
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LEGISLATIVE LINGO



DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

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Office of Policy Analysis
Department of Legislative Services
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Library and Information Services
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Legislative Lingo

Adopt

To approve an action (*i.e.*, an amendment, committee report, motion).

Amend

To make a change in a bill or a law.

Bill

A proposed law presented for consideration by a legislative body.

Bill Number

The number the Secretary of the Senate or the Chief Clerk of the House assigns to a bill at the time of introduction. The bill retains the same number if it moves to the opposite chamber.

Bill Status

The current standing of a bill.

Calendar Day

The 24-hour day as denoted on the calendar.

Chapter Number

Chapter numbers are assigned to bills in the numerical order in which the bills are signed by the Governor.

Committee Report

The report a committee submits to the chambers listing actions taken on bills (*i.e.*, favorable, favorable with amendments, unfavorable, re-referred, or referred for interim study).

Committee Reporting Courtesy Date

Each chamber's committees report their own bills to the floor by this date.

Committee Reprint

The reprinting of a bill to include committee amendments.

Concur

One chamber approves an action taken by the other chamber.

Conference Committee

Three members from each chamber (five in the case of the budget conference committee) are appointed to resolve the differences in a bill passed by both chambers. A bill does not pass the General Assembly unless each chamber passes the bill in identical form.

Conference Committee Report

The report a conference committee submits to the chambers for final passage of a bill. The report may consist of adopting, rejecting, or adding amendments. Each chamber must adopt the report and then vote for final passage of the bill.

Crossover Date

Each chamber sends to the other chamber those bills it passes favorably by this date.

Drop into the Hopper

A member files a bill with the Chief Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate for introduction. The bill is given a number and a committee assignment.

Enacted

A bill is enacted when the bill becomes a law, *i.e.*, is signed by the Governor and takes effect.

Enrolled (Passed Enrolled)

A bill is an enrolled bill if it was amended in the opposite chamber.

Failed

A bill or amendment does not receive a majority vote on the chamber floor.

First Reader

A bill as printed for the first time with its bill number and committee assignment.

First Reading

A bill is introduced in a chamber, “read across the desk” for the first time, and assigned to a standing committee.

Fiscal and Policy Note

An analysis prepared by the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) summarizing a bill and the bill’s impact on State/local revenues and expenditures. A fiscal and policy note is updated when amendments to a bill necessitate revisions to the note.

Fiscal Year

July 1 to June 30.

Green Bag

Proposed gubernatorial appointments requiring legislative approval are delivered in a green bag to the Senate by the 40th day of the session (Art. II, Sec. 13, MD Constitution).

Guarantee Date

A bill introduced by this date is guaranteed a committee hearing in the chamber of origin.

Interim

The nine months between legislative sessions.

Joint Resolution

Except as otherwise provided by the Maryland Constitution and statute, a resolution passed by both chambers making a statement on a public issue that does not have the effect of law.

Laid Over

Floor action on an amended bill is postponed for one legislative day.

Legislative Day

Length of time from convening a session in the chamber until adjournment, which may be longer or shorter than a calendar day. For example, a session that continues into a second calendar day without adjourning is one legislative day. If a chamber adjourns and reconvenes on the same day, that constitutes two legislative days.

Legislative Request (LR)

An identifying number DLS gives to a bill request until the bill is introduced and assigned a bill number. A bill becomes public only when filed for introduction and assigned a bill number.

Motion

To propose an action.

Move the Previous Question

Motion to end debate and return to the question on the floor.

Passed

When a bill or amendment is voted on favorably by the majority of the elected members.

Prefile

A bill DLS drafts, by request, prior to a legislative session for introduction on the first day of the session. Prefiling request dates are set by law.

Quorum

Minimum number of members of a chamber (or committee) required for the transaction of business.

Quorum Call

Action used to establish the presence of the majority required to transact business.

Racial Equity Impact Note

An analysis prepared by DLS discussing racial disparities that may be impacted by certain criminal justice legislation under consideration in the General Assembly.

