

LET'S TALK ABOUT

THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE

Florida has a bicameral legislature composed of a 40-member Senate and a 120-member House of Representatives.

- Senators serve four-year, staggered terms.
- Representatives serve two-year terms.

What will you find in this document?

GENERAL TERMS

Check out this section for a listing of general terms you may hear in and around the legislative process.

SESSION

Session is all the focus, but what is Session. When does it occur? What are the types of meetings?

BILLS

Not the kind you pay. The kind that become laws. Learn about the types of bills, terms about bills and actions taken upon them.

RESOLUTIONS

Concurrent, Joint, House or Senate. What do they mean and what do they do?

COMMITTEES / LEADERSHIP

What does it mean when a bill is in committee? Who makes up the committee? Who are the key players and relevant committees currently in place?

Get Comfortable Talking About The Florida Legislature

❖ General Terms

- Act and law – Act is a bill passed by the Legislature. An act becomes a law when approved by the Governor or allowed by the Governor to become law without his signature by the passage of time or when the Legislature overrides the Governor's veto.
- Budget - The totality of appropriations measures passed by the Legislature. The detailed spending plan submitted by the Governor to the Legislature which recommends monetary allocations for each of the departments of the state for the next fiscal year is also known as a "budget." Using recommendations from the Governor and individual departments, each house prepares its own version of the budget. After the budgets go through the legislative process, one final version is then presented to the Governor.
- Chamber & Floor - The large meeting rooms in which the House and the Senate hold their floor sessions. The House and Senate chambers are located on the fourth floor of the Capitol. Floor is synonymous with Chamber. Floor action suggests consideration by the entire Senate or House rather than committee action.
- Chapter Law - A bill becomes chapter law once it has been enacted and assigned an identifying number by the Secretary of State. The number indicates the year passed and the printing sequence number. For example, chapter 2000-541 represents the 541st law printed in the year 2000. Chapter laws are compiled and published annually in the Laws of Florida.
- Florida Statutes (F.S.) - A compilation of general laws of the state. F.S.
- Florida Constitution - The document that outlines the basic framework of Florida's system of government which was revised in 1968 and subsequently amended.
- Governor's Budget - The Governor's spending plan which recommends funding allocations for each state agency for the next fiscal year. Each house uses these recommendations when preparing its own version of the budget.
- Laws of Florida - A verbatim publication of the general and special laws enacted by the Florida Legislature in a given year and published each year following regular session. This presents the laws in the order in which they are numbered by the Secretary of State, as well as resolutions and memorials passed by the Legislature.
- Sine Die - Latin for without day. The motion to "adjourn sine die" is the last action of a session of the Legislature. Each house may adjourn on its own motion.
- Trust Fund - A special account into which certain funds are deposited and out of which funds are disbursed for a specific and exclusive purpose. Section 19(f) of Article III of the State Constitution mandates that trust fund bills that create or re-create a trust fund pass by a vote of three-fifths of the membership of each house.
- Veto - An objection by the Governor to an act passed by the Legislature, which kills the act unless it is reenacted by a two-thirds vote of both houses.
- Veto, Line Item - The Governor's veto of specific line items in a general appropriations act or any specific appropriation in a substantive act containing an appropriation.

- Veto Override - Action by the Legislature to set aside the Governor's objections to an act. It takes two-thirds of the members voting in each house to override a veto.

❖ Session

- Session - The term is used to refer both to a particular day's meeting of the House or the Senate and to the entire period for which the Legislature has been convened. The types of session that may be convened are: executive, extended, joint, organization, regular, and special.
 - Regular Session: The annual session that begins on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March of each odd-numbered year, and on the second Tuesday after the first Monday in January, or such other date as may be fixed by law, of each even-numbered year, for a period not to exceed 60 consecutive days. There is no limit on the subject matter that may be introduced in a regular session.
 - Special Session: Special sessions may be called by Proclamation of the Governor, by Joint Proclamation of the House Speaker and the Senate President, or by the members of the Legislature for the purpose of considering specific legislation and shall not exceed 20 consecutive days unless extended by a three-fifths vote of each house. In order for members of the Legislature to call a special session, three-fifths of the members of both houses must vote in favor of calling a special session.
 - Extended Session: A regular or special session that has been prolonged beyond its allocated time in order to complete action on introduced legislation. Extension of a session requires a three-fifths vote by members in each house.
 - Joint Session: The annual session held the first day of a regular session in the House Chamber and attended by members of both houses, the Governor, the Cabinet, members of the Supreme Court, and invited guests. During this session, the Governor informs the Legislature concerning the condition of the state, proposes such reorganization of the executive department as will promote efficiency and economy, and recommends measures in the public interest. Joint sessions are also held on other occasions.
 - Organization Session: Section 3(a) of Article III of the State Constitution directs the Legislature to convene on the 14th day after the general election, solely for the purpose of organization and election of officers.

