



Government 101: Key Terms and Definitions

Administrative Procedures Act: A law that governs the process by which government agencies develop, issue, and enforce regulations within an enacted law.

Agency: Government organizations, typically created through legislative action, set up for a specific purpose such as management of resources, financial oversight of industries, or national security issues.

Appropriations Bill: Legislation that appropriates funds and authorizes spending to specific federal government departments, agencies, and programs for its operations, personnel, equipment and activities.

Authorization Bill: Legislation that allows for agencies to carry out various functions and programs.

Bicameral: A legislative body that has two "branches" or "chambers," such as the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Bill/Legislation: A draft of a proposed law presented to a legislative body for discussion and potential enactment.

Cloture: A procedure for ending a debate and taking a vote on legislation or another action in a legislative body.

Conference Committee: A committee made up of members from both chambers of a legislative body, whose task is to eliminate any differences between version of the legislation on the same subject that was passed in both chambers.

Enacting Clause: The clause of a bill or act that formally expresses legislative authorization and intent that it become law. Usually begins with "Be it enacted..."

Filibuster: An attempt to delay or block a vote on a piece of legislation or other action in a legislative body.

Mark-up: A mark-up refers to the meeting of a Committee held to review the text of a bill before reporting it out. Committee members offer and vote on proposed changes to the bill's language, known as amendments. Most mark-ups end with a vote to send the new version of the bill to the floor for final approval.

Power of the Purse: The power to tax and spend public money for the government, typically given to a legislative body.

Program: Any fund, scheme, or benefit administered by or on behalf of a government entity. Examples of programs include Medicare, Medicaid, social security, and the Youth Mentoring Grant.

Regulation: An official rule, typically made by an executive/administrative agency, that controls conduct within their area of responsibility.

Resolution: An official expression of the opinion or will of a legislative body, which also includes matters concerning the operations or conduct of the body.

Veto: The power vested in a branch of government (typically the executive) to cancel or postpone the decision or enactment of another branch (typically the legislative).