

The logo for the New York City Bar, featuring the text "NEW YORK CITY BAR" in a serif font, centered between two horizontal blue bars.

NEW YORK CITY BAR

POLICY DEPARTMENT

NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS GLOSSARY OF FREQUENTLY USED PHRASES

Amendment

A bill can be amended as many times as necessary at any time during the legislative process. When a bill is amended a letter is added to the end of the bill number. The first amendment is referred to as the “A” version of the bill; the second amendment is referred to as the “B” version of the bill, and so on (*i.e.* A.1234-A, A.1234-B, A.1234-C, etc.).

Approval memo

Memo attached to a bill that has been signed by the Governor explaining why he/she approved the bill. Approval memos are not required. If written, approval memos are included in a **bill jacket** and become a part of the bill’s legislative history. (*See also* ‘Disapproval memo’)

Article 7

Article of the New York State Constitution governing the State’s finances and budget. “Article 7 bills” are non-appropriation pieces of legislation which are intended to amend existing state laws governing programs and revenues.

Bill jacket

Includes the legislative history of a bill that has been enacted into law or vetoed by the Governor. Bill jackets include the bill, the bill’s sponsor memo, **approval** or **disapproval memos**, financial analysis (if necessary) and any other memos, letters or comments that were submitted to the Governor’s office regarding the bill. This would include comments by other agencies, organizations, or individuals. A bill jacket is an excellent resource when doing research on an issue and can be accessed through the New York State Library or by contacting the Legislative Secretary to the Governor’s Counsel (for bills from the current year).

Calendar or Reading calendar

Once a bill has been considered by all necessary committees and favorably reported, it is placed on the calendar. Bills must ‘age’ for three consecutive legislative session days before it can be voted on by the house. This rule is intended to provide legislators sufficient time to read and consider legislation before acting on it. A bill will automatically move from its first to second reading calendar; it will then be placed on the third reading calendar, where it can remain indefinitely if no further action is taken. If it is decided that a bill should move to the floor for a vote, then it will appear on the ‘Debate List’ in the Assembly and/or the ‘Active List’ in the Senate. A bill can bypass the three-day reading rule with a **Message of Necessity** issued by the Governor.

Chapter number

Number assigned a bill once it has been signed into law by the Governor. Chapter numbers are assigned in numerical order as bills are signed and are specific to the year in which the bill was enacted. Knowing a bill's chapter number is helpful when searching for legislation enacted in past years (*i.e.* Chapter 1 of 2012).

Delivered to Governor

After passing both houses of the Legislature, bills will be delivered to the Governor. During the legislative session, the Governor has 10 days to sign or veto bills once they've been transmitted. This time period does not include Sundays, but does include legal holidays. If the Governor does not act on the bill within the 10 day period, the bill automatically becomes law. When a bill is delivered to the Governor after the Legislature has formally adjourned *sine die* (the final adjournment of a legislative session year), the Governor has 30 days (including Sundays *and* including legal holidays) to sign a bill or it will be automatically vetoed upon expiration of the time period. No veto message from the Governor is required if this happens.

Disapproval memo

Memo attached to a bill vetoed by the Governor laying out the reasons for disapproving the bill. All bills that are vetoed are accompanied by a disapproval memo, which is included in the **bill jacket** and becomes part of the bill's legislative history. (*See also* 'Approval memo')

Enacting clause stricken

When the main sponsor of a bill removes their support for the bill and the title has been deleted. Bill is considered dead unless another legislator decides to sponsor the bill.

Held for consideration

When a bill is placed on a "hold" agenda in a committee. A committee can vote to favorably, unfavorably or to hold a bill when it comes up for a vote. The bill is still able to be placed on an active agenda at any time. This action is usually taken when a committee does not want to disapprove a bill but feels further study is needed or there are amendments that should be made before the bill progresses.

Laid aside

When a bill's sponsor or the Temporary President in the Senate does not want a vote to be taken on a bill. Bills that are laid aside retain their place in the regular order of business until called for a debate. Unlike bills that are **starred on calendar**, bills that are laid aside can be voted on the same day it is laid aside if the sponsor or Temporary President of the Senate so chooses. (*See also* 'Starred on Calendar')

Legislative term / session

A **legislative term** is the two-year period during which a bill can remain active. Each term starts the January of an odd-numbered year, after the legislative election, and consists of two **legislative sessions** (running from roughly January through June). Bills introduced in the first session that are not signed into law will retain their bill number and be automatically introduced in the second session. After this two-year period a new legislative term begins and all bills not enacted into law will have to be reintroduced and obtain new bill numbers before they can be considered by the legislature. This is done by bill sponsors as a matter of course.

Message of necessity

Method by which the Governor can bypass the three-day bill aging process (or **calendar readings**) and call for an immediate vote on a bill. A message of necessity must lay out why an immediate vote is required and must be approved by a majority of members in the house where it is being requested.

Motion for reconsideration

Method by which a legislator can have a bill, resolution, message, report, amendment, nomination or motion reconsidered and voted on again. This can be done for matters before the house or for bills which have been vetoed by the Governor. In the case of bills vetoed by the Governor, a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of members in each house must vote in favor of the bill in order to overturn the veto and enact the legislation.

Ranking member (or 'ranker')

Highest ranking minority party member of a committee.

Referred

The date on which a bill is given to a particular committee for consideration. All bills are referred to a committee upon introduction; bills can be referred to other committees at the request of that committee or if the bill's subject covers multiple committees. A bill does not have to be voted on by a committee in order for it to be referred to another committee.

Reported

The date on which a bill is placed on a floor **calendar** to be considered for a house vote, or the date on which a bill is sent to another committee for further consideration. For example, when reading a bill's status: "reported, referred to Rules".

Starred on calendar

A bill that is on the **reading calendar** can be 'starred' by its sponsor and all further action on the bill is suspended until the star is removed, although the bill retains its place on the calendar. Other than for the purpose of amendment or recommitted, a star can't be removed from a bill until one day after the request was made. A bill will be automatically starred if it is **laid aside** by its sponsor on five consecutive days in the Senate or three consecutive days in the Assembly.

State of the State

Held on the “first Wednesday after the first Monday in January”. Kicks off the official start to session. Governor lays out his/her agenda for the year.

Substitution of bills

Process for ensuring that a bill is identical in each house of the legislature before it is passed by both houses. Bills cannot be sent to the Governor until the identical version has passed both houses. A bill is typically substituted for when it is on the **calendar** in one house and its same-as partner has already passed the other house. A motion for substitution must be approved by a majority vote of the house.

SOURCES

Rules of the Assembly - <http://assembly.state.ny.us/Rules/>

Rules of the Senate - <http://legislation.nysenate.gov/pdf/bills/2017/R4>

New York State Constitution - <https://www.dos.ny.gov/info/constitution.htm>