

# GLOSSARY OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS

Act

Adjournment

Appropriation

Bill

Calendar

Caucus

Clerk of the House

Code

Committee

Constitutional Majority

Enrollment/Engrossment

Journal

Law

Legislative Council

L. O. T.

Lobbying

Majority Leader

Motion

President of the Senate

President Pro Tempore

Quorum

Resolution

Rules of Each House

Secretary of the Senate

Speaker of the House

Statute

Title

Veto

**Act** – A bill that has passed both houses of the General Assembly in identical form and becomes law, with or without the Governor’s signature. A “general act” has form application throughout the state, while a “local act” applies to a specific city or county.

**Adjournment** – Suspension of a legislative session. “Adjournment until a day certain” is a temporary suspension of proceedings during a session, while “adjournment sine dies” marks the final closure of a session.

**Appropriation** – A budget act that authorizes the spending of public money for a specific purpose.

**Bill** – A proposed law. Bills usually propose changes or additions to the existing statutory law.

**Calendar** – A daily listing of the bills and resolutions which have been reported from committee and are ready for final reading, debate, and voting by the full membership of a house. A “general calendar” prepared by the Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate governs the order of business for the session.

**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** – Is 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 actions on bills and resolutions.

**Code** – A collection of a government’s statutes and their revisions. A state’s code is usually found in a series of volumes according to subject matter and is usually by title, chapter and section.

**Committee** - Committees of legislators include:

- (a) A “**Standing Committee**” studies proposed legislation in some general field of legislative activity (e. g., Agriculture, Education, and Health) and recommends to the full membership whether that legislation should be supported or not supported.
- (b) An “**Interim Committee**” is appointed to meet between legislative sessions to study a particular problem and report back to the full membership.
- (c) A “**Committee of the whole**” is the designation for either the Senate or the House of Representatives when the entire membership meets as a committee to study matters under that chamber’s rules relaxed to permit more informal discussion.

**Constitutional Majority** - The Delaware Constitution requires a majority of the entire membership (regardless of how many are actually present) to vote for the passage of bills and resolutions that will have the effect on law. In contrast, many motions or procedural matters require only a “simple majority” or a majority of those present and voting.

**Enrollment/Engrossment** - Preparation of a bill in its final and official form to show the precise language of the measure passed by both houses.

**Journal** - The official record of legislative proceedings in each house.

**Law** - The general term, usually used for official acts and statutes of the legislature.

**Legislative Council Research Division** - The staff office that provides bill drafting, legal counseling, references bill service and other legal assistance and services to members of the General Assembly and public.

**L.O.T.** - Laid on Table.

**Lobbying** – Attempts by a person or group acting on behalf of other to influence legislation.

**Majority Leader** – That member chosen by each house 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 presiding officer in the Senate, held by the Lieutenant Governor.

**President Pro Tempore** – The Senator elected by the other members to replace the President in case of absence, disability or resignation. The President Pro Tempore appoints all members to standing committees.

**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 of its total members.

**Resolution** – A resolution is the formal expression of the opinion, sentiment or will, of either or both Houses of the General Assembly. There are three types of resolutions:

**Simple Resolution** – A simple resolution is a motion of the house, and deals with the internal affairs of that house only. The effect of its passage does not go beyond the bounds and the authority of that house.

**Concurrent Resolution** – A concurrent resolution is used to accomplish the same purpose in relation to the entire legislature that a simple resolution accomplishes for with the House or Senate singly. A concurrent resolution adopted by the legislature does not become a statute, nor does it have the force and effect of law, nor can it be used for any purpose that requires the exercise of legislative power.

**Joint Resolution** – A joint resolution is the most formal, and is addressed to matters that are not the internal affairs of the house individually, nor the internal affairs of the General

Assembly as a whole. It is of no legal effect unless it is passed by both Houses and signed by the Governor. A joint resolution is not a law but is used to employ temporary measures and has the force of law while in effect.

**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.

**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, their members and assignment of bills to committee.

**Statute** – The written permanent law formally enacted by the legislature.

**Title** – The bills' introduction summarizing and listing the subject matter of the bill as well as statutes affected by it.

**Veto** – The Governor's disapproval of a bill passed by the General Assembly. Unless overridden by a three-fifths vote of the total membership of each house, a veto prevents a bill from becoming law.