

Glossary – Legislative Process

A-Engrossed: An engrossed (meaning “to make a final fair copy of”) bill is a bill that is printed with its amendments. If a bill is engrossed, it will be printed as “SB _____, A-eng.,” meaning “Senate Bill _____, including its amendments.” A bill may be amended more than once; in that case, the bill will be printed “B-eng.,” and so on.

Administrative Rule: Any agency directive, standard, regulation or statement of general applicability that implements, interprets or prescribes law or policy, or describes the procedure or practice requirements of any agency. (ORS 183.310(9)).

Agenda: The official plan that outlines what the committee will do on a given day. Agendas normally list measures and the kind of hearing it is scheduled for (e.g., public hearing, work session) or topical informational hearings.

A & R Tables: Officially known as the “Table of Sections Amended, Repealed, or Added To” printed in the Weekly Cumulative Index to Legislative Measures and in the final calendar. These printed tables show all Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS), Oregon Rules of Civil Procedure (ORCP), session laws, and Constitutional provisions amended, repealed, or “added to” by introduced measures. These tables are useful when researching changes made to particular pieces of legislation over the years.

Act: A bill which has been made law by passing both houses of the Legislative Assembly, and which either has been signed by the Governor, filed without the Governor’s signature, or passed by both houses of the Legislative Assembly over the Governor’s veto.

Adjournment: Ending of a meeting or legislative session. Adjournment of the House or Senate takes place at the close of each legislative day.

Advance Sheets: The compilation of laws enacted and selected memorials and resolutions adopted during a single Legislative Session, before the publication of the “Oregon Laws.”

Amendment: An alteration made or proposed to be made to a measure. Measures may be amended more than once.

Appropriation: A sum of money designated for a particular purpose by an Act. For example, an appropriations bill funds a state agency over the upcoming biennium.

Approved by the Governor: Acceptance by the Governor of a bill passed by the Legislative Assembly as indicated by the Governor’s signature on the enrolled bill.

At Ease: Describes the condition of the Senate or House when it temporarily stops its floor work for some other specific activity. A committee may also “stand at ease” for a short while.

Bar: The Bar is the railing along the sides of the Senate or House Chamber which separates the Chamber floor and the side aisle. Only legislators, legislative staff, or invited guests, may be within the bar and side aisles. The press is allowed both within the bar (in the press area) and in the side aisles.

Benchmark: General term for a standard or point of reference, but often refers to an Oregon Benchmark. See Oregon Benchmarks.

Bicameral: A body made up of or having two houses, branches, or Chambers. Oregon, for example, has a bicameral Legislative Assembly.

Biennial: Occurring every two years. The Legislative Assembly creates a biennial state budget.

Biennium: A two-year period. Regular sessions convene twice per biennium: for 160 days in the odd-numbered year, and 35 days in the even-numbered year.

Bill: A measure that creates new law, amends or repeals existing law, appropriates money, prescribes fees, transfers functions from one agency to another, provides penalties, or takes other action.

Bill Back (blue/green back): The cover of the measure, showing the bill number, title, and sponsors. It is also used on resolutions and memorials. The covers are sometimes green, and are sometimes referred to as “green backs.” They have also been referred to as “blue backs.”

Blue (pink) Sheet: Committee Report Summary listing measures filed with the desks and eligible for floor debate. Published by the Secretary of the Senate and Chief Clerk of the House, Pink Sheets signify Senate measures eligible for floor debate and Blue Sheets signify House measures.

Calendar Days: The days listed on a normal seven day per week calendar, as distinguished from legislative or session days, which are those days the Legislature is in session.

Call of the House/Senate: A Call of the House/Senate is a means of compelling all members (unless they are excused) to present themselves to the Chamber. The Call empowers the floor staff to lock the Chamber, preventing those present from leaving, and requires the Sergeant at Arms to bring in absent members. A Call is usually requested just before a major vote is to take place or to bring a quorum to the floor to conduct other business.

Carrier: The legislator assigned by the Committee Chair to explain and speak in favor of a measure on the floor and to answer questions about it.

