



# Advocacy Glossary

**302(a) Allocation:** Sets a total amount of money for the Appropriations Committees to spend for a given fiscal year.

**Act:** A rule or statute that is passed by both Chambers in identical format and signed into law by the president or passed over a veto.

**Adjourn:** Ends that day's session.

**Adjournment sine die:** Adjournment on the final day of a session of a Congress.

**Administration:** The President and actual offices of the Government such as the United States Education Department.

**Advice and consent:** Senate's role of confirming presidential nominations and international treaties.

**Amendment:** Proposal to change text or strike out parts in a pending or existing bill.

**Amendment in the nature of substitute ("Substitute amendment"):** Strikes out the entire text of a bill or other measure and inserts new text.

**Amendment tree:** A process in the Senate used to limit the number and types of amendments allowed on a bill, typically used to prevent changes to controversial legislation.

**Appropriations:** Assigned funding for federal agencies to make payments out of the Treasury for specified purposes.

**ASCD:** Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development - Supports the global community of educators dedicated to excellence in learning, teaching, and leading.

**Authorization:** Legislation is typically authorized for a period of time and then it gets reauthorized or extended with some tweaks. Within an authorization, there is usually a funding target for each year.

**Bill:** A proposal to enact or repeal laws.

**Block Grants:** Lump sums given to the states by the federal government for loosely defined purposes, such as childcare or improving public safety.

**Budget:** The President develops a budget and Congress is supposed to develop a budget annually (although this hasn't happened for the last 5 to 6 years.)

**Budget authority:** The authority that Congress provides a federal agency to spend money, granted through an appropriation law that specifies a purpose and a set time period.

**Budget resolution:** Concurrent resolution that creates the congressional budget by dividing spending into functional categories. Can include reconciliation instructions to designated Senate or House committees.

**Calendar of business: "Senate Calendar" or the "Legislative Calendar":** Published each day the Senate is in session and has information about the bills and resolutions eligible for floor action.

**Caucus:** An informal group of Senators, Representatives or both, that discuss shared concerns and possibly conduct legislative research and policy planning. There are regional, political, ideological, and ethnic caucuses.

**CBO (Congressional Budget Office):** Makes forecasts of revenues and estimates budget impact of proposed legislation.

**Chair:** The leader of a certain committee always in the majority party of the chamber.

**Class:** Article I, Section III of the Constitution divides senators into three classes, Class I, Class II, and Class III, each of whom are up for reelection 2 years apart.

**Cloakroom:** Adjacent to the House and Senate chambers, a cloakroom for each party serves as a place for the members of that party to discuss their ideas privately.

**Closed session: "Secret Session":** A House or Senate meeting that excludes the public and press usually for impeachment trials, national security, confidential information or sensitive communications from the present.

**Cloture:** The process by which a supermajority (two-thirds) of the Senate agrees to stop debate and move something forward. Goes against a filibuster.

**Committee:** Subgroup of the House or Senate with a specific topic area that considers legislation, conducts hearing and investigations and conducts other assignments in that policy area.

**Committee amendment:** Amendment recommended by a committee when reporting a bill or other measure.

**Committee print:** Publication committees use to state the rules of each standing committee, draft of bills or committee reports, and include memorial tributes.

**Committee report:** A publication created by a House, Senate, or conference committee to state the purpose of legislation the committee has considered.

**Companion bill or measure:** Bills that are similar or identical introduced in both the Senate and House.

**Competitive Based:** Funding typically based on a competitive process to acquire a grant type based funding.

**Concurrent resolution:** A resolution adopted by both the House and Senate that does not require the signature of the President and does not have the force of law. Concurrent resolutions are used to make or amend Congressional rules that apply to both chambers, express the sentiments, or set a non-binding annual congressional budget resolution.

**Conferees:** Appointees on conference committees who must uphold Chamber's position when negotiating with the conferees of other Chambers.

**Conference committee:** An ad hoc panel that reconciles differences in a measure passed in both chambers.

**Congressional record:** The substantially verbatim accounts of daily proceedings on the House and Senate floors. Printed each day either Chamber is in session.

**Congressional resolution:** A joint resolution by Congress that allows federal agencies and programs to continue operations without regular appropriations.

**Congresswoman/Congressman:** Typically used to address a Member of the House of Representatives.

**Continuing Resolution(CR):** A legislative mechanism to continue forward something passed previously, such as funding levels.