❖ Bills

- General Bill (SB¹, HB²) - A bill of general statewide interest or whose provisions apply to the entire state.
- Types of Bills
 - Appropriations, Implementing, and Conforming Bills - Bills authorizing the expenditure of public funds. These bills are effective for only one fiscal year. A conforming bill amends the Florida Statutes to provide for specific changes in the general appropriations bill.
 - Committee Substitute - A bill offered by a committee in lieu of another bill that was originally referred to the committee for consideration; technically, it is an amendment

¹ Senate Bill

² House Bill

to the original bill. (Usually will be referred in examples such as “CS/CS HB 75” or “Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 386”

- Proviso - Language used in a general appropriations bill to qualify or restrict the way in which a specific appropriation is to be expended.
- Appropriations Project Bill - A bill that proposes funding for an appropriations project. As defined in House Rule 5.14(a)(1), an appropriations project includes a specific appropriation that provides funding for a local government, private entity, or privately operated program.
- Local Bill - A bill that applies to an area or group that is less than the total area or population of the state.
- Proposed Committee Bill (PCB) - A draft legislative measure taken up by a committee for the purpose of considering whether to introduce it in the name of the committee.

❖ Bill Requirements

- Enabling Legislation - A bill designed specifically to implement an adopted constitutional amendment.
- Enacting Clause - The phrase, "Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida." The State Constitution requires that it preface each bill.
- One/Single subject Rule - The constitutional requirement, imposed by section 6 of Article III of the State Constitution, that every law shall embrace but one subject and matter connected therewith.
- Effective Date - The date on which a law takes effect in the last section of each bill.

❖ Amendments

- Amendment - A proposal to change a bill or other proposed legislation. A committee or individual representative may propose amendments.
- Floor Amendment - An amendment offered in the Chamber during discussion of a measure.
- Germananity - The relevance or appropriateness of amendments or substitute amendments.
- Technical Amendment - A non-substantive amendment used to correct errors such as spelling, numbering, incorrect coding, or directory language.

❖ Misc. Bill Terms

- Bill Number - The identifying number given each bill filed for introduction. House bills receive odd numbers, while Senate bills receive even numbers.
- Bill Summary - The identifying number given each bill filed for introduction. House bills receive odd numbers, while Senate bills receive even numbers.
- Companion Bill - Bills introduced in the House and Senate that are identical or substantially similar in wording. The use of companion bills allows bills in both bodies to move through the committee process at the same time.
- Compare Bill - Bills with some provisions that are similar in text.
- Identical Bill - A companion bill with identical language, not including titles. Resolutions and concurrent resolutions are considered identical if the only difference is the word "House" or "Senate."
- Linked Bill - A bill that takes effect only if another bill passes.

- Message - A formal communication by one house to the other house concerning action taken on a bill.
- Reading - Each bill or proposed constitutional amendment must be read by title on three separate days in each legislative house before it can be voted on final passage. The first reading usually occurs when the bill title is published in the Journal, though it can also take place in the Chamber. After being favorably reported by the committee of reference, a bill is read a second time in the Chamber. During the second reading, questions may be asked and amendments considered. If amendments are adopted, the bill is engrossed. Once a bill is read a third time in the Chamber, members may debate the bill and then a vote on final passage occurs. If amendments are proposed on third reading, a two-thirds vote is required for the amendments to be adopted.
- Similar Bill - As used in bill history, companion bills that are substantially similar in text or have substantial portions of text that are largely the same.
- Sponsor - The legislator or committee that files a bill for introduction. The sponsor's name appears first on the bill and on any material dealing with the bill. A cosponsor is a legislator who signs a bill in addition to the sponsor.

❖ Resolution

- Concurrent Resolution - Resolutions used to extend legislative sessions and to address legislative organization and procedures. They are also used to express the opinion of both houses.
- House or Senate Resolution - A one-house document used for matters not involving the other house. It is often ceremonial or congratulatory in nature. Resolutions do not require the signature of the Governor and they do not become law.
- Joint Resolution (HJR, SJR) - A resolution used to propose amendments to the State Constitution; they are also the form of legislation used for redistricting state legislative seats.