Caucus: “Caucus” is used as both a noun and a verb. A caucus, n., is a group of people who share something in common (e.g. they are members of the same political party, such as the Senate Republican Caucus or the Senate Democratic Caucus, or come from the same area of the state, such as the Coastal Caucus or the Eastern Oregon Caucus, or share something else in common, such as the Freshman Caucus or the Women’s Caucus). When these people caucus, v., they meet to address their group’s policy questions and to select political candidates for office, or political party leaders.

Caucus Staff: The people working for the members of a political party. In each Chamber there is a majority caucus staff and a minority caucus staff. The caucus staff helps legislators research issues and serve constituents.

Chair: The legislator appointed by the President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House to preside over an individual committee; for example, the Chair of the House Revenue Committee.

Chamber: The official meeting place of the Senate or House.

Chief Clerk of the House: The chief administrative officer of the House of Representatives. The Chief Clerk is elected by the members of the House, and is responsible for keeping records of the proceedings of the House, supervising House employees, acting as parliamentarian of the House, advising members on parliamentary procedures, and preparing all House publications for printing.

“Christmas Tree” Bill: A “Christmas Tree” bill is generally passed late in a legislative session and contains funding for particular projects. It gains its name from the provisions or “ornaments” that are attached.

Committee: A group of legislators chosen to consider bills in a particular subject area and make recommendations to the full Senate or House.

Committee Administrator: The staff “manager” of a committee, responsible for assisting the Chair in getting agendas posted, bill management, meeting logistics, assembling background materials and information, and bill analysis.

Committee Assistant: Works with the Committee Administrator in providing assistance to legislative committees. The assistant is responsible for recording meetings, preparing and maintaining the committee records, and submitting reports to the office of either the Secretary of the Senate or Chief Clerk of the House.

Committee Counsel: Another name for a Committee Administrator who is an attorney.

Committee Records: Office that provides copies of minutes/recording logs, exhibits, and audio recordings of legislative committee meetings.

Committee Reports: A one page report made to the President of the Senate or Speaker of the House by a standing, special, or conference committee, which recommends further action on a measure, or reports the measure without recommendation.

Concurrence: Agreement by one Chamber to a proposal or action taken by the other Chamber.

Concurrent Resolution: A measure affecting actions or procedures of both houses of the Legislative Assembly. A concurrent resolution is used to express sympathy, commendation, or to commemorate the dead.

Conference Committee: A committee usually consisting of two or three members of each house, appointed by their respective presiding officers. A conference committee is appointed when one house refuses to concur with amendments to a measure adopted by the other house. Its goal is to prepare a version of the measure acceptable to both houses.

Confirmation: Approval of a Governor's appointment by the Senate, requiring that a constitutional majority (16) of the members approve the appointment.

Conflict: A conflict occurs when two or more measures amend or repeal the same section of law, and the changes cannot be blended, even if the measures do not conflict in purpose. The Oregon Constitution allows the compilation of more than one amendment unless the amendments conflict in purpose. If conflicting amendments become law, the measure last signed by the Governor prevails. (Also see conflict amendment).

Conflict Amendment: An amendment drafted for the purpose of resolving conflicts between two or more measures.

Conflict of Interest: An action that could be expected to have a financial impact on the official, his or her business, or the person's relative. See ORS 244.020 (1) ("actual conflict of interest") and ORS 244.020 (12) ("potential conflict of interest").

Consent Calendar: In the House of Representatives, measures reported out of committee unanimously may be placed on the Consent Calendar at the recommendation of the committee. Such measures must be held at the Desk for two days prior to being scheduled for consideration. If four written objections are received, signed by members of the House, the measure is placed in its proper order on the daily calendar. Measures scheduled on the Consent Calendar are not debatable.

Constituent: A citizen residing within the district of a legislator (or other elected official).

Constitutional Majority: A majority of the membership in the Oregon Legislative Assembly: 16 votes in the Senate and 31 votes in the House of Representatives. (See: extraordinary votes).

Continuously Appropriated: Monies received by an agency other than from the General Fund that are deposited into a fund or account for specified uses by the agency. The amount of money that the agency can spend from the continuously appropriated fund or account is restricted by the Legislature through the budget process in the form of an expenditure limitation.

Convene: To officially begin a meeting of a legislative body.

