

# Glossary

**Act** A bill which has passed both houses of the Legislature, been enrolled, approved by the Governor or passed over the Governor's veto, and published.

**Adjourn** To conclude a legislative day's business.

**Adoption** Approval of a motion, amendment, resolution, or joint resolution.

**Amendment** When a change is made in a bill, it is said to be amended. There are simple and substitute amendments.

**Appropriation** is money set aside by formal action for a specific use.

**Authors, Sponsors** The author or co-authors of a bill are those who introduce it into the house in which they are members. The sponsor or co-sponsors also sign the bill in support of its introduction but are members of the other house. Bills often have many co-authors and co-sponsors.

**Bill** is a draft of a proposed law presented to the Legislature.

**Calendar** The Assembly or Senate agenda of bills, resolutions, joint resolutions, etc. scheduled for any legislative day.

**Chair** The presiding officer.

**Chief Clerk** The officer elected by the body to perform and direct the administrative, clerical and personnel functions of the body (Assembly or Senate).

**Concurrence** When a measure is passed in one house, it is sent to the other for concurrence (agreement, passage). A bill must pass both houses in identical form to become law.

**Conference Committee** If the Assembly and Senate pass different versions of a bill, it may be referred to a conference committee where members of both houses will attempt to work out differences.

**Constituents** are the people who live in a given Assembly or Senate district.

**Drafted** Proposals are researched and assembled into formal legal language by attorneys in the Legislative Reference Bureau.

**Engrossed** A proposal incorporating all adopted amendments and all approved technical corrections in the house of origin.

**Enrolled** Once a measure has completed the legislative process, its amendments are consolidated or enrolled and prepared to be sent to the governor for signature.

**Executive Session** is a committee meeting when members vote. Active participation is limited to committee members.

**First Reading** is the formal announcement on the floor of the Legislature that a bill has been introduced.

**Fiscal Estimate** An estimate of the change in state and local government revenues and expenditures that would be caused by passage of a bill.

**Floor Debate** is discussion of a proposal on the "floor" of the Assembly or Senate.

**Floorperiods** range from a week to several weeks during which legislators formally debate proposals in the Assembly and Senate Chambers.

**Germane** All amendments must be germane, that is, relevant and appropriate to the bill.

**Indefinitely Postpone** In the Wisconsin Legislature, one way to "kill" a proposal is a motion for indefinite postponement, a maneuver that sounds less harsh but achieves the same end.

**Joint Committee on Finance** Any bill introduced in either house of the Legislature appropriating money must be referred to this committee to qualify for passage.

**Joint Resolution** A proposal expressing the opinion of the Legislature, changing joint rules, or proposing an amendment to the state constitution, requiring adoption by both houses. The Governor's approval is not required.

**Joint Standing Committee** is a committee comprised of members of both houses.

**Law** A bill passed by the Wisconsin Legislature and approved by the Governor.

**Legislative Document Room** Bills, amendments, bulletins, journals, hearing schedules, calendars and related documents are available in the Document Room.

**Legislative Reference Bureau** is where proposed laws are researched and put into formal legal language.

**Legislators** are members of the Wisconsin Legislature. The 99 members of the Assembly are called State Representatives and each represents about 54,000 people living within his or her Assembly district. Thirty-three Senators constitute the Wisconsin Senate and each represents a Senate district made up of three Assembly districts.

**Lobbyist** One who represents the views of industries, organizations and government agencies before the Legislature. Individual citizens may also lobby their legislators on matters of concern to them.

**Motion** A term of parliamentary procedure for a proposal that something be done; motion to adjourn, motion to postpone, etc.

**Override** The Legislature may pass a measure over the governor's objections by voting to override the veto by a two-thirds vote of the members present in both the Assembly and Senate.

**Public Hearing** is a committee meeting at which members of the public, lobbyists, legislators, and agency representatives speak or register for or against a proposal.

**Referred** When bills are sent to a committee or moved from one committee to another, they are said to be referred.

**Representatives** are elected to two-year terms in November of even-numbered years to the Assembly. Each of the 99 Assembly members represents a district containing about 54,000 persons.

**Roll Call Vote** A vote on which each member's vote is recorded by name.

**Rules** At the beginning of each session, the Legislature adopts detailed rules of parliamentary procedure. Those rules have evolved slowly over generations from procedures devised by Thomas Jefferson and from those in use hundreds of years earlier in English Parliament. They are designed

to promote fairness and deliberation in the legislative process.

**Rules Committee** is the Assembly standing committee responsible for scheduling bills for floor debate. Its counterpart in the Senate is the Committee on Organization.

**Second Reading** is the stage where amendments are considered.

**Senators** serve four-year terms in the Senate and are elected in alternate even-numbered years. Those representing the 17 odd-numbered districts are elected in the years in which a governor is elected. Those from the 16 even-numbered districts are elected in Presidential election years. Each of the 33 Senate districts contains three Assembly districts.

**Sergeant-at-Arms** The officer elected by the body to perform and direct the police and custodial functions of the body (Assembly or Senate).

**Session Schedule** divides the two-year session into floorperiods and committee work periods. It is adopted by the Legislature at the beginning of the session.

**Simple Amendment** makes changes in the original bill or a substitute amendment.

**Speaker** is elected by the members of the Assembly and is the chief presiding officer of the Assembly.

**Speaker Pro Tempore** is elected by the members of the Assembly to perform the duties of the Speaker in his or her absence.

**Sponsors, Authors** The author or co-authors of a bill are those who introduce it into the house in which they are members. The sponsor or co-sponsors also sign the bill in support of its introduction but are members of the other house. Bills often have many co-authors and co-sponsors.

**Standing Committee** Standing committees carry on much of the work of each house in the Legislature. Each legislator is assigned to several committees in his or her own house and, in addition, may serve on one or more joint committees.

**State Capitol** is the seat of state government in Wisconsin where the Assembly, Senate, Supreme Court and Governor's Office are located.

**Substitute Amendment** completely rewrites and replaces a proposed piece of legislation.

**Sustain** To uphold the governor's position when he or she vetoed all or part of a bill.

**Table** An element of parliamentary procedure that permits a body to lay a question aside temporarily and attend to other business.

**Third Reading** is the final reading when the bill itself comes up for discussion and final vote. It may no longer be amended.

**Veto** If the Governor disagrees with a measure passed by the Legislature, he or she may reject, or veto it.

**Veto Message** If the governor decides to veto a bill, he or she must explain the veto in a message to the Legislature within six days (Sundays excepted) of receiving the bill.

**Voice Vote** A vote of the Assembly whereby members verbally express "aye" or "no".