**Controlled time:** A unanimous consent agreement limiting debate time on a bill or other measure. The floor manager yields the specified time to any senator to speak in the debate.

**CROmnibus:** A combination of a long-term omnibus spending bill and a short-term continuing resolution.

**CRS (Congressional Research Service):** Researches policy implications or background on proposed legislation.

**Deemer:** Legislation which is deemed to serve as an annual budget resolution for purposes of establishing enforceable budget levels for a budget cycle.

**Earmark:** A legislative way to funnel funds to a specific project, company, or individual. (Earmarks have been considered unethical for some time now.)

**Ed & Labor (Committee on Education and Labor):** The committee in the House that handles most K-12 education legislation.

**Enacted legislation:** Legislation after it has passed both Chambers of Congress in identical form and has become law by signature of the president, a [pocket veto](#), or a [veto override](#), company, or individual. (Earmarks have been considered unethical for some time now.)

**Enrolled bill:** The final copy of a bill or joint resolution after it has passed both Chambers and been signed by the correct Congressional officials and submitted to the President for their signature.

**Engrossed bill:** The official copy of a bill or joint resolution passed and certified by one Chamber.

**ESEA / ESSA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of Every Student Succeeds Act):** The main piece of Federal Education Legislation for K-12 schools.

**Ex officio membership:** Allows the chairman and ranking member of a committee to participate as members of any subcommittees of that committee, but generally they can not vote.

**Executive business:** The consideration of nominations and treaties, which is received from the President.

**Executive calendar:** A list of executive business available for consideration on the Senate floor. Can include treaties and nominations.

**Executive communication:** A message sent to the senate from the Executive branch, typically about a veto.

**Executive session:** Any time during the Senate's daily session when it considers executive business.

**Filibuster:** Procedure by which the Senate uses to prevent something from moving forward and does not require someone to stand on the floor and continue talking.

**Fiscal Year:** The leader of a certain committee always in the majority party of the chamber.

**Floor:** The physical space where the whole Senate conducts its business. It is also used informally such as someone "having the floor" or "yielding the floor" referring to the speaking area of the Senate.

**Floor amendment:** An amendment offered by a Congressperson during consideration of a bill or other measure on the floor rather than a committee amendment.

**Floor manager:** Senators or representatives designated to lead consideration of a bill or other measure on the floor. Usually the chair and ranking minority member of the reporting committee or their designee.

**Formula Based:** Funding based on a formula that uses a certain demographic or population.

**Germane:** Related to the subject and context of a bill. The House has a "germaneness rule" and all amendments must relate to the part(s) of the bill being amended. The Senate can allow nongermane amendments.

**Hearing:** A meeting of a committee or subcommittee to hear testimony, conduct an investigation, review a federal agency or program or consider nominations and treaties.

**HELP (Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions):** Matters relating to the issues of health, education, labor, and pensions. Encompasses most federal and labor laws.

**Hold:** An informal practice for a Senator to inform the leadership that they do not want a measure or nomination to reach the floor.

**IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act):** Special Education Law. The Federal Government is supposed to pay 40% of the average per student cost for every special education student.

**ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education):** Community of global educators who believe in the power of technology to transform teaching and solve problems in education.

**Joint committee:** A committee with members from both Chambers of Congress. They usually have narrow jurisdiction and no authority to report legislation. Chairmanship usually alternates between the Senate and House members from Congress to Congress.

**Joint explanatory statement:** A document to address differences in versions passed by the Senate and the House, usually created by a conference committee.

**Joint meeting:** An occasion, often ceremonial, when the Senate and House recess and meet together to hear an address by a visiting dignitary, such as a foreign leader.

**Joint resolution:** A legislative measure such as for constitutional amendments, continuing appropriations, establishing permanent joint committees, and corrections of errors in existing law. Becomes law when approved by both Chambers and signed by the president, besides proposed constitutional amendment, which requires a two-thirds affirmative vote in each Chamber and ratification by three-quarters of the states.

**Joint session:** A session both Chambers meet together for formal business or to hear an address from the President.

**Journal of the Senate:** The written record of the official proceedings of the Senate, including motions and votes but not debates. Each chamber, and legislative, executive, closed and impeachment proceedings all have their own journals.