Current Service Level: An estimate, required by law, of the cost to continue current legislatively approved programs at their current levels. The essential budget level is built on the base budget plus essential packages.

Desk: The station of the Secretary of the Senate and staff at the desk below the main podium in the Senate Chamber, or the station of the Chief Clerk of the House and staff at the desk below the main podium in the House Chamber.

Desk Personnel: The people who work at the Desks: the Secretary of the Senate, the Chief Clerk of the House, and their staff, which include, for example, the Journal Editor, Reading Clerk, and Calendar Composer.

Digest: The brief measure summary found at the top of a bill. The digest is written by Legislative Counsel.

District: A geographical area designated for representation by a Senator or Representative. Legislative districts are drawn to ensure that a nearly equal number of constituents reside in each legislator's district, and are re-drawn by the Legislature every ten years to accurately reflect changes in population. Each larger Senate district contains two equally-populated House districts.

Do Pass: The recommendation by a committee for passage of a measure, abbreviated "DP." "DPA" means "do pass with amendments."

Drop: Refers to submitting a committee report to the appropriate Desk after a measure passes out of committee, as in "I dropped the bill at the Desk at 2:00 p.m."

Effective Date: When a bill goes in to effect. "Except as otherwise provided in the Act, an Act of the Legislative Assembly takes effect on January 1 of the year after passage of the Act." (ORS 171.022) Some bills contain a clause that specifies a particular effective date; others may have emergency, sunset, or referendum clauses attached.

Emergency Board: The joint committee of Senators and Representatives that meets during the interim periods to address state fiscal and budgetary matters.

Emergency Clause: A statement added to the end of a measure that causes the Act to become effective before the accustomed date (on January 1 of the year after passage of the Act). An emergency clause either sets a specific date or is effective immediately, which means that the measure will take effect on the date it is signed into law.

Employee Services: The non-partisan unit of Legislative Administration (LA) that manages personnel, payroll, and recruitments for LA, the Assembly, Fiscal, Counsel and Revenue Offices.

Engrossed Bill: A measure that is printed with its amendments included.

Enrolled Bill: A final copy of a bill that has passed both houses of the Legislative Assembly and has been specially reprinted in preparation for the signatures of the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House. After these confirmatory signatures, the enrolled bill goes to the Governor.

Executive Branch: The branch of state government that carries out and enforces state laws. It includes state agencies and the Governor's Office, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, and Commissioner of Bureau of Labor and Industries. The other two branches of government are the Legislative Branch and Judicial Branch.

Exhibit: Anything submitted for the record that supplements a witness' oral testimony. An exhibit can also be a copy of a witness' oral testimony.

Expenditure Limitation: A spending limit set by the Legislative Assembly directing state agencies as to the level of Other Funds, Lottery Funds, or Federal Funds they can spend in a biennium. If an agency receives more Other Funds or Federal Funds than the Legislature approved them to spend, they must obtain an increase in their expenditure limitation from the Legislature or the Emergency Board in order to spend the revenue.

Extraordinary Votes: The Constitution requires that bills raising revenue receive 3/5 majority for passage. The Constitution also requires that bills reducing criminal sentences, as approved by the people, requires a 2/3 majority vote for passage.

Facility Services: The non-partisan unit of Legislative Administration (LA) which maintains the Capitol, including heating and cooling, custodial service, and ongoing maintenance, as well as telephone service, supplies and distribution services.

Financial Services: The non-partisan unit of Legislative Administration (LA) that manages finances and accounting for LA and the Assembly, as well as member service and supply accounts. Financial Services is also responsible for preparing the LA and Assembly budgets.

First Reading: The recitation on the Chamber floor of the measure number and title by the Reading Clerk upon introduction of a measure in either house. After the First Reading, the measure is referred to committee by the President or Speaker.

Fiscal Impact Statements: An analysis of a bill done by the Legislative Fiscal Office that estimates future costs resulting from the passage of a bill.

Floor: The area within the bar in both the Senate and House Chambers.

Floor Personnel: This term refers to the Sergeant at Arms, Assistant Sergeant at Arms, and Pages who work on the floor of the Senate and House Chambers.

