

Glossary

Words That Will Help You Understand What Is Going On

Accede Second house agrees to the request for a conference committee and appoints conferees.

Agree to Disagree Report of the conference committee which is not able to reach an agreement in the conference committee. This allows the second report to be considered with only a majority of the conferees signing the report.

Amendment A change or addition to a bill or motion; must be germane to the subject of the bill or motion.

Author Legislator who introduces a bill; chief author has primary responsibility for passage of a bill which may have additional coauthors, sometimes called sponsors.

Bill The form in which a proposal to create, change, or abolish a law is introduced into the legislature. Bills are considered by the body (Senate or House).

Calendar Bills and/or other items of legislative business listed in the order in which they will be presented in the chamber. The Calendar is very useful to anyone following actions in the chamber.

Caucus Legislators who belong to the same political party and are organized to impact legislative actions; “to caucus” is a meeting of these legislators.

Chamber Place in the capitol in which legislators meet to consider legislation in the House or Senate and/or conduct other business.

Committee A group of legislators, appointed by the leadership, that considers and makes recommendations on bills that have been referred to it. The Senate and House each has its own committee system. A “standing committee” is a permanent committee unless the Rules of the body are changed. Other committees include conference (members of Senate and House appointed to reach a compromise on different versions of a bill); interim (appointed to study a subject after the session adjourns and charged with reporting back to the legislature in the next session); and ad hoc (appointed for a specific purpose; dissolves when task is completed).

Committee of the Whole Senate or House acting as a single committee. When either body meets as a Committee of the Whole, debate is informal and actions are preliminary. Votes are recorded in the Senate when five members demand a vote, in the House when 15 members demand a vote.

Concur First house agrees with the amendments made by the second house. This constitutes a final action.

Conference Committee Report Adopted Conference Committees usually include three members from each house who get together to work out the differences in a bill which has been passed by both houses in different versions. When both houses vote and approve the same report, the bill is ready to go to the governor for signature.

Effective Date The date the bill will become law. Statute Book date is July 1. That is the date the Session Laws are published. Bills also become law upon the date of publication in the Kansas Register or a date may be specified in the bill.

Enroll Printing of resolution or concurrent resolution on parchment with dates of actions and signatures of leadership.

Enrolled and Presented to Governor Process on bills of dating actions, leadership signing the enrolled version of the bill and taking the copy to the governor.

Glossary

Final Action When a bill has been debated and amended, a roll call vote is taken. All members vote Yea, Nay, or Present and Not Voting (pass). These votes are recorded and printed in the Journal with the title of the bill.

First Reading The formal introduction of a bill. Clerk of the legislative body “reads in” the bill; usually the reading of the bill’s title is all that is necessary. Following the first reading, the bill is referred to the appropriate committee.

Floor Area in the chambers where legislators sit and from which they speak.

Gallery Area reserved for the public to observe the chamber.

General Orders The section of the Calendar when the house resolves itself into a Committee of the Whole to debate and amend bills. This allows all members the opportunity to work on the bill, not just those in the committee to which it was referred.

Hearing Committee meeting in which points of view on a bill are presented and votes are taken.

Introduction A member or committee requests a revisor of statutes (attorney) to draft a bill. When it is written, the member turns the bill into the clerk or secretary and it is given a number and read before the House or Senate and that constitutes introduction.

Journal Official record of the actions taken by the legislature. Each body has its own journal. A copy of the journal usually is available the day following the proceedings.

Majority Leader Legislator selected by the majority caucus to direct caucus strategy on the floor; leads the caucus.

Motion A proposal made formally to a committee or to the full Senate or House. Bills and other legislative business are moved through the legislature by motions.

Nonconcur The first chamber does not agree with (or wants to look at) amendments of the second chamber. Bill goes to conference.

Omnibus The final bill approved each session which normally reconciles spending for approved bills and establishes the required ending balance for the various funds.

Quorum Established by rule, it is the number of legislators that must be present to conduct business, generally a majority.

Revisor of the Statutes Office that has the authority to put bills in proper legal form.

Rules Adopted by the legislature, rules regulate the process and actions of the legislature in a prescribed way.

Second Reading Following committee action, a committee report is presented to the legislative body and, following the acceptance of the report, the bill receives its second reading. Next step: the bill is placed on General Orders.

Sine Die Final adjournment of the legislature.

Speaker The presiding officer of the House of Representatives, usually of the majority caucus. Often referred to as “the second most powerful position in state government” (following the governor).

Third Reading Reading of the bill before the legislative body votes on final passage.

Veto Return of a bill by the governor to the legislature without the governor’s signature (which is necessary for a bill to become a law). To override a veto, two-thirds (2/3) majority of the entire legislature is necessary for passage.