**“Lame duck” session:** The time after November general elections during Congressional election years, as some of the lawmakers will not return to the next Congress.

**Layover:** Informal term for the requirement in various Senate rules that a measure or matter lie over one or two days before Senate action is in order. Layover periods may be waived by unanimous consent. Some fast-track statutes waive the layover requirement so that it is in order to proceed immediately to a measure.

**LEA (Location Education Authority):** Individual school districts.

**Legislative day:** The time between when the Senate convenes and adjourns. Usually one day, though, may extend over several days or even weeks or months.

**Legislative session:** Any time during the Senate's daily session in which it considers legislative business (bills, resolutions, and related actions).

**LHHS:** The House and Senate Labor, Health, Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittees (also referred to as “Labor-H” or “Labor-HHS”).

**Lie on the table:** A motion for permanent disposal of a bill, resolution, amendment, appeal or motion.

**Line-item veto:** A veto of only a section of an appropriations act, not the entire act. A president must sign or veto an act and cannot issue a line-item veto.

**Majority leader:** The floor leader for the majority party.

**Markup:** The process for congressional committees and subcommittees to debate, amend, and rewrite proposed legislation.

**Measure:** Proposed legislation on which the Senate or House takes action, such as a bill or resolution.

**Member:** Typically used as abbreviation of Member of Congress or Member of House of Representatives.

**Minority leader:** The floor leader for the minority party.

**Morning business:** Routine business for the first two hours of a legislative day or other times of unanimous consent such as receiving messages from the president and the House, executive branch reports, committee reports, and the introduction of bills and submission of resolutions.

**Motion to instruct conferees:** A non-binding proposal to instruct conferees appointed to a conference committee to take a certain position in the conference.

**Motion to proceed to consider:** A proposal, usually offered by the majority leader, to bring a measure, nomination, or treaty up for floor consideration, including debate and votes. Usually used when unanimous consent to do so cannot be obtained.

**Motion to reconsider:** A proposal that can be offered once after each vote by a member of the winning side to revisit any question previously decided by vote.

**Motion to table:** A proposal to set aside any pending question. Used to dispose of a question the Chamber does not want to consider further. Agreement to the motion is equivalent to defeating the question tabled.

**Nomination:** An appointment by the president to executive or judicial office which is subject to Senate confirmation.

**NSBA:** National School Board Association.

**Omnibus:** Term that describes packaging a large amount of items together into one large bill.

**Original bill:** A bill drafted by a committee instead of one drafted by a member and referred to committee.

**Oversight:** Review of the activities of a federal agency or program by a committee.

**Parliamentarian:** The Senate or House adviser on the interpretation of its rules and procedures. Duties also include referring bills to the appropriate committees.

**Parliamentary inquiry:** A question from the floor to the presiding officer requesting a clarification of the procedural situation on the floor.

**Party conference:** An organization of all party members in a Chamber. They elect party and committee leaders, assign members to committees, and then meet periodically to talk about political strategy and review party positions in pending legislation.

**Pocket veto:** A veto caused by the president not signing a bill within 10 days of receiving it and Congress adjourns during that time.

**Poison Pills:** An amendment proposed by someone who disagrees with the bill in an attempt to make it useless.

**Point of order:** A claim made by a Congressman from the floor that a rule of the Chamber is being violated.

**Policy committees:** Democratic and Republican groups with the purpose of providing research and services to the members of that party. They also help serve as a forum for discussion of party legislative strategy.

**President of the Senate:** The vice president oversees sessions of the Senate and may vote in the case of a tie. In the absence of the vice president, the president pro tempore or a designee performs these duties, with the exception of voting.

**President pro tempore:** A constitutionally recognized officer of the Senate who presides over the Chamber in the absence of the vice president. Elected by the Senate and, by custom, the senator of the majority party with the longest record of continuous service.

**Presiding officer:** A senator of the majority party who presides over the Senate in the absence of the president pro tempore. They maintain order and decorum, recognize members to speak, and interrupt the Senate's rules, practices, and precedents.

**Private law:** A bill applicable only to specific organizations or individuals that has passed both Chambers and is signed by the president.