Form and Style Manual for Legislative Measures: The manual that explains the official, uniform system for preparing of all legislative measures.

General Fund: Money available for the state budget that is not dedicated to a specific agency or purpose and that can be used for general purposes of state government. Most General Fund money in Oregon derives from personal and corporate income taxes. Some revenue from liquor, cigarettes, and other sources also go into the General Fund.

General Election: An election involving most or all constituencies in a state (or nation) in choosing candidates for office and voting on ballot measures. In Oregon, the general election is held on the first Tuesday following a Monday in November.

Germane: Appropriate, relevant, pertinent. As the term is used in relation to legislation, “germane-ness” is a parliamentary determination as to whether a provision fits into a measure.

Governor's Recommended Budget: The budget proposed by the Governor. A newly elected Governor must submit a recommended budget by February 1 after the election. Thereafter, the Governor must send a recommended budget to the Legislative Assembly by December 1 in even-numbered years.

"Gut and Stuff": A slang term that refers to removing the text of a measure and inserting entirely new language which, while it may change the nature of the measure completely, still must fall under the measure's title, also known as the "relating-to" clause.

Hearing: A public meeting of a legislative committee held for the purpose of taking testimony and/or other action concerning proposed legislation.

House of Representatives: The legislative body of 60 members, called Representatives, each of whom represents a district of approximately 63,851 Oregon citizens.

Information Services (IS): The non-partisan unit of Legislative Administration that manages all computer and media systems, including closed circuit television, within the Capitol.

Initiative: A procedure enabling a specified number of registered voters, via petition, to place proposed laws, changes to laws, or changes to the State Constitution on a general election ballot. In Oregon, the number of signatures required is determined by a fixed percentage of the votes cast for all candidates for governor at the general election preceding the filing of the petition. (Also see: Referendum).

Interim: The period of time between two sessions of the Legislative Assembly.

Interim Committee: A legislative committee authorized by the Legislative Assembly to study a particular subject or subjects between sessions. Interim committees are appointed by the presiding officers or established by a bill.

Introduction: First Reading of a bill, resolution or memorial in the Chamber of origin.

Joint Committee: A legislative committee composed of members of both houses. NOTE: Committees may also meet jointly; that is, two committees may meet simultaneously, for example, to hear testimony on matters of interest to both committees.

Joint Legislative Schedule: A document published daily during Legislative Sessions identifying planned committee meetings, locations, and bills scheduled to be discussed.

Joint Memorial: A measure adopted by both houses and used to make a request of or to express an opinion to Congress, the President of the United States, or both.

Joint Resolution: A measure used for proposing Constitutional amendments, creating interim committees, giving direction to a state agency, expressing legislative approval of action taken by someone else, or authorizing a kind of temporary action to be taken. A joint resolution may also authorize expenditures out of the legislative expense appropriations.

Joint Session: A combined meeting of the House and Senate, usually taking place in the House Chamber.

Journal: The edited record of all proceedings in each Chamber of the Legislative Assembly, published after each Legislative Session.

Judicial Branch: The branch of state government that interprets the Oregon Constitution and state laws. It includes the courts of the state, with the Supreme Court having general power over all other courts. The other two branches are the Legislative Branch and Executive Branch.

Law: A bill that has been passed by both the Senate and House, enrolled, and approved by the Governor.

LC Draft: Refers to “legislative concept.” It is a draft of an idea for legislation prepared by Legislative Counsel. Each LC draft has its own number (e.g., LC 345). If the draft is introduced as a measure, it is given a bill number instead. For example, LC 345, if introduced in the House, could become HB 2040, or whatever number assigned.

Leadership: The presiding elected officers of each house: the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. They are elected by the members of each Chamber when the body organizes for a Legislative Session following a general election. Sometimes “leadership” also refers to the majority and minority leaders, who are elected by their respective caucuses.

Legislative Administrator: The non-partisan chief administrative officer of the Legislative Administration Committee who coordinates the following service functions: visitor services, personnel and payroll, facilities, financial services, information systems, committee staffing, and mail and distribution for the Legislative Assembly.

Legislative Assembly: The Senate and House of Representatives collectively. The terms Legislative Assembly and Legislature are often used interchangeably.

