

Definitions of Common Terms

Assembly

The California State Assembly is the lower house of the California State Legislature. It consists of 80 members, with each member representing at least 465,000 people. An Assembly term is two years. The Assembly is associated with the color green.

Senate

The California State Senate is the upper house of the California State Legislature. It consists of 40 members, with each member representing approximately 931,000 people. A Senate term is four years. The Senate is associated with the color red.

Author

The legislator that is listed as the principle author of the bill. There may be more than one, but generally, the most important author is the first listed.

Sponsor

The private individual or group who developed a piece of legislation and advocates its passage.

Legislative Staffer

Staff of either a legislator or a legislative committee. This person is generally given a number of bills or certain subject areas to focus on for a session on behalf of their legislator or legislative committee.

Legislative Counsel

The nonpartisan public agency that drafts legislative proposals, prepares legal opinions, and provides other confidential legal services to the Legislature.

Stakeholders

Groups or individuals that have an interest in a given subject matter. Stakeholders can include interest groups (associations), individuals, and government entities (state, local, federal).

House of Origin (First House)

The House in which a measure begins; the Assembly is the House of Origin for all Assembly measures.

Second House

The house that hears measures following the House of Origin.

Urgency Clause

Language in a bill which states the bill will take effect immediately upon enactment. A two-thirds vote is required for bills containing an urgency clause.

Enrolled

When a bill passes both the Senate and Assembly, it is ordered "enrolled." Upon enrollment, the bill is again proofread for accuracy and delivered to the Governor.

Chaptered

After a bill has been signed by the Governor, the Secretary of State assigns the bill a Chapter Number, for example, "Chapter 123, Statutes of 2015," which subsequently may be used to refer to the measure.

Chaptering Out

When, during a calendar year, two or more bills amending the same code section become law, the bill enacted last (with a higher chapter number) becomes law and prevails over ("chapters out") the code section in the bill or bills previously enacted. Chaptering out can be prevented with the adoption of "double jointing" amendments.

Double Jointing

Double jointing refers to technical amendments necessary when two or more bills propose to amend the same code section (i.e., are in conflict). Double jointing prevents the problem of chaptering out.