
Legislative Glossary



Image courtesy of Kathleen Luikart, LSC

Statehouse Grounds, Third Street

Act

A bill passed in identical versions by both the House of Representatives and Senate and signed by the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate. An act is then sent to the Governor for approval or veto or becomes law without the Governor's signature.

Adjourn/Adjournment (Sine Die)

A motion used to signal the end of a legislative session on a particular day and that suspends operations and terminates business until the next scheduled meeting. Adjournment sine die ("without a day") refers to the final adjournment of a General Assembly.

Administrative Code

A compilation of administrative rules adopted by state agencies. These rules are collected in the Ohio Administrative Code and are available online at codes.ohio.gov and in printed format.

Administrative Rule

A written statement of law adopted by an administrative agency pursuant to authority granted by the General Assembly to carry out the policies and intent of a statute enacted by the General Assembly.

Advice and Consent

The power vested in the Senate to review and approve or reject gubernatorial appointments to various positions, such as the appointment of administrative department directors.

Amendment

A proposal to alter the text of a law, bill, or another amendment by substituting, adding, or deleting language.

Appropriation

An authorization granted by the General Assembly, usually to a state agency, to spend money for a specific purpose during a fiscal year or biennium. No appropriation may be made for a period longer than two years.

Appropriation Spreadsheet

A document in spreadsheet format, prepared by the Legislative Service Commission's Legislative Budget Office staff, that lists individual agency appropriations by line item and compares appropriations in different versions of an operating appropriations bill as the bill moves through the legislative process.

Biennial Session

A meeting period for a legislature consisting of two calendar years (a biennium). This two-year period may also be referred to as a session of the General Assembly.

Bill

A legislative proposal to do one or more of the following: (1) create a new law (enact), (2) change an existing law by adding new language to or eliminating language from one or more sections of existing law (amend), or (3) eliminate an existing section or sections of law (repeal). The General Assembly may enact, amend, repeal, or suspend law only by bill, which must be presented to the Governor for the Governor's approval. A bill must proceed through various constitutionally prescribed steps to become law.

A bill is structured with a header, title, and bill sections. The header includes the bill number, General Assembly session information, and a list of sponsors and cosponsors. The title includes the list of Revised Code sections being added or modified (if applicable) and a brief description of the bill's contents. A bill section may consist of [Revised Code sections](#) and/or [uncodified law](#).

Bill Analysis

A document prepared by the Legislative Service Commission's Office of Research and Drafting staff that summarizes key points of a bill and details changes to the law proposed by the bill. An analysis is revised at several stages in the legislative process. The first analysis is usually prepared when a bill is scheduled for a first hearing in committee.

Bond

A certificate or other evidence of debt in which the issuer promises to repay the bondholder the amount of a loan and, usually, to pay a fixed rate of interest at specified intervals. A general obligation bond is a bond secured by the issuer's general taxing powers, often expressed, in the

case of the state, as the “full faith and credit of the state.” A revenue bond is a bond that is repayable exclusively from revenue generated by the specific projects financed by the bond.

Budget

The biennial appropriation plan, also called an “operating budget,” which allocates certain state funds to state agencies for specified purposes, including the administration and personnel of the agency, the implementation and enforcement of programs within the jurisdiction of the agency, and equipment.

Bulletin

A publication compiled by the Senate Clerk that records information about every bill and joint and concurrent resolution introduced, including the dates of action on each bill, bill sponsor and cosponsors, and the page numbers of the Senate and House *Journals* that contain amendments to, and roll call votes on, the bills and resolutions. The *Bulletin* also provides information about Revised Code sections affected, a list of special committees, and a subject index to bills and resolutions.

Calendar

A legislative agenda for a day’s floor session including bills and other items of business offered for consideration. *Calendars* are published by the Senate and House Clerks’ offices.

Call to Order

The action of convening the House of Representatives or Senate or a committee to do business.

