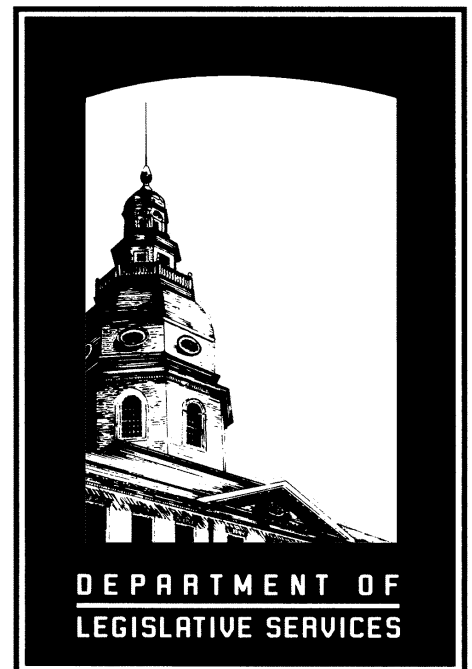


MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

---

# Legislative Lingo

---



This document was prepared by:

Library and Information Services  
Office of Policy Analysis  
Department of Legislative Services  
General Assembly of Maryland

For additional copies or further information, contact:

Library and Information Services  
90 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

Baltimore/Annapolis Area: 410-946-5400/5410  
Washington Area: 301-970-5400/5410  
Other Maryland Areas: 1-800-492-7122, ext. 5400/5410  
TTY: 410-946/301-970-5401

TTY users may also use the Maryland Relay Service  
to contact the General Assembly.

E-Mail: [libr@mlis.state.md.us](mailto:libr@mlis.state.md.us)  
Home Page: <http://mlis.state.md.us>

*The Department of Legislative Services does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disability in the admission or access to its programs, services, or activities. The Department's Information Officer has been designated to coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in Section 35.107 of the Department of Justice Regulations. Requests for assistance should be directed to the Information Officer at the telephone numbers shown above.*

# 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.

**Attorney General's Bill Letters**

The letters that examine the legal sufficiency of the bills that the General Assembly passed. The Attorney General's Office prepares the letters and submits them to the Governor before the approval or veto of bills.

**Bill**

A proposed law presented for approval to 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.

**Blue Back**

The original copy of a bill. House bills are printed on blue paper and Senate bills are printed on white paper.

**Calendar Day**

The 24-hour day as denoted on the calendar.

**Chapter Number**

The number the Secretary of State assigns to a bill after the Governor signs the bill. Chapter numbers are issued in the numerical order in which the bills are signed.

**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 Dates**

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 (appointed by the presiding officers) who work 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 the 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.

**Crabtown**

The City of Annapolis.

**Crossover Date**

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

**Drop into the Hopper**

When a member files a bill with the Chief Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate for introduction.

**Enacted**

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

**Enrolled**

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

**Failed**

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

**First Reader**

A bill as printed for the first time with its assigned bill number.

**First Reading**

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

**Fiscal Note**

A statement the Department of Legislative Services prepares stating the fiscal impact of a bill on State revenues and expenditures if the bill becomes law. A Fiscal Note is revised if an adopted amendment changes the bill’s impact.

**Fiscal Year**

July 1 to June 30.

**Goldenrod**

A committee report printed on gold paper indicating the next day’s committee agenda on the Senate floor.

**Green Bag**

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

**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**

A resolution both chambers pass that makes a statement on a public issue, makes a request of the Governor or a government office, or establishes a task force. With certain exceptions, Joint Resolutions do 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; may be longer or shorter than a calendar day.

**LR**

An identifying number the Department of Legislative Services gives to a bill request until the bill is introduced and assigned a bill number. A bill becomes public only when assigned a bill number.

**Motion**

To propose an action.

**Move the Previous Question**

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

**Passed**

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

**Prefiled**

A bill the Department of Legislative Services drafts, by request, prior to a legislative session for introduction in that session. Prefiling dates are set by law.

**Reassigned**

Assignment of bill from one committee to another.

**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 from one committee to another.

**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).

**Roll Call**

A recorded vote taken on third reading and final passage of a bill or on request of a member with support of four other members.

**Screen Amendment**

The short amendments that are projected on a screen in the House of Delegates to save time and printing costs.

**Second Reading**

When a bill is reported out of committee and brought to the chamber floor for preliminary approval, or second reading. Committee and floor amendments may be added to the bill at this time. (The bill is not reprinted for second reading.)

**Sine Die**

The final adjournment of a session, without adjourning to a specific time or date.

**Session Laws**

The compilation of all the Chapters, the bills the Governor signs, from a legislative session.

**Special Order**

Floor action on a bill is postponed 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**

Provides that a provision of the law is automatically repealed on a specific date, unless the General Assembly reenacts the law.

**The Chair**

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

**The City**

Baltimore City.

**The Code**

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

**The Floor**

The elected members of each chamber.

**The Shore**

The Eastern Shore of Maryland.

**Third Reader**

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

**Third Reading**

When 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. At the next session the General Assembly may override the Governor's veto with a 3/5 vote in each chamber.

## **TYPES OF BILLS**

### **Administration Bill**

A bill introduced by the Speaker of the House or President of the Senate at the request of the Governor.

### **Bobtail Bill**

Prohibited action which, if allowed, would change the purpose of a bill by striking every word following the words "A Bill".

### **Budget Bill**

A bill that consists of the Governor's proposed operating budget for the State for the next fiscal year. The Budget Bill becomes law on approval by both chambers. The Governor's signature is not required. The bill must be passed by both chambers seven days before the end of a session or the Governor must extend the session. (Art. III, Sec. 52(10), MD Constitution)

### **Capital Budget Bill**

A general construction loan or bond bill that finances construction of State-owned buildings ("bricks and mortar"). This bill states the amount of State debt to be incurred and the projects to be funded. The Capital Budget Bill may not be acted on until the 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 and 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 chairman at the request of a department of the Executive Branch 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.

### **Reintroduction Bill**

A bill that was unsuccessful in a previous session and is reintroduced in the present session. In the upper left corner the bill is identified as a reintroduction.

### **Snake**

A bill or provision that has a hidden purpose.