

COMMON POLICY TERMS FOR SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

Bicameral legislature: A bicameral legislature is a legislative body made up of two (bi) chambers (camera). It is distinguished from a unicameral legislature in which all members of the legislature belong to and vote in one house.

Bill draft request (BDR): a BDR is a request for the Legal Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau to draft a bill. When a legislator or state agency requests a bill draft, that request is added to the BDR list in the order it is received so that the public has notice of subjects that may be considered in the next legislative session.

Bill: A bill is a proposed law that must pass through the Nevada Legislature and be signed by the Governor before it is enacted into law.

Bill Sponsor: The primary policymaker for an individual bill. They are responsible for submitting the BDR, proposing specific language, and presenting before Committees.

Call to action: A call to action is a specific means of encouraging an audience to take lobbying action. A call to action must comprise one of the following 1) telling the audience to contact a legislator; 2) providing information on how the audience can contact their legislator, such as providing a phone number or address; 3) providing a mechanism for enabling the audience to contact their legislator, such as an email form or petition; or 4) identifying a legislator or legislative committee member who will vote on the legislation as being opposed to or undecided about the organization's view on the legislation.

Committee hearing: A committee holds a hearing to take testimony and gather information about a bill. The bill sponsor is often asked to present on the bill and walk through the specifics of the bill. A hearing is when Committee members are allowed to ask the bill sponsor any questions. After the presentation, the committee then takes testimony in favor, opposition, and in neutral of the bill.

Committee Work Session: Following a formal committee hearing, the committee may recommend that the bill is passed as it is written, passed with amendments or not passed at all. When a committee acts, it is called a work session.

Communication: A conversation in person, or through a phone call, letter, email, fax, social media, or other mechanism to convey a message.

Constituent: An individual voter within an electoral district, state, community, or organization.

Direct lobbying: Direct lobbying is any attempt to influence specific legislation by communicating with legislators or government officials that participate in the making of laws. Examples of direct lobbying include visiting a legislator to discuss a particular bill or contacting a legislator to ask him/her to support a bill.

Grassroots lobbying: Grassroots lobbying is any attempt to influence specific legislation by trying to affect the opinions and actions of the general public. Examples of grassroots lobbying include requesting in a newsletter that readers contact their legislator to ask for more funding for domestic violence programs or giving a television interview and stating your organization's support for a particular bill.

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Interim committee: Interim committees research, debate, hold public hearings, and make recommendations on various issues for the twenty months before the next regular session. Interim Committees cannot vote to pass legislation, they can only recommend potential ideas.

Interim session: Occurs in the twenty months between regular sessions and allows for interim committees to research and prepare for the upcoming regular sessions.

Legislative counsel bureau: A state agency that provides staff support to the Legislature through several divisions – fiscal, legal, research, audit, and administrative. The Bureau is non-partisan and is supervised by a Legislative Commission composed of six members from each house of the Legislature.

Legislator: A legislator is defined as a member of a legislative body or their staff. In addition, executive branch officials who participate in the formulation of legislation are considered legislators (such as the governor or mayor when vetoing a bill or an agency secretary when helping the legislature draft a bill).

Policy Advocacy: Often characterized as creating a strategy to affect policy change or action, involves a primary audience of decision-makers, includes a deliberate process of persuasive communication, and is often conducted by groups of organized entities and/or citizens.

Public: The public is defined as anyone except a legislator or member of an organization.

Regular session: Regular sessions begin on the first Monday in February of odd numbered years and are limited to 120 days due to a 1988 Constitutional amendment. One of the top priorities of each Legislative session, along with reviewing and voting on hundreds of bills, is for the members to adopt and pass the state budget for the next two years.

Sine die: The adjournment of the regular session.

Special session: Any official state business which does not occur within regular session must be completed in a special session called by the Governor. The governor controls the agenda and must state the specific purpose of the session in a proclamation. The Legislator may only act on the issues on the agenda.

Testifying/providing testimony: Speaking before a group of government officials who are conducting a public hearing on a proposed law or a government policy, this is an opportunity to disclose whether you or the organization you are representing are testifying in support or opposition of the proposed law.

Veto: A veto is the legal power of the Governor to unilaterally stop a bill from being enacted into law. A vetoed bill returns to the house of origin for a possible vote to override the veto. Overriding a veto requires a two thirds majority vote of both legislative houses.