Capital Appropriations Bill

A bill, usually enacted during the second year of a biennium, that authorizes new capital spending for projects such as the acquisition, construction, equipment, or renovation of facilities of state agencies.

Capital Reappropriations Bill

A bill reappropriating money for capital projects not completed during the two-year life of their original appropriation. A capital reappropriations bill allocates funds appropriated in an earlier bill but not spent.

Catalog of Budget Line Items (COBLI)

A budget document prepared, and updated annually, by the Legislative Service Commission’s Legislative Budget Office staff that provides detailed information on every line item appropriation from every state agency. Specifically, COBLI provides a description of the line item’s purpose, legal authority, funding source, appropriations for the current biennium, and four years of actual expenditure history.

Caucus

A meeting of a group of legislators from the same political party of the House of Representatives or Senate, usually held to discuss legislative issues and make policy and strategy decisions. This term can also refer to a group of House or Senate members determined by political party or a group of House and Senate members with a common purpose, for example, the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus.

Chamber

The official location for convening a legislative session. The House of Representatives and the Senate have separate chambers. House Rules refer to the House Chamber as the “Hall of the House.”

Clerk (House and Senate)

Persons separately elected by the House of Representatives and the Senate who act as administrative officers and are responsible for keeping the official record of all bills and resolutions introduced in their respective houses. Other duties include overseeing the printing and distribution of bills, resolutions, and reports; acting as parliamentarian; and facilitating the order of business during a floor session. Various specialized clerks assist the Clerks of the House and Senate.

Codified Law

Law of a general nature that is compiled in the [Revised Code](#) and assigned a Revised Code section number.

Commit/Refer

A motion used to assign a bill to a committee for consideration. A motion to recommit or to re-refer sends a bill back to a committee any time before passage.

Committee Report

A report issued by a committee recommending that a bill be considered for a floor vote by the full membership of the House of Representatives or Senate. A committee report consists of a signature page containing the signatures of the committee members who voted for or against the bill and a copy of the bill.

Comparison Document (Compare Doc)

A document prepared by the Legislative Service Commission staff, commonly known as the “compare doc,” that compares the current version of an operating appropriations bill, provision by provision, with one or more versions of the bill that were produced at preceding steps in the legislative process. Arranged alphabetically by agency, the compare doc includes estimates of each provision’s fiscal effects but does not include the line-item appropriations, which are available in the [Appropriation Spreadsheet](#). Specialized compare docs are available for conference committee deliberations.

Concurrence in Amendments

The point in the legislative enactment process at which the first house approves (concur in), without alteration, amendments adopted by the second house.

Conference Committee

A committee created to resolve points of difference between two versions of one bill passed by the two houses. If a conference committee resolves differences in the versions of the bill, the committee adopts a conference committee report. A conference committee report must be approved by a majority of both the House of Representatives and the Senate in order for the bill to be enacted and sent to the Governor.

Confirmation

The Senate's approval of a Governor's appointee.

Conflict of Interest

A situation in which a government official's private interests benefit from his or her public actions. The Ohio Ethics Laws, contained in Chapter 102 and sections 2921.42 and 2921.43 of the Revised Code, and the Legislative Code of Ethics prohibit certain actions associated with conflicts of interest.

Constitutional Amendment (Ohio)

A change in the language of a section of the Ohio Constitution, the addition of a new section, or the repeal of an existing one. A proposal to amend the Constitution may originate in the legislature through the adoption of a joint resolution or through an initiative petition of the electorate. In either case, the proposed amendment must be submitted to a vote by the general electorate.

Cosponsor

A legislator, other than the sponsor or a joint sponsor, whose name appears in the list of sponsors of a bill as an expression of support. A bill may have many cosponsors.

Debt Service

The money needed, or payments due, to pay principal and interest on a debt.

Digest of Enactments

A compilation of condensed versions of the final analyses of enacted bills published by the Legislative Service Commission.

Discharge Petition

A motion to discharge a committee of further consideration of a bill or resolution.