**Pro forma session:** A few minute meeting of the Senate or House when business is typically not conducted.

**Proxy voting:** The practice of allowing a senator to cast a vote in committee on behalf of an absent senator.

**PSA (Public School Academy):** Typically a charter school

**Ranking Member:** Typically the most senior member of the minority party of the committee.

**Public law:** A bill or joint resolution with general applicability nationwide that has passed both Chambers and is signed by the president.

**Question:** All matters the Senate votes on, such as passage of a bill, adoption of an amendment, agreement to a motion, or an appeal.

**Quorum:** The number of senators that must be present for the Senate or House to do business. The Constitution requires a majority of senators (51) and representatives (218) for a quorum.

**Ranking member:** The highest-ranking (and usually longest-serving) minority member of a committee or subcommittee.

**Recess:** A temporary break of proceedings which can be a few hours to a long break such as a holiday period.

**Reconciliation:** A tool the Senate can use to make legislation easier to pass in the Senate. The reconciliation process allows for a simple majority of the Senate to pass certain policies, eliminating the need for three-fifths of the chamber—or 60 votes—to break the filibuster.

**Referral:** The process to assign a bill to committee for consideration. In the Senate, this is usually done by the committee with jurisdiction over that subject matter, but can be done by other committees with unanimous consent.

**Rider:** A nongermane amendment to a bill or an amendment to an appropriation bill that changes the permanent law governing a program funded by the bill.

**Roll call vote:** A vote in which each senator or representative votes "yea" or "nay" as his or her name is called by the clerk.

**SEA (State Education Authority):** A state's department of education.

**Secretary of the Senate:** Nominated by the majority party and elected by the senate to be the chief legislative, financial, and administrative officer of the Senate.

**Select or special committee:** A committee established usually for a limited time by resolution to conduct a particular study or investigation.

**Senate Manual:** A document containing the Senate's standing rules and orders and other laws and regulations that apply to the Senate, usually published once each new Congress.

**Senator:** Used to address a Member of the Senate.

**Seniority:** The status given to senators according to their length of service. Entitles a senator with greater seniority to preferential treatment in matters such as committee assignments. Seniority lists are established by the party conferences.

**Sequestration:** When the spending that is above the overall reduction needed to hit the spending target is withheld. This is the process by which the gridlock in DC in 2011 was "solved"; an overall spending target was established, but no individual programs were cut.

- Sergeant at arms:** The protocol officer and chief law enforcement officer of the Senate. Nominated by the majority party conference and elected by the Senate.
- Session:** The period of time that Congress assembles and conducts business. Each Congress generally has a first and second session roughly lasting a calendar year.
- Simple resolution:** A non-binding resolution passed by a single chamber of Congress concerning the operations or opinions of that chamber.
- Slip law:** The first official publication of a law, usually published a few days after a law has been enacted.
- Star print:** Corrected editions of congressional publications with stars in the lower left-hand corner that have precedent over the original documents.
- Statutes at large:** A publication of the laws and concurrent resolutions enacted during each Congress, arranged in chronological order. Also includes presidential proclamations.
- Subcommittee:** Part of a committee to divide the workload.
- Supplemental appropriation:** Money provided in an appropriations act outside the regular appropriations cycle for emergencies and disaster relief.
- Title I:** Refers to at risk population support in a given school based on free and reduced lunch rates.
- Unanimous consent:** A Senate procedure to set aside rules of procedure to speed up a legislative action.
- United State Code:** A compilation of general and permanent U.S. laws currently in force, organized by subject matter.
- USED:** United States Education Department.
- Veto:** When the president rejects a bill that has been passed by both Chambers and it gets sent back to the Chamber it originated in. Can be overridden by a two-thirds vote in both the Senate and the House.
- Veto override:** A veto by the president can be overridden by a two-thirds vote in both Chambers.
- Vice President:** Elected with the President. Part of the Executive branch. Also serves as President of the Senate.
- Voice Vote:** A vote where the presiding officer states a question, takes a "yea" or "nay" vote and announces the results based on their count. The names and numbers of senators voting on each side are not recorded.
- Whip:** Elected by the party to mobilize votes within the party and often serves as acting floor leader. There is one for each party in each Chamber.
- Yeas and Nays:** Vote options during a roll call vote
- Yield:** "Yields the floor" concludes a member speaking. "Yielding time" refers to the floor manager allowing members to speak for a certain amount of time. "Yielding for a question" refers to the senate with the floor allowing another member who does not have the floor to ask a question.