

Frequently Asked Questions

What is?

Adjournment: Termination of a session for that day, with the hour and day of the next meeting being set prior to adjournment.

Adjournment Sine Die: The final adjournment of a legislative session.

Amendment: A change made to legislation in committee or on the chamber floor

Biennium: A two year term of legislative activity.

Bills: A bill is a document which either 1) changes the current law, 2) adds new law, or 3) deletes existing law. The idea for a bill may come from General Assembly members, their constituents, lobbyists, the governor, or heads of state agencies charged with administering the law.

Budget Bill: Recommended appropriations of state revenue presented by the Governor to the General Assembly for its consideration during the legislative session.

Crossover: The date that both chambers (House of Delegates and Senate) of the General Assembly send bills it intends to pass favorably to the opposite chamber.

Engrossed: A stage in the legislative process when a bill passes the second reading in the house of origin.

Enrolled: Legislation which has passed both the House of Delegates and the Senate.

Fiscal Year: A 12-month period used in the State Budget. In Virginia, the fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30 of the following year.

General Assembly Session: The regular session of the General Assembly in an even year will be no longer than 60 days and the regular session in an odd year will be no longer than thirty days. In either case, the session may be extended for no longer than thirty days.

Patron: A legislator who introduces a specific piece of legislation.

Prefile: To file a bill with a house of the General Assembly during a specified period of time before the opening day of a Regular Session. The bill is deemed automatically introduced on the opening day.

Resolution: Legislation which requests a study, or expresses legislative opinion on a particular issue. Resolutions do not have the force of law and do not require the signature of the Governor.

Special Session: A called session, commonly referred to as a special session, is so designated because it must be called by the Governor, who also states how long they can meet.

Veto: Action by which the Governor refuses to sign legislation passed by the General Assembly. The Governor returns the vetoed bill to its house of origin. A 2/3 vote of each body is required to overturn a veto.

To see how a bill becomes a law, [click here](#).

What can happen to a bill?

Pass: Bills that pass become effective July 1st of the same year unless otherwise specified (emergency legislation, delayed enactment, second enactment). Laws passed at a special session become effective on the first day of the fourth month following adjournment, unless otherwise specified.

Bills that do not pass fall into one of these categories:

Carry Over (Continue) - Action which removes the measure from consideration during an even-numbered year session and provides for its reconsideration at the next regular session of the General Assembly. No bill may be carried over in an odd-numbered year session. A carry-over bill retains its assigned bill number in the odd-numbered year session.

Defeat: The committee rejects a motion to report the bill, and there is no further action by the committee.

Fail to Report (Defeat) - The committee rejects a motion to report a bill to the full house.

Incorporate - The committee incorporates one or more bills into another bill.

No Action Taken - No motion is made on the bill and it dies at the time of the committee deadline.

Pass By Indefinitely (PBI) - This action allows the committee to reconsider legislation at a later meeting. If the committee takes no further action, the bill is "dead."

Report - The majority of the committee approves the bill and it is reported to the floor. The bill may be reported three ways: without amendment, with amendment(s), or with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. A bill may also be reported and referred to another committee.

Strike - The bill is removed from the docket. This action frequently occurs at the request of the patron.

Table: To indefinitely postpone action on a bill or other matter.