Effective Date

The date on which a law can first be applied and enforced. In most cases, the effective date is the 91st day after a law has been filed with the Secretary of State.

Elector/Electorate

A person/all persons qualified to vote in an election.

Emergency Clause

A clause that allows a bill to take effect immediately upon passage by the General Assembly and approval by the Governor. The clause, as constitutionally required, sets forth the reasons a bill is an emergency measure. The clause is voted on separately by the legislature and requires an affirmative vote of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the members of each house. If the emergency clause is approved, the bill as an emergency measure is voted on and also requires a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote to pass. A bill that includes a provision to levy a tax or make an appropriation for current expenses does not require an emergency clause for that provision to take immediate effect.

Encumbrance

The commitment of funds against a state agency's appropriations for the purchase of goods or services.

Engrossment

The preparation of a copy of a bill by incorporating all of its amendments. The House or Senate Clerk's office engrosses a bill before it is sent to the [Rules and Reference Committee](#) and before it is sent to the other house.

Enrolled Bill

A printed version of a bill that is prepared when the bill has passed both houses in identical form. The enrolled bill is signed by the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate and becomes an act awaiting the Governor's approval.

Ex Officio Member

A person who is automatically made a member of a certain committee or board by virtue of a particular office or position held. Although ex officio members may be voting members of a committee or board, often they serve in a nonvoting capacity.

Executive Budget

The complete biennial financial plan that the Governor is required to submit to the General Assembly not later than four weeks after its organization (or not later than March 15 in years of a new governor's inauguration). In addition to the Governor's requested appropriations for the operations of state government, the executive budget may include the Governor's proposals for law changes needed for its implementation, as well as other budget-related information such as historical expenditures, revenue analyses, and supporting documentation.

Executive Order

Any written or printed order, directive, rule, or regulation promulgated by the Governor to: (1) exercise the Governor's constitutional authority as "chief executive," (2) enforce state laws, (3) exercise responsibilities as commander-in-chief of the armed forces and civil defense

forces of the state, or (4) in the role of “agent” of the state legislature, exercise powers delegated by statute to administer and implement particular state laws and programs.

Fiscal Note

A fiscal analysis required by law that is prepared by the Legislative Service Commission’s Legislative Budget Office staff and that estimates the financial impact of proposed legislation on state and local government revenues and expenditures. This analysis is published and updated for individual bills as part of the combined Fiscal Note and Local Impact Statement. See also [Local Impact Statement](#).

Fiscal Year (FY)

A 12-month budget and accounting period used for fiscal planning purposes. The state fiscal year (usually abbreviated FY, but sometimes SFY) begins July 1 and ends June 30. The federal fiscal year (FFY) begins October 1 and ends September 30. The year identified with a fiscal year is the year of the ending date. Thus, FY 2025 is the 12-month period starting July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025.

General Revenue Fund (GRF)

The primary operating fund of the state. It is the fund that receives the unrestricted revenues of the state from the personal income tax, the sales tax, and other sources.

Greenbook

An analysis prepared by the Legislative Service Commission’s Legislative Budget Office staff for an individual state agency subsequent to the state budget’s enactment. In addition to a detailed analysis of the agency’s budget, a Greenbook contains a brief description of the agency and of the appropriations enacted in the state budget that affect it. See also [Redbook](#).

Hearing

A meeting of a legislative committee in which members hear testimony from legislators, interest groups, or private citizens regarding legislation under consideration by the committee.

Immediate Consideration

Suspension, by the House or Senate, of the constitutional requirement that bills be considered on three different days in each house, making it possible to bring a bill to an immediate House or Senate vote. The Constitution requires a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of the house in which the bill is pending to suspend the three-day requirement.

Initiative

A process authorized by the Ohio Constitution that permits the electors of the state to propose laws or constitutional amendments independently of the General Assembly and allows the electors of a municipality to propose ordinances or charter amendments independently of the municipal legislative authority. An initiative petition must meet certain legal requirements, such as having the minimum number of signatures. If the petition is valid, the issue is submitted to the voters for their approval or rejection.