Legislative Branch: The branch of state government that creates state laws. It also decides how state government will be financed. The Legislative Branch in Oregon consists of a Senate with 30 members and a House of Representatives with 60 members. The other two branches are the Executive Branch and Judicial Branch.

Legislative Counsel (LC): The bill drafter and legal adviser to the Legislative Assembly, and the chief administrative officer for the Legislative Counsel Committee. The Legislative Counsel Office also publishes and distributes Oregon Laws and edits, indexes, annotates, and publishes the Oregon Revised Statutes.

Legislative Fiscal Officer (LFO): The statutory fiscal adviser to the Legislative Assembly, and chief administrative officer for the Emergency Board, the Joint Ways and Means Committee, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee and the Joint Information Management and Technology Committee. In addition, the Legislative Fiscal Office prepares fiscal impact statements for proposed bills.

Legislative Guide: A directory listing the names and office locations of all members, names and room locations of all committees, a Capitol floor plan, telephone numbers, and other pertinent legislative information.

Legislative Publications and Distribution Services: A division of Facility Services popularly known as “distribution” or “the bill room.” This legislative service unit receives all printed measures, measure status reports, and digests from the State Printer and distributes these publications to legislators and members of the public on call or by mail upon request.

Legislative Revenue Officer: The statutory chief revenue analyst for the Legislative Assembly and chief administrative officer for the interim revenue committees and the separate standing Senate and House Committees on Revenue. In addition, the Legislative Revenue Office prepares revenue impact statements for proposed bills.

Legislative Schedule: See Joint Legislative Schedule.

Legislature: See Legislative Assembly.

Lobbyist: A person who is employed by an organization to represent its interests before the Legislature.

Majority Leader: A legislator elected by their peers to lead the party having the majority in their house. The majority leader is responsible for the development and implementation of the caucus agenda.

Mason’s Manual: The source document for legislative parliamentary procedures. It is used in Oregon only in instances which are not provided for in the Oregon Constitution, the rules and custom of either house, or statute.

Measure: A written document used by the Legislative Assembly to propose a law or to express itself as a body. A measure may be a bill, a memorial, or a resolution.

Measure Status Report: A document published daily during a legislative session listing the measures introduced to date, the action taken on each measure, the dates of hearings and work sessions, and other legislative information. After adjournment, a compilation of every measure introduced during the session is published in the Final Legislative Measures--Status Report.

Members Present: Those members of a Chamber who are physically present at a daily floor session. Many votes are determined by a majority of the members present.

Memorial: A measure adopted by either the Senate or House (a measure adopted by both is a joint memorial) to make a request of or express an opinion to Congress or the President of the United States, or both.

Message from the Governor: Official communication from the Governor read during session and printed in the Journal.

Message from the Senate (House): An official communication from the opposite Chamber read during session and printed in the Journal.

Minority Leader: A legislator elected by their peers to lead the party in the minority in their house. The minority leader is responsible for the development and implementation of the caucus agenda.

Minority Report: A committee report signed by at least two committee members who are in the minority on the issue in question on a particular bill (not necessarily in the political minority party) for the purposes of officially stating their position on the issue and seeking action from their Chamber on their proposal.

Minutes/Recording Logs: A written record of the proceedings of a committee. By Oregon statute, the official record of a meeting is the digital recording of its proceedings. The minutes/logs accompanying it serve as an index to the contents of the recordings.

Motion: A formal proposal for action during debate on the floor or in committee. For example, a member may move that an amendment to a bill be adopted in committee, or that a measure be recommended for passage by the committee, or a member may move to table a measure.

“Note from Mother”: A slang term for a note from a legislator or committee administrator authorizing Legislative Counsel to work with the person possessing the note on drafting a measure or amendments.

Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR): A compilation of the administrative rules of Oregon state agencies, compiled, indexed, and published by the Secretary of State's Office.

Oregon Benchmarks: High level measures of societal well-being identified by the Oregon Progress Board to measure the state's social, economic, and environmental progress. State agencies are expected to link to these benchmarks when developing strategic plans and budget requests.

Order of Business: The established sequence of activity during each floor session in each Chamber.

Oregon Laws: The collected laws and selected memorials and resolutions of a Legislative Session.

