

Definitions: Just What are They Talking About at the State Capital?

Amendment	Changes to a bill, usually to make more clear and/or less controversial by adding, changing, or deleting certain content. Amended bills are assigned a letter following the bill number for each new version of the bill (A, B, C, etc.).
Bill	A legal proposal that has been introduced by a sponsor and assigned a unique number (sequentially in order of introduction, generally up to 5 digits within a two-year session). The proposal would create, change, or negate one or more laws.
Bill draft	A proposal that has been drafted but not yet introduced.
Calendar	The schedule of bills to be considered for a vote by the full house on a particular date. A bill brought to the full floor for a vote is said to be “on calendar.”
Caucus	Select members of both houses joining to discuss views.
Companion Bill	A bill that has been introduced in both houses of the legislature with the same text (but distinct identifiers), since bills must pass both houses before submission to the Governor; ex. the “Title Protection” bill of 2006 was A5816-A/S6326-A.
Conference	Meeting of the members of one political party in either house.
Chapter	The status of a bill as designated by a unique number (sequentially in order of enactment) once the Governor signs (enacts) legislation into law. Ex. NYSNA’s “title protection bill,” formerly A5816-A/S6326-A, is now recognized as Chapter 323 of the Laws of 2006.
Deliverable	Potential or actual success in achieving a goal sought (ex. introduction or passage of legislation, procurement of funding, etc.).
Departmental Bill	Legislation introduced at the request of a state agency.
Died in Committee	The status of a bill when it fails to “advance,” that is to be forwarded out of a committee, by the end of the two-year legislative cycle. It is null and must be re-introduced in a subsequent session (under a new bill number).
Floor, Full Floor	A session (meeting) of all members of one house of the legislature. Because so few of all of the bills introduced in a session make it this far, the outcome of bills actually brought to the floor for a vote is generally anticipated in advance.
Home Rule Bills	Legislation that requires authorization by local governments prior to enactment.
Home Rule Message	Authorization by local government to enact a state-level bill.
House	One of two bodies of state legislators: the Assembly or the Senate.
One House Bill	Legislation that has been introduced in only one house and does not have a sponsor in the other house.
Legislation	One or more legal proposals that, if enacted, would create, change, or negate one or more laws. Also referred to as a bill or bills.
Legislative Session	A two-year period January (odd-years) through December (even-years), in sync with the electoral cycle, during which a body of legislation is considered by the legislature. Also refers to the period when legislators are “in session” in Albany, January through June of each year.
Legislature	Both bodies of state legislators; the legislative system.
Lobby Day	A special day when a group brings members to Albany to meet with elected officials to discuss issues and concerns.

Lobbying	Educating policy makers about problems, situations, or service gaps and offering legislative solutions to address the issue.
Lobbyist	A person who monitors the legislature and advocates for the interests of a specific cause or group.
LULU	A lump sum bonus paid to legislators for extra work such as committee chairs or leadership posts.
Majority Member	A member of the majority political party in a house.
Marginal Member	A legislator who won election or re-election by a small number of votes or whose district enrollment favors the opposite party and is therefore considered vulnerable to electoral defeat.
Member Item	A budget appropriation sponsored by a legislator for the benefit of their constituents.
Memorandum of Support, Opposition, or Concern (MOS, MOO, or MOC)	A document that outlines an organization's rationale for support of, opposition to, or concern about a bill, and requests action (support, oppose, or amend the bill). Such a memo may be forwarded to legislators considering a bill, e.g. to committee members when the bill is on their agenda.
Message of Necessity	The Governor can issue a message of necessity for vital legislation negating the rule that a bill wait three days before it may be voted on.
Minority Member	A member of the minority political party in the house.
Pocket Veto	The rare expiration of a bill passed by both houses without action (enactment or veto) by the governor.
Political Action Committees (PAC)	A group that endorses and/or donates money to support candidates.
Program Bill	Legislation proposed by the Governor's office.
Ranking Member	The legislator representing the minority party on each committee.
Recess	A period during which the legislature is not in session in Albany, whether for holidays or vacations, or from July through the end of the year.
Referred by Committee	The favorable vote by a standing committee that forwards a bill to the next committee that must review or to the floor to be put on calendar.
Returned to Committee	The return of a bill to a committee for review due to an amendment or due to passage in the complimentary house.
Second Floor	The Governor's office (Executive Chamber).
Session Day	A day (usually Monday through Wednesday from January to June) when representatives are in Albany conducting the people's business.
Sponsor or Prime Sponsor	The legislator who has introduced a specific piece of legislation. In some cases, the sponsor may be a legislative standing committee.
Co-Sponsor(s)	One or more legislators, besides the primary sponsor, who have "signed on" as sponsors, in support of the bill.
Multi-Sponsor(s)	One or more legislators, besides the primary sponsor, who have "signed on" as sponsors, in support of the bill. Fundamentally the same as co-sponsors, multi-sponsors are generally so-designated for signing on significantly later (in relation to the bill's introduction date).
Sponsor's Memo	A memorandum by the sponsor that accompanies bill introduction and offers a basic explanation of and rationale for a bill.

Starring a Bill	Action by the Senate Majority Leader to prevent action on a bill.
Third Reading	The calendar status of a bill that has been “aged” (three days) and can be voted on. A calendar number is assigned to maintain the bill’s place on the legislative calendar.
Veto	Action by the Governor rejecting legislation that has passed both houses.
Veto Message	The Governor’s memorandum explaining the rationale for vetoing a bill. While not required to issue a memorandum on each bill enacted, the Governor is required to issue a memorandum for each bill vetoed (except in the case of a pocket veto).
Veto Override	Action in the legislature to reconsider a bill that was vetoed by the Governor. Overriding the Governor’s veto requires support by at least two-thirds of the members of each house.