Joint Committee

A committee consisting of both House and Senate members.

Joint Rules

Procedural guidelines adopted by both the House and Senate that govern matters of concern to both houses, such as committees of conference and joint sessions. In the absence of joint rules, the General Assembly refers to parliamentary guides to resolve matters concerning both houses.

Joint Session

A combined meeting of the House of Representatives and Senate.

Joint Sponsor

A sponsor who joins with another primary sponsor to introduce a bill or joint resolution.

Journal

The official record of House of Representatives and Senate legislative floor sessions prepared and distributed by the Clerks' offices. Each house prepares its own *Journal*.

Law

An act that has been signed by the Governor or that has become effective without the Governor's signature. This term also refers to existing statutes and, more broadly, to any rule or principle enforceable by a court.

Laws of Ohio or Session Laws

A compilation of all acts and resolutions enacted by the General Assembly during a specific biennial session and also referred to as session laws. Beginning with the 127th General Assembly, compilations have been replaced with digital copies of the acts available at the Ohio Secretary of State website.

Lay on the Table or Table

Under general parliamentary law, a motion to temporarily postpone action on legislation. In Ohio, the effect of the motion is to dispose of an issue without taking a position on its merits.

Legislative Agent or Lobbyist

A person hired to represent the interests and positions of the person's employer on issues pending before the General Assembly.

Legislative Liaison

A person designated by a state agency to represent the agency during the legislative process and assist members of the General Assembly in understanding programs or obtaining information relative to the agency. A legislative liaison must register as a legislative agent (lobbyist).

Local Impact Statement

An analysis required by law that is prepared by the Legislative Service Commission's Legislative Budget Office staff and that estimates the net additional cost of pending legislation to counties, municipalities, townships, and school districts. Required for bills with local costs that exceed a minimum threshold, a local impact statement is published and updated for individual bills as part of the LSC combined document, Fiscal Note and Local Impact Statement. See also [Fiscal Note](#).

Memorialize

To convey, by resolution, the opinion of the General Assembly to Congress.

Motion

A legislator's formal request for consideration of a proposal for action by a legislative body.

Motion to Reconsider

A motion to reconsider the vote on a bill or resolution as if it had never been considered. The motion must be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side and must be made no later than the second legislative day following the day on which the vote was taken.

Omnibus Amendment

An amendment to a bill that comprises numerous individual amendments offered as a group and voted on as a single unit.

Open Meetings

Meetings of legislative and governing bodies that must be open to members of the public under the provisions of the Open Meetings Laws. Under these laws, the public must be properly notified of meeting times and locations.

Order of Business

The order in which the House of Representatives or Senate considers items of legislative business.

Out of Order

Not conducted in accordance with proper parliamentary rules and procedures.

Parliamentary Procedure

Formal procedures and requirements of parliamentary debate. The House and Senate Rules establish House and Senate legislative procedure and designate specific published parliamentary guides as resources to consult about issues not addressed by the Rules.

Personal Privilege

A provision within legislative rules of procedure under which a member may ask to explain a personal matter but may not discuss or debate an issue during the explanation.

Previous Question

A procedural motion under which a member moves to close debate on a question.

Question (Point) of Order

A motion through which a member may question a procedure and state the rule, statute, or constitutional provision that the member believes is being violated.

Quorum

The minimum number of members who must be present to officially conduct business.

Recess

A formal break in a voting session of the General Assembly. Questions pending at the time of recess are resumed without any motion to that effect.

Redbook

An analysis prepared by the Legislative Service Commission's Legislative Budget Office staff at the beginning of the legislative budget process that examines the executive budget proposal for an individual state agency. A Redbook typically contains a brief summary of the agency and the provisions of the executive budget that affect the agency. They also include a detailed analysis of the executive budget recommendations for the agency, including funding for each appropriation line item. See also [Greenbook](#).