Oregon Revised Statutes: The codified laws of the State of Oregon. The ORS is published every two years. Each edition of the ORS incorporates all laws, and changes to laws, enacted by the Legislative Assembly through the odd-numbered year regular session referenced in the volume titles for that edition.

Original Bill Folder: The file folder that contains the official bill documentation: a copy of the bill, committee reports, staff measure summary, and fiscal and revenue impact statements. The original bill file is distributed to committee staff when the bill is referred to committee and is returned to the Desks with official documentation when the bill is reported out of committee. The Senate uses yellow folders and the House uses blue folders for original bill folders.

Other Funds: Money received by state agencies that does not come from the General Fund or from the federal government. Other Funds come from sources such as gasoline taxes, driver licenses fees, and fishing license fees. Other Funds may be dedicated, requiring the revenue to be spent for specific purposes. Examples of dedicated funds are park user fees dedicated to park programs and gasoline taxes dedicated to highway programs.

Page: A person who works on the Chamber floor, and occasionally in committees, to distribute materials, open doors, deliver messages, and generally facilitate the legislative work flow. Honorary pages are guests of members who serve as pages for a day.

Parliamentary Inquiry: A request from the floor or from a committee member to ask a question. Typically, such questions are about parliamentary procedures or agenda items under consideration.

Passage: Favorable action on a measure before either house.

Per Diem: Meaning “for the day.” It is an allowance made to legislators for expenses when on legislative business.

Pink Sheet: See Blue Sheet.

Point of Inquiry: A motion from a member on the floor or in committee in order to ask a question. Typically, questions are about such issues as parliamentary procedures or agenda items under consideration.

Point of Order: A motion from the floor or from a committee member calling attention to a breach of order or a breach of rules.

Point of Personal Privilege: A way in which a legislator can get the attention of the presiding officer on the floor of either Chamber. It is used when some question requires immediate consideration such as raising the question of no quorum.

Postpone/ Postpone Indefinitely: A motion from the floor to postpone further consideration of a bill. A motion to postpone will contain a time certain for further consideration. A motion to postpone indefinitely does not contain a time certain and, in most cases, bills that are indefinitely postponed are not heard again.

Precedent: Precedents are previous interpretations of rulings by presiding officers and/or appeals by the body on specific rules.

Prefiled Bill: A bill that a legislator requests to be drafted during the interim between legislative sessions. The bill is introduced and given a number on the first day of the next legislative session.

Presiding Officer: The person elected to direct the activities of a Chamber. (Another term for President or Speaker).

President of the Senate: The presiding officer of the Senate, elected by a majority of members of the body.

President Pro Tempore: President “for a time”: a Senator elected to serve as the temporary presiding officer in the absence of the President of the Senate. If the office of the President of the Senate becomes vacant, the President Pro Tempore becomes the President until a new President is elected.

Previous Question: A motion to close debate and bring the pending question to an immediate vote.

Primary Election: A preliminary election in which the registered voters of a political party nominate candidates for office. A political party may allow registered independents or unaffiliated voters to vote in a primary election.

Propositions and Motions: A customary, traditional order of business on the floor where legislators may make a motion if they wish.

Quorum: The number of members required to be present before business can be transacted in the Senate, House, or a committee. In the Senate, 20 members must be present; in the House, 40 members; and in committees a constitutional majority constitutes a quorum. NOTE: If a quorum is not present, the chair can convene the committee as a subcommittee for the purposes of taking testimony ONLY.

Quorum Call: The method used to determine if a quorum exists.

Ratify: To approve and make valid.

Reapportionment: See Redistricting.

Reading Clerk: A House or Senate staff member responsible for reading bills and recording votes on any question or motion before the body.

Recess: A break in a daily legislative session. A committee may also recess for a period of time before resuming later in the same day.

Reconsideration: The process for taking a second vote on a measure. A motion to reconsider must carry before a second vote can be taken. A bill may be reconsidered by a committee after being voted out of committee, if it has not yet been dropped at the Desk. A vote on a bill may also be reconsidered on the floor.

