

New Hampshire Tax Collectors' Association 2025 Spring Workshop Legislative GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ad Hoc: Brought together for a special purpose.

Adjourn (motion to): A verbal request by a legislator to discontinue proceedings. This motion has the highest precedence, is not debatable, cannot be offered during a vote or while a member is speaking and requires a majority vote for approval.

Amend (motion to): A proposal to modify the contents of a bill under consideration by a committee or on the floor.

Appropriation: The setting aside by the legislature of a specific sum of public money for a particular public purpose.

Biennial: Occurring once every two years.

Bill: A written proposal drafted in legal form for consideration by the legislature.

CACR (Constitutional Amendment Concurrent Resolution): The Senate and House voting separately may pass a proposed Constitutional change by a three fifths margin of the entire membership of each chamber. CACRs do not require the signature of the governor , but are passed directly to the voters for ratification at the next general election. Voter approval must be by a two-thirds margin.

Caucus: Members of a legislature belonging to the same party, organized in a body to determine joint legislative action. Also a meeting of such a body.

Committee of Conference: A small group of legislators, usually four House and three Senate members, selected by the respective presiding officers and charged with the reconciling of differences on the content of a bill which has passed both houses.

Consent Calendar: A calendar of legislative business that is normally comprised of noncontroversial measures. A motion to place a bill on the consent calendar requires a unanimous vote by the committee. A single vote is taken on the entire Consent Calendar. However, any member may request that a bill be removed from the Consent Calendar for a separate vote.

Concur (motion to): A motion made in one house to accept modifications or amendments made in the other house to a bill already passed by motion to concur is debatable and requires the approval of a majority of voting members.

Deadlines: Dates after which particular kinds of legislative action, such as introduction of bills, are prohibited.

Division Vote: A vote on an issue counted by individual vote but not recorded by individual name.

Drafting: The drawing up of bills, resolutions and amendments for introduction into a chamber.

Effective Date: The date on which a law becomes effective.

Enabling (legislation): An act, bill or resolution permitting a government agency or a town to carry out an action which it would not otherwise have the authority to do.

First Reading: The formal reading of a bill by the clerk of a house before that house for the first time. While bills must be formally “read in” to be considered, this is usually done with only a reading of the title of the bill.

Fiscal Note: A cost estimate which is attached to a bill to indicate its fiscal impact. State law (RSA 14:44) requires that all bills and resolutions that would affect money matters in towns, counties or the state be accompanied by a statement setting forth the estimated fiscal impact.

Fiscal Year: An accounting period of 12 months. (For New Hampshire, July 1 to June 30.)

Germane: Related to or having a common subject matter.

Hearing: An occasion during which evidence and points of view on a specific bill are brought before a legislative body. In New Hampshire both the House and the Senate require in their Rules that a public hearing be held on all bills referred to their committees.

Housekeeping Measure: A change in a statute that is minor, often correcting a

small defect in the law.

Indefinite Postponement: A motion made from the floor that further action on a bill be deferred and thus that the bill be killed.

Inexpedient to Legislate: A recommendation that a bill should not pass. If adopted, the bill is killed.

Joint Resolution: A formal written proposal expending funds or expressing an intent, will or opinion of the General Court which is offered for consideration by both houses, and which requires the Governor's signature (unlike other types of resolutions). Joint resolutions which are enacted are published in the session laws.

Joint Committee: A committee with members from both chambers appointed to consider matters of common interest.

Joint Rules: Rules of procedure adopted by and applicable to both houses of the legislature.

Lay on the Table: A non-debatable motion to set aside a pending question until further action is desired; ranks second in precedence only to a motion to adjourn.

Lobbyist: A person representing a special public or private interest who provides information to legislators with the hope of influencing legislative proceedings.

Minutes: Accurate record of the proceedings of a meeting in chronological order.

Motion: A proposal formally made before any deliberative body such as a legislature; all legislative business is moved through the legislative process by motions, some having precedence over others.

Move Previous Question: A motion to end debate and bring up for a vote all pending motions before the chamber. This is non-debatable and only motions to adjourn or to lay on the table have higher precedence.

Order (of Business): The sequence of daily activity followed by a chamber in accordance with its rules; it may be changed by a majority vote.

Organization Day: The Constitution stipulates that the Senate and House assemble biennially on the first Wednesday of December for organizational purposes. The

following officers are elected on Organization Day: Speaker of the House; Senate President; House and Senate Officers.

Parliamentary Inquiry: A request for information from the presiding officer with respect to procedure.

Point of Order: A question raised by a member when he doubts the propriety of a procedure being followed or a statement made by another member; this requires a ruling from the presiding officer and is not debatable.

Private Acts: Laws passed by the legislature that deal with specific, limited situations (i.e. claims against the state, special town meetings, etc.). Private acts appear in the session laws but not in the RSA's.

Privileged Motions: Those motions that concern themselves with the performance of the House and its good order and which take precedence over other motions.

Pro Tem (pore): For the time being or provisionally.

Quorum: The number of legislators who must be present in order for a chamber to do business, usually a simple majority.

Ratify: To approve and make valid.

Readings: The recital of the title of the bill by the Clerk as it proceeds through the legislative process, done three times in both the House and Senate.

Reapportionment: The act of redistricting governmental units so as to insure that representation is reflective of population. (See Constitution of the State of New Hampshire, Part Second, Articles 9 and 26.)

Recall: To summon a piece of legislation and return to the body last acting upon it (e.g., from the Governor's Office to the House).

Recommit: A motion to refer a bill back to a committee which has already acted upon it.

Reconsider: A motion to re-evaluate a vote offered immediately after action has been completed on an item of business; it may be offered anytime during the day's session in which action was taken and as otherwise provided by Rules.

Revenue: Yield of taxes and other sources of income the state collects.

Roll Call: A recorded vote on an issue.

RSAs (Revised Statutes Annotated): The name of the codified volumes of permanent New Hampshire laws.

Rule: A regulation controlling action or procedure of a legislative, administrative or judicial body or, in the case of a legislature, the rules secure order and provide for the regular passing of legislative business in a predictable way.

Second Reading: Bills receive a second reading by conglomerate motion at the time of their introduction.

Session Laws: All laws passed by the legislature in a given legislative session, numbered in the order in which they are passed. Session laws include private acts, appropriations measures and laws which amend or add to the permanent laws.

Sine Die: Adjournment of a legislative body closing the session and terminating all unfinished business.

Special Order: A matter of legislative business set for a designated time and day.

Sponsor: A legislator who introduces a bill or resolution to a legislative chamber.

Sunset: A provision for the repeal of a measure sometime in the future.

Suspend the Rules: A motion requiring a two-thirds vote to change the previously adopted procedures.

Third Reading: The final passage of a bill, usually accomplished by conglomerate motion.