Redistricting Commission, Ohio

The Commission responsible for drawing Ohio General Assembly districts and, in some cases, Ohio's Congressional districts. The seven-member Commission consists of the Governor, the Auditor of State, the Secretary of State, one person appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one person appointed by the House Minority Leader, one person appointed by the President of the Senate, and one person appointed by the Senate Minority Leader.

Redistricting, Congressional

The redrawing of congressional districts according to the state's population as determined by the decennial U.S. Census. The Ohio Constitution gives the General Assembly primary authority to adopt a congressional district plan in the form of a bill, but requires the Ohio Redistricting Commission to adopt congressional districts under certain circumstances.

Redistricting, State

The redrawing of Ohio House of Representatives and Senate districts according to the state's population as determined by the decennial U.S. Census. The Ohio Redistricting Commission is responsible for drawing the boundaries. See also [Redistricting Commission, Ohio](#).

Referendum

The power of the people to approve or disapprove any law (other than a law levying taxes, appropriating money for current operating expenses, or declaring an emergency) passed by the General Assembly. A referendum petition may be filed within 90 days after a law has been filed

by the Governor with the Secretary of State. If the Secretary of State validates the petition, the Secretary submits the law to the voters for their approval or rejection.

Repeal

To revoke or annul a law or rule by legislative action.

Resolution

A formal written expression of the opinion or will of the legislature, the subject matter of which would not properly constitute a statute. Types of resolutions include:

Simple Resolution – A formal written expression of a house, adopted only by that house, relating to its organization or extending recognition to individuals or organizations.

Concurrent Resolution – Generally, a formal expression of the intent or wish of the legislature. This type of resolution may originate in either house but must be adopted by both houses. Concurrent resolutions most often deal with joint procedural matters, communications to Congress, and invalidation of administrative and court rules. Additional uses of concurrent resolutions are described in Chapter 7 under [Oversight Regarding States of Emergency](#) and [Oversight Regarding Public Health](#).

Joint Resolution – A formal written expression of the General Assembly’s opinions and wishes usually reserved for matters required by the Constitution or statutes to be in joint resolution form such as proposing amendments to the Ohio Constitution, ratifying amendments to the U.S. Constitution, and calling for a federal constitutional convention. To become effective, a joint resolution must be adopted by both houses.

Revised Code, Ohio

The codified law of the state, available online at codes.ohio.gov or in printed format and often abbreviated R.C. or ORC. Commercial versions of the Code, published privately, include annotations and other reference material. Codified law is sometimes informally referred to as “permanent law.”

The Revised Code is divided into titles, chapters, sections, and supplemental sections. Each subdivision of the Revised Code indicates increasing specificity regarding the topic addressed. For example, Title 33 of the Revised Code addresses education law generally, and each chapter and its sections provide increasing levels of detail.

You can determine the title, chapter, and section (and, if relevant, supplemental section) of the Revised Code from the number:

R.C. 101.21 → Title 1, Chapter 1, Section 21

R.C. 3301.0720 → Title 33, Chapter 1, Section 7, and Supplemental Section 20.

Roll Call Vote

A vote of a house in which each member’s individual vote is recorded by name.

Rules (House or Senate)

Legislative rules of procedure adopted at the beginning of each General Assembly. Both the House of Representatives and Senate adopt rules that are printed in the [Journals](#) of the respective houses.

Rules and Reference Committee

A standing committee in both the House and Senate that (1) refers bills and resolutions to another standing committee for consideration and (2) under its rules function, schedules the agenda for floor sessions and performs other responsibilities as might be assigned. During some General Assemblies, the House and the Senate have created a separate Reference Committee and Rules Committee to perform these functions. See also [Standing Committee](#).

Select or Special Committee

A committee created by order of the Speaker or President (or both in the case of a joint select committee) or by resolution or statute for a particular purpose or task. A select or special committee is automatically dissolved upon completion of the assigned task or upon reaching its specified termination date.