Redistricting: The redrawing of legislative and congressional district boundaries following the federal census to reflect changes in population distribution. In Oregon, the Legislature is responsible for Congressional and Legislative redistricting. If the Legislature does not agree on a redistricting bill or does not obtain the Governor's signature on such a bill, the authority transfers to the Secretary of State.

Referendum: The submission of a measure passed by the Legislature to a vote of the people. In Oregon, either the Legislature or citizens, by petition, may cause a measure passed by the Legislature to be placed on the ballot for a vote. In the case of a legislative referral, both houses of the Legislature must vote to refer the measure. Such referrals cannot be vetoed by the Governor. In the case of a citizen referendum, supporters of the referendum must obtain a specified number of signatures from registered voters. The number of signatures required is determined by a fixed percentage of the votes cast for all candidates for governor at the general election preceding the filing of the petition. Any change to the Oregon Constitution passed by the Legislature requires referral to voters. (See also: Initiative).

Referendum Clause: A clause added to the end of a measure that causes the measure to be referred to a vote of the people for approval before it takes effect. The referred measure goes on the ballot at the next general election unless the Legislative Assembly calls a special election for the vote.

Refer: To direct a bill to a committee (e.g., HB 2000 was referred to the Ways and Means Committee).

Relating-to Clause: The title of a bill begins with the phrase “Relating to” and expresses the subject of that bill. For example, HB 2000, relating to charter schools. In Oregon, a bill may only address one subject, and for this reason the relating-to clause becomes an important element of the bill.

Remonstrance: A protest. It is a Constitutional right of legislators that “any member of either house shall have the right to protest, and have his protest, with his reasons for dissent, entered on the journal.” (Oregon Constitution, Article IV, Section 26).

Report Out: To return a measure from a committee to the Senate or House Desk with or without recommendation as to further action.

Resolution: A measure used by the Senate or House (a measure used by both would be a joint resolution) to take an action that would affect only its own members, such as appointing a committee of its members, or expressing an opinion or sentiment on a matter of public interest.

Revenue Impact Statement: An analysis of a bill done by the Legislative Revenue Office that identifies any potential state or local revenue changes that might result from the bill’s passage.

Roll Call: A recitation by the Reading Clerk of each legislator’s name, done at the beginning of a floor session, during a Call of the Senate or House to identify those present, or during a vote of the Senate.

Rules: The written procedures by which the Senate, the House of Representatives, or a committee governs its meetings. Rules are formally adopted at the first convening of the Legislative Assembly or of a committee, and require a vote (with at least a quorum of members present) for official adoption.

Second Reading: Like the First Reading, a recitation of the measure’s number and title by the Reading Clerk. Second Reading occurs after the measure has been referred to committee, worked on, and reported back to the floor for a vote.

Secretary of the Senate: The chief administrative officer of the Senate. The Secretary of the Senate is elected by the members of the Senate, and is responsible for keeping records of the proceedings of the Senate, supervising Senate employees, acting as parliamentarian of the Senate, advising members on parliamentary procedure, and preparing all Senate publications for printing.

Senate: The legislative body consisting of 30 members, called Senators, each representing districts of approximately 127,702 Oregon citizens.

Sergeant at Arms: Staff appointed by each house to maintain order within that Chamber.

Session: The period of time in which the Legislative Assembly officially convenes. Regular sessions convene each February and may last 160 days in odd-numbered years and 35 days in even-numbered years.

Session Laws: Officially called the “Oregon Laws,” the session laws are a compilation of laws enacted and selected memorials and resolutions adopted during a single session. They are published in bound volumes with tables and an index.

Sine Die: “Without fixing a day for a future meeting”--the last day of a Legislative Session.

Speaker of the House: The presiding officer of the House of Representatives, elected by the members of the House.

Speaker Pro Tempore: A Representative elected to serve as the temporary Speaker in the absence of the Speaker of the House.

Special (select) committee: A committee authorized by Senate or House Rules to study a limited subject.

Special Session: A convening of the Legislative Assembly called by the Governor or a majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly, at a time other than during a regular session. Typically, special sessions of the Legislative Assembly are called for the purpose of addressing a specific state problem or issue.

Sponsor: The legislator(s), state agency, or legislative committee that introduces a measure. The name of this person or committee is printed at the top of the measure.

