

# **Glossary**

## **Glossary of Terms for Legislative Types for CA**

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## **Glossary of Terms for Legislative (Bill) Types for California:**

### **Legislative Types**

A	Assembly
ACA	Assembly Constitutional Amendment
ACR	Assembly Concurrent Resolution
AJR	Assembly Joint Resolution
EO	Executive Order
GRP	Governors Reorganization Plan
HR	House Resolution
PA	Preprint Assembly
PACA	Preprint Assembly Constitutional Amendment
PACR	Preprint Assembly Concurrent Resolution
PAJR	Preprint Assembly Joint Resolution
PS	Preprint Senate
PSCA	Preprint Senate Constitutional Amendment
PSCR	Preprint Senate Concurrent Resolution
PSJR	Preprint Senate Joint Resolution
PSR	Preprint Senate Resolution
S	Senate
SCA	Senate Constitutional Amendment
SCR	Senate Concurrent Resolution
SJR	Senate Joint Resolution
SR	Senate Resolution
V	Ballot Measure

**Source: Adapted from “Legislative Types,” State Net®. Reference Desk, California State Resources.**

# Glossary of Legislative Terms

*For a full list, go to the Glossary of Legislative Terms at  
[www.leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/glossaryTemplate.xhtml](http://www.leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/glossaryTemplate.xhtml)*

**AB:** When a bill number begins with "AB" it means it is an Assembly Bill and a state-level bill. The other type of state-level bill begins with "SB", meaning Senate Bill. Federal bills begin with either "S." or "H.R."

**ALERT:** A communication from Roy Hanson and Nathan Pierce, usually made via Email Alerts about an impending piece of legislation which requires immediate contact with our legislators. Homeschooling leaders, pastors, or supporters of FPM each calendar year receive these Email Alerts complimentary.

**AMENDMENT:** An addition or change in the language of a bill, or an addition or change in the language of another amendment.

**ASSEMBLY:** The 80 members of one of the two houses of our state legislature. The other house is the State Senate.

**ASSEMBLY MEMBER:** This is the correct term to use in describing or addressing our elected representatives to the State Assembly.

**BILL:** Legislation proposed to become law. It is identified with a number, title, and author. Bill numbers identify what branch of the legislature the author is part of. Bills at the state level begin with either "SB" (for Senate Bill) or "AB" (for Assembly Bill.) Bills at the federal level begin with either "S." (for Senate) or "H.R." (for House of Representatives.)

**CALIFORNIA ROSTER:** This roster list the current, complete address and phone information for state representatives. Refer to the California Roster on the California Secretary of State's website: [www.sos.ca.gov/administration/california-roster](http://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/california-roster)  
The California Roster also lists contact information on state agencies, departments, boards, and commissions.

**CHAIRMAN/WOMAN:** He or she heads the committee, i.e. Public Safety Committee. The chairman/woman wields an enormous amount of influence on the committee vote and whether a bill will be heard or be put in "suspense" which usually means it dies. The chairman is appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly (for Assembly committees) or the President (pro Tempore) of the Senate (for Senate committees.)

**COMMISSIONS, BOARDS & DEPARTMENTS:** In the state government, they are appointed by the governor and are not accountable to the voting public.

**COMMITTEE:** All proposed legislation must pass through at least one policy committee before it can be voted on by each house on the "floor" of the legislature. All bills which affect the budget and government expenditures must also go through a fiscal committee. Legislators are assigned to committees by the Speaker of the Assembly or by the President of the Senate. Committee assignments can be found at the following:

**Assembly Committees:** [www.assembly.ca.gov/committees](http://www.assembly.ca.gov/committees)

**Senate Committees:** [www.senate.ca.gov/committees](http://www.senate.ca.gov/committees)

The committee hearings are the only public forum for citizen testimony. This is where most bills live or die.

**CONFERENCE COMMITTEE:** This is a small group from the State Assembly and the State Senate that confers to negotiate differences in the language of a bill over which the two houses disagree. If both houses agree on the negotiated language, the bill goes to the governor. If they cannot arrive at an agreement, the bill dies. The process is the same on the federal level.

**CONGRESS:** This is the federal body of elected officials that passes federal laws. It is comprised of U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives. Our state equivalent is the State Legislature, comprised of State Senators and State Assembly Members.

**CONGRESSMAN:** A title used to describe a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. The title "Representative" (capitalized) may also be used. "Representative" is the usual title used today because it can more easily fit either a man or a woman.