❖ Committees & Leadership

- Committee - A panel of legislators appointed by the respective presiding officers to perform specific duties, such as consider legislation and conduct investigations or hearings. Types of committees include: conference committee, joint committee, select committee, standing committee, and subcommittee.
- Chair - The presiding officer for a floor session or committee meeting.
- Conference Committee - A committee composed of members of the House (appointed by the Speaker) and members of the Senate (appointed by the President) whose sole purpose is to resolve the differences between the two houses on the language of a bill.
- Joint Committee - A committee composed of House and Senate legislators chosen by their respective presiding officers to oversee a specified legislative function.
- President of the Senate - The presiding officer of the Senate. The Senate President is elected by the full membership of the Senate for a term of two years.
- President Pro Tempore of the Senate - A senator who is elected by the full membership of the Senate for a term of two years. The Senate President Pro Tempore presides over the Senate Chamber whenever the Senate President is absent and no other senator has been designated to preside.
- Select Committee - A committee created for the purpose of studying or investigating a specific matter within a specified time period.

- Speaker of the House of Representatives - The presiding officer of the House of Representatives. The Speaker of the House is elected by the full membership of the House of Representatives for a term of two years.
- Speaker Pro Tempore of the House of Representatives - A member of the House of Representatives who is designated by the majority party in caucus and then elected by the body. The Speaker pro tempore presides over the House of Representatives at the request or in the absence of the Speaker.
- Standing Committee - A committee appointed by the respective presiding officer and given a continuing responsibility over legislation covering specific subject matters.
- Subcommittee - A subset of members from a committee which performs duties as requested by a committee.

❖ Relevant Senate Committees and Chairpersons of Each Committee

- Agriculture (AG)
 - Senator Jay Collins, representing portion of Hillsborough County
- Appropriations (AP)
 - Senator Doug Broxson, representing all or in part of Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa Counties
- Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government (AEG)
 - Senator Jason Brodeur, representing portions of Seminole and Orange Counties.
- Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development (ATD)
 - Senator Ed Hooper, representing portions of Pasco and Pinellas Counties.
- Banking and Insurance (BI)
 - Senator Jim Boyd, representing portions of Hillsborough and Manatee Counties.
- Commerce and Tourism (CM)
 - Senator Jay Trumball, representing part of Okaloosa County and all of Walton, Bay, Holmes, Washington, Jackson, and Calhoun counties.
- Community Affairs (CA)
 - Senator Alexis Calatayud, representing part of Miami-Dade County
- Environment and Natural Resources (EN)
 - Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez, representing portion of Miami-Dade County and all of Monroe County.
- Fiscal Policy (FP)
 - Senator Travis Hutson, representing Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns Counties and portion of Volusia County.
- Judiciary (JU)
 - Senator Clay Yarborough, representing Nassau County and portion of Duval County
- Regulated Industries (RI)
 - Senator Joe Gruters, representing Sarasota County and portion of Manatee County.
- Rules (RC)
 - Senator Debbie Mayfield, representing part of Brevard County
- Select Committee on Resiliency (SSHR)
 - Senator Ben Albritton, representing Charlotte, DeSoto, and Hardee Counties and parts of Lee and Polk Counties.

❖ Relevant House Committees and

- Appropriations
 - Representative Tom Leek, representing part of Volusia County
- Commerce
 - Representative Bob Rommel, representing part of Collier County
 - Energy, Communications, and Cybersecurity Subcommittee
 - Representative Mike Giallombardo, representing part of Lee County
 - Insurance and Banking Subcommittee
 - Representative Wyman Duggan, representing part of Duval County
 - Regulatory Reform and Economic Development Subcommittee
 - Representative Tyler Sirois, representing part of Brevard County
- Infrastructure Committee
 - Representative Bobby Payne, representing Putnam County and parts of Clay, Marion, and St Johns Counties
 - Agriculture, Conservation, and Resiliency Subcommittee
 - Representative James Buchanan, representing parts of Sarasota County
 - Transportation and Modals Subcommittee
 - Representative Fiona McFarland, representing parts of Sarasota County
 - Water Quality, Supply and Treatment Subcommittee
 - Representative Cyndi Stevenson, representing part of St Johns County
- Judiciary Committee
 - Representative Tommy Gregory, representing part of Manatee County
 - Civil Justice Subcommittee
 - Representative Will Robinson, representing party of Manatee County
- Select Committee on Hurricane Resiliency and Recovery
 - Representative Michael Grant, representing parts of Charlotte and Sarasota Counties
- State Affairs Committee
 - Representative Lawrence McClure, representing part of Hillsborough County
 - Local Administration, Federal Affairs, and Special Districts Subcommittee
 - Representative Jenna Persons-Mulicka, representing part of Lee County