Staff Measure Summary: A brief, impartial description of a measure that must accompany the measure when it is reported out of committee.

Standing Committee: A permanent committee during a session authorized by Senate or House Rules.

Status Report: See Measure Status Report.

Statute: A codified law. NOTE: “Codify” means “to arrange laws systematically.” A codified law is one that has been incorporated into that section of the ORS that it amends, modifies, or accompanies.

Statutory Committee: A legislative committee established by statute.

Subcommittee: A subordinate committee composed of members appointed by the chair (or by Senate or House leadership) from the full committee. A subcommittee usually considers a narrower range of topics than the full committee, and generally is authorized only to make recommendations to the full committee.

Subsequent Referral: When the President or Speaker designates a bill to go to two committees, one after the other (e.g., a tax measure might first be referred to a committee to consider the substantive issues, and then to the Revenue Committee to consider the revenue issues).

Substitute Measure: A measure submitted by a standing committee as a substitute for a measure referred to it. It is treated in the same manner as an amendment if it is germane to the title and subject of the original measure.

Summary: The measure summary or digest found printed near the top of a bill.

Sunset Clause: A statement added to the end of a measure which causes the act to “sunset,” or become ineffective, after a certain date.

Table: “Table” is used as both a noun and a verb. Tables, n., are found at the back of the calendars, and display legislative information in a variety of ways. Table, v., is used in reference to stopping bills from further action in committees or on the floor. A bill is tabled by a majority vote, after a non-debatable motion from a member.

Task Force: A legislative committee authorized by legislative leadership to study a specific subject for a specified period of time. A task force may contain lay members and is different from a committee in that it typically considers a narrow subject within a broader topic area; for example a task force might consider mental health in Oregon rather than health issues in Oregon.

Third Reading: As in First or Second Readings, a recitation of a measure’s number and title by the Reading Clerk on the floor before a final vote by either Chamber.

Third Reading Calendar: A publication devoted exclusively to listing all measures on the agenda for Third Reading and final passage on a given day. It lists the measures in order, and includes measures scheduled for consideration under Propositions and Motions and, in the Senate, action on Executive Appointments.

Time Certain: A means of designating a definite time for a certain activity, for example, to hear a particular bill.

Unfunded Mandate: A requirement that a lower level of government provides a program or performs an activity with their own resources. Under a federal mandate, the federal government may require a state or local government to provide a service and not provide the federal funding to pay for it. Under a state mandate, the state may require a local government to provide a service, but under the Oregon Constitution, the local government is not required to comply with certain new state mandates unless the state pays the costs of the new services. The Constitution provides exceptions.

Veto: An action by the Governor in disapproval of a measure that has passed both houses. After a veto, the bill is returned to the house of origin with written objections. A Governor’s veto may be considered by both houses, and if the bill is again passed by two-thirds of the members present, it is considered overridden and becomes law. A veto must be considered at the very next Legislative Session following the veto.

Vice-Chair: A committee member chosen by the President or Speaker to serve as the committee chair in the chair’s absence.

Visitor Services: The non-partisan unit of the Legislative Administration (LA) which provides Capitol tours and video presentations on the legislative process and Capitol history. They also schedule and coordinate special events in the Capitol and operate the Capitol Gift Shop.

Vote Explanation: On occasion, legislators may wish the official record to reflect the reason why they voted yes or no on particular bill. Members may state their vote explanation orally after a roll call vote, and a member may also submit a written vote explanation. A written vote explanation is found in the Journal, following the vote record of a bill.

Weekly Cumulative Index to Legislative Measures: A subject index to measures, published weekly during legislative sessions.

Whip: A term used at the federal level to refer to the Deputy Majority Leader. It derives from the British fox-hunting term “whipper-in,” which described the person responsible for keeping the foxhounds from leaving the pack. Some, but not all, of the caucuses in the Oregon Legislative Assembly use the term “whip” in reference to the Deputy Majority or Minority Leader.

Witness: A person who testifies before a legislative committee.

Work Session: A committee meeting held for the purpose of determining the contents of a measure to be reported out of committee. A work session is different from a public hearing. In a work session, testimony is usually not taken from the public, although the public may attend the hearing.