**CONSULTANTS:** These individuals are hired by the chairmen of the committees. For example, in the Education Committee, the consultants do research on the bills assigned to the committee, receive position letters from organizations and citizens supporting or opposing a bill, and advise the members of the committee on the pros and cons and usually on how to vote.

**DISTRICT:** The state is divided into 40 State Senate districts and 80 State Assembly districts for state-level representation. California is divided into 53 Congressional districts for federal-level representation. The district boundaries are reset every 10 years. Boundaries for each type of district overlap those of the other types.

**DISTRICT OFFICE:** The District Office is the office of a legislator in his or her district. This is where most constituent communication should be directed. Most state legislators return to their district office on Fridays.

**FLOOR:** When a vote is "on the floor" it means that it is presented for vote by the entire State Senate or Assembly (at the state level), or by the entire U.S. Senate or House of

Representatives (at the federal level.) In contrast, a committee vote takes place in a committee hearing, with votes taken only from the members of the committee.

**H.R.:** If a bill number begins with "H.R.", it means it is a House of Representatives bill at the federal level. The other type of federal bill begins with "S." State bills begin with "AB" or "SB."

**LEGISLATION:** If it has not yet been approved, proposed legislation is referred to as a bill. It must go through many steps before it is passed into law. If it fails at any one of the steps, the legislation is dead. If it passes through each and every step successfully, it becomes a statute (i.e., a law.)

**LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT OR STAFFER:** L.A.'s are employed by elected officials at the Capitol and District Offices. They are civil servants and are an extension of the legislator to the constituents and public at large. In many offices in the Capitol, they have enormous influence.

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL:** These are attorneys hired by the state to help legislators draft bills so the language won't violate current law or protection by the Constitution.

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST:** This is a condensed version of a bill written in layman's language. It appears in the first section of each bill and summarizes how the language in the bill will affect current law.

**LEGISLATOR:** This term applies to our elected federal and state officials who draft and vote on legislation. It could mean a U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative, State Senator, or Assembly Member.

**REPRESENTATIVE:** The term "representative", may apply to any of our elected officials, at both the state and federal level, since their job is to "represent" their constituents. When the term is capitalized: "Representative," it refers specifically to a member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

**S.:** When a bill number begins with the letter "S.," it means the bill is a U.S. Senate bill at the federal level. "SB" also means Senate Bill, but "SB" is used for bills at the state level. The other type of federal bill begins with "H.R."

**SB:** When a bill number begins with "SB" it means it is a Senate Bill and is a state-level bill. The other type of state-level bill begins with "AB", meaning Assembly Bill. Federal bills begin with either "S." or "H.R."

**SENATOR:** This is the correct title for either a State Senator or a U.S. Senator, although the two positions are different. State Senators are elected to the California State Legislature, where they make state laws. U.S. Senators are elected to Congress, where they make federal laws.

**STATE LEGISLATURE:** The body of officials elected by citizens of California to make state laws. The State Legislature is divided into two houses: the State Senate and the State Assembly.

**STATE SENATE:** The 40 members of one of the two houses of our California state legislature elected by the public. The other house is the State Assembly. The State Senate is different from the U.S. Senate, which is part of Congress in Washington, D.C.

**STATE SENATOR:** This title may be used to describe or address a member of our State Senate.

**TESTIMONY:** Public opinion presented in person in front of the committee hearing a pending bill at the Capitol. Any private citizen of any age may testify in California's committee hearings.

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:** One of the two houses of Congress, operating at the federal level. California has 53 members of the House of Representatives. Each state has a different number, depending on the state's population; there are a total of 435 Representatives for the whole nation. Members of the House of Representatives are called either "Representatives" or "Congressmen," with the preferred title being "Representative." The other house of Congress is the U.S. Senate.

**U.S. REPRESENTATIVE:** A member of the House of Representatives. In address, the "U.S." is dropped, for example, John Doe is a U.S. Representative, but we call him "Representative Doe."

**U.S. SENATE:** One of the two houses of Congress, operating at the federal level. Each state has two U.S. Senators, making a total of 100 U.S. Senators in Congress. The other house of Congress is the House of Representatives.

**U.S. SENATOR:** A member of the U.S. Senate.

**VETO:** This is a "no" vote from the governor or from the president on federal bills. At the state level, the governor's veto can be overridden with a 2/3 majority vote of the State Legislature.