Reassigned

Assignment of a bill from one committee to another.

Referred

The action of assigning a legislative measure to a committee or committees.

Referred for Interim Study

The action a committee takes to refer a bill for committee study during the nine-month interim.

Re-referred

The reassignment of a bill to a different committee after the original referral.

Referendum

The power of the registered voters, under certain conditions, to petition an act of the last General Assembly (with certain exceptions) for approval or disapproval at the next General Election.

Reject

The failure of an action (*i.e.*, an amendment).

Returned Passed

When a bill passed in its chamber of origin is returned by the opposite chamber without amendments.

Roll Call

Names of members present in the chamber are recorded; used to establish a quorum or to take a vote on an issue before the body.

Second Reading

The action when a bill is reported out of committee and brought to the chamber floor for discussion and preliminary approval. Committee and floor amendments may be added to the bill at this time.

Simple Resolution

A form of legislative measure introduced in only one chamber of the General Assembly and used for the regulation of business only within the chamber of origin.

Sine Die

The final adjournment of the 90–day session, without adjourning to a specific time or date.

Special Order

Postpones floor action on a bill until a definite date or time.

Suspend the Rules

To set aside the rules temporarily, by a 2/3 vote, to allow a certain action.

Sunset Provision

A provision of law that is automatically repealed on a specific date, unless altered by the General Assembly.

The Chair

Refers to the presiding officer of a chamber or of a committee.

The Code

The *Annotated Code of Maryland*, the codified statutory laws of Maryland.

The Floor

The portion of the chamber reserved for members or other persons granted access.

Third Reader

A bill that is printed after second reading in the chamber of origin, including adopted amendments.

Third Reading

A bill is voted on for the final time in each chamber. The third reading vote is recorded.

Veto

Action the Governor takes to prevent enactment of a bill passed by the General Assembly. The Governor may not veto the operating budget bill in its entirety but may line-item veto items in the bill that were added or increased by the General Assembly.

Veto Override

Except in the first year of a legislative term, the General Assembly may override the Governor's veto of a bill with a 3/5 vote in each chamber at the next regular or special session following the veto. If the Governor exercises line-item veto authority for the operating budget bill, the General Assembly may convene a special session within 30 days after the veto to consider an override.

TYPES OF BILLS

Administration Bill

A bill introduced at the request of the Governor.

Bond Initiative

A request for a bond authorization to support a local or non-state-owned capital project. Bond initiatives are not adopted individually, but instead are incorporated as part of the capital budget bill.

Budget Bill

A bill that consists of the Governor's proposed operating budget for the State for the next fiscal year. As a matter of practice, the House and Senate alternate years for beginning consideration of the budget bill.

Capital Budget Bill

A general construction loan or bond initiative that finances construction of State-owned buildings and local capital projects. This bill states the amount of State debt to be incurred and the projects to be funded. The capital budget bill may not be passed until the operating budget bill has been passed by the General Assembly.

Constitutional Amendment

A bill that amends the Maryland Constitution. A constitutional amendment requires a 3/5 vote in each chamber, may not be vetoed by the Governor, and requires approval by the voters at the next general election.

Cross-filed Bill

An identical bill that is introduced in both chambers.

Departmental Bill

A bill introduced by a committee chair at the request of an Executive Branch agency of State government.

Emergency Bill

A bill that takes effect immediately upon the Governor's approval. A bill marked as "emergency bill" must pass third reading with a 3/5 vote in each chamber to achieve emergency status.

Local Legislation

A bill that affects only one local jurisdiction and is reviewed by the appropriate select committee in the Senate or county delegation in the House before consideration by a standing committee.

Supplemental Budget

After submission of the operating budget bill by the Governor each year, supplemental budgets can be presented at any time prior to passage of the budget to correct errors, introduce new spending, or withdraw proposed appropriations. There is no limit to the number of supplemental budgets that can be introduced.