceedings which are published as the official legislative record.

Leave of Absence

Permission granted to a member who wishes to be absent for a specific period of time.

Legislative Intent

The purpose for which a measure is introduced and/or passed.

Legislator

An elected member of a legislative body.

Legislature (General Assembly)

The branch of state government responsible for enacting laws.

Lobbyist

A person that represents a particular interest or group of interests before the legislature.

Majority Leader

A member of the majority party designated to be its floor leader.

Majority Party

The political party having the greater number of members in the legislature of either house.

Mini Journal

A document consisting of the condensed daily House floor actions, and committee reports and referrals.

Minute Book

A document consisting of the condensed daily Senate floor actions, and committee reports and referrals.

Minority Leader

A member of the minority party designated to be its floor leader.

Minority Party

The political party having the fewest members in the legislature of either house.

Morning Hour

A period at the beginning of each day’s session when members may introduce distinguished visitors to their colleagues, or speak on any subject by asking for a “point of personal privilege.”

Motion to Reconsider

A motion which places the question in the same status it was prior to the vote on the question.

Parliamentary Inquiry

A question posed to the chair for clarification of a point in proceedings.

Patron

A legislator who introduces a specific piece of legislation. Other legislators may show their support by signing on as co-patrons.

Reading

The presentation of a bill before either house which requires the reading or printing of the bill number or title. This formal procedure is required by the Constitution and Rules and indicates to the legislators and the public a stage in the enactment of a measure. The Constitution requires that bills receive three readings on three different days in each house, unless the readings are waived by a vote of 4/5 of the members present and voting.

Reapportionment

A redrawing of legislative district boundaries so as to provide equality of representation.

Reconsideration

A motion which, when granted, gives rise to another vote annulling or reaffirming an action previously taken. Such a motion may be offered only by a member having voted previously on the prevailing side.

Reconvened Session

Held on the sixth Wednesday after adjournment of each regular or Special Session to consider and act on the Governor’s proposed revisions.



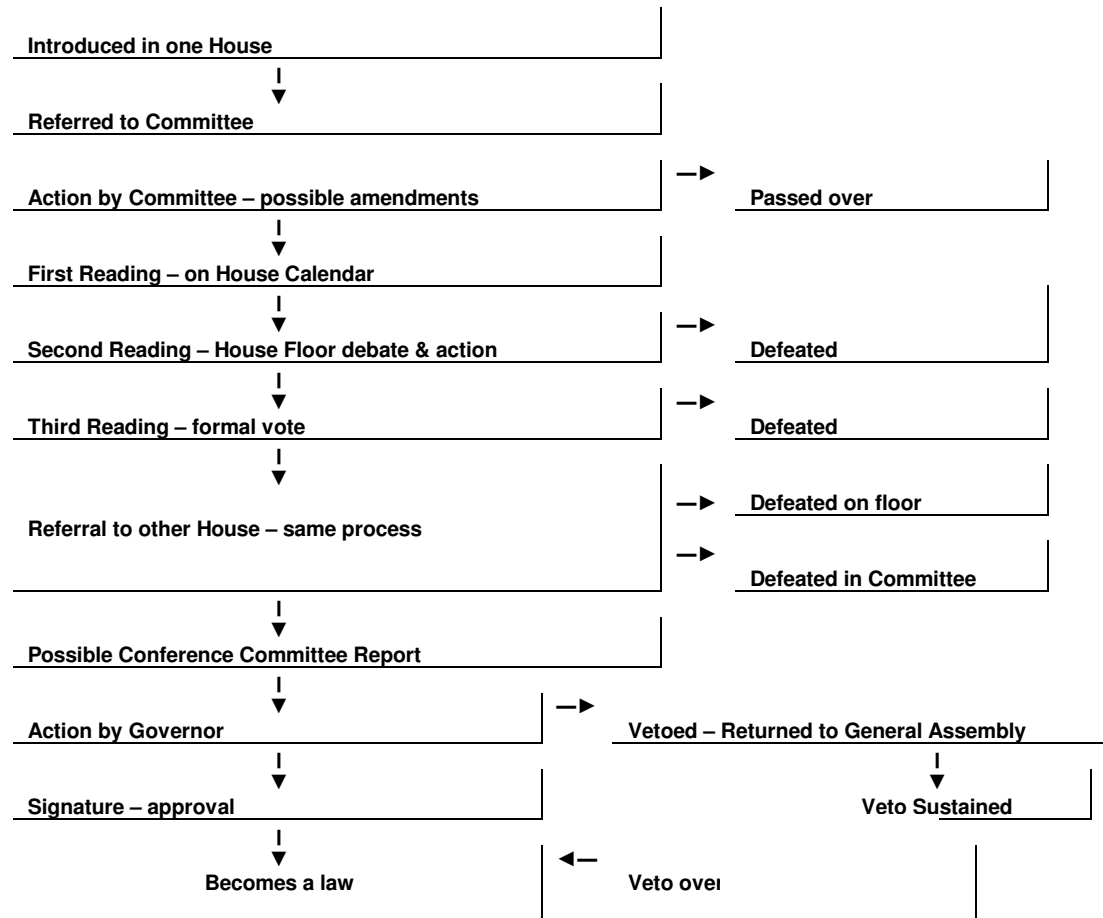
GLOSSARY OF
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HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW



Referendum

A method by which a measure adopted by the legislature may be submitted to popular vote of the electorate.

Referral

The referring of legislation to a committee.

Re-refer

The reassignment of legislation to a committee.

Resolution

Legislation which requests a study, or expresses legislative opinion or sentiment on a particular issue. Resolutions do not have the force of law and do not require the signature of the Governor. Constitutional amendments, however, are signed by the presiding officers of each house and are assigned chapter numbers.

Session

The period which the legislature meets. In even-years, session meets for 60 days, and in odd-years meets for 30 days. The session may be extended for a maximum of 30 days.

Standing Committees

Regular committees of the legislature set up to perform certain legislative functions.

Sunset

The expiration date of a legislative measure.

Suspension of the Rules

Parliamentary procedure whereby actions can be taken which would otherwise be out of order. A 2/3 vote is required to suspend the rules.

Veto

Action by which the Governor refuses to sign legislation passed by the General Assembly. A 2/3 vote of each body is required to overturn a veto.

Vote

Formal expression of will or decision by the legislative body.

Vote, En Bloc

The disposition of several items, such as a series of bills or amendments, by taking one vote.

Vote, Record

A roll call vote in which each member electronically votes yea or nay. The vote is recorded in the Journal.

Vote, Voice

Oral expression of the members when a question is submitted for their determination. Response is given by “yeas” and “nays” and the presiding officer states his decision as to which side prevails.

Yield

The relinquishing of the floor to another member to speak or ask a question.