Sergeant-at-Arms

An employee of the House of Representatives or Senate responsible for maintaining order in the chambers, halls, galleries, corridors, and committee rooms of the Statehouse and Senate building; enforcing the rules; and serving subpoenas and warrants issued by the House or Senate or any duly authorized officer or committee. The House Sergeant-at-Arms also is responsible for maintaining order in the areas of the Vern Riffe Center that are under the exclusive use and control of the House.

Session

A meeting convened by the House of Representatives or Senate in its chamber during which the House or Senate conducts its official business. The term “session” may also be used to refer to the [Biennial Session](#).

Special Order (of Business)

A motion to bring up an issue for any particular day and hour for consideration under a suspension of the regular order of business upon a vote by the membership.

Sponsor

The member who introduces a bill, resolution, or amendment, sometimes referred to as the primary or prime sponsor. The sponsor’s name appears first, often followed by [cosponsors](#), in the heading of a bill, resolution, or amendment. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate permit a bill or resolution to list two [joint sponsors](#) as primary sponsors.

Standing Committee

A committee established at the beginning of a General Assembly. Most standing committees are organized by subject matter so that most bills referred to a particular committee address related topics.

Status Report of Legislation

A report of all legislative action on all bills, joint resolutions, concurrent resolutions, and simple resolutions introduced during a particular General Assembly. The Status Report is available on the General Assembly's website.

Study Committee

A committee created to study a subject of interest to the General Assembly. As a result of its study, the committee may publish a report, make recommendations, or propose legislation.

Subcommittee

A committee formed under the supervision of a standing committee. A standing subcommittee functions similarly to a standing committee in that it may consider several bills during a General Assembly. An ad hoc subcommittee is appointed to consider a single issue and is dissolved once its task is complete.

Substitute Bill (Sub Bill)

A redrafted version of a bill, usually substantially amended, that replaces a preceding version.

Sunset Provision

A provision enacted by the General Assembly that places an expiration date on an entire act or part of an act.

Supplemental Appropriation

An additional appropriation for a purpose or agency that is made subsequent to the initial appropriation for the purpose or agency for that fiscal year or biennium.

Suspension of the Rules

Dispensing with the operation of the House or Senate Rules by motion.

Three Considerations Requirement

Consideration of a bill on three different days by each house, as required by the Ohio Constitution. The members of the house considering the bill may suspend the three-day rule by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote.

First Consideration – The point in the legislative process, known as Introduction, at which a bill is read on the floor and thereby introduced.

Second Consideration – The point in the legislative process at which the Rules and Reference Committee reports a bill back to its house with its referral (assignment) to a standing committee.

Third Consideration – The point in the legislative process at which the full membership of the House of Representatives or Senate votes on a bill. This step is also known as “floor action.”

Uncodified Law

Law of a special nature that has a limited duration or operation and is not assigned an Ohio Revised Code section number. Uncodified law may also be referred to informally as temporary law.

Veto

The Governor’s official disapproval of an act. A veto must occur within ten days, Sundays excepted, of receipt of the act. A vetoed act must be returned to the house in which it originated accompanied by the Governor’s written objections.

Veto, Line-Item

The Governor’s disapproval of an item or items in an appropriation act. Those provisions of the act that are not vetoed become law. The Ohio Supreme Court has ruled that an “item” must be separate and distinct from other provisions of the bill.

Veto, Overriding a

The option available to the General Assembly to re-pass a bill after the Governor has vetoed it. The Ohio Constitution requires a $\frac{3}{5}$ vote of each house (or $\frac{2}{3}$ in certain instances) to override a veto. Action to override a veto must commence in the bill’s house of origin.

Voice Vote

A method of voting by which members indicate approval or disapproval of a measure by saying “yea” or “nay.” The presiding officer determines from the yeas and nays which side prevails. A voice vote differs from a roll call vote because votes are not counted on an individual basis.