

Glossary of Statutory, Legislative and Regulatory Terms

Statutory and Regulatory Terms

Bill: The principal vehicle employed by lawmakers for introducing proposed laws or proposals to repeal laws in one house of a legislature. Bills are generally designated by the house in which they are first introduced ("H" for House of Representatives, "S" for Senate) and numbered in order of introduction. They address either matters of general interest ("public bills") or narrow interest ("private bills"), such as individual claims against the federal government or a state.

Chapter: A division of each title of the *Code of Federal Regulations* that deals with regulations for a specific agency. Also, the statutory and administrative codes of some states (Florida, Massachusetts, Nevada) are divided into chapters rather than titles.

Codified: Laws or regulations that are codified are general and permanent laws or regulations that are arranged in subject-matter order by title or other major subdivision and section (as opposed to session laws, which are generally presented in chronological order). The text of the original law or regulation is collated with any subsequent amendments (additions to or deletions from the language of the original law or regulation), so as to provide the most up-to-date text of the law or regulation. Most bills or session laws indicate (either in either the text or the margin) the title (or other major subdivision) and section number of the *U.S. Code* or the state code in which the law will appear.

Concurrent Resolution: A legislative proposal that requires the approval of both houses of Congress, but is not submitted to the President and thus does not have the force of law. Concurrent resolutions are generally used to address the sentiments of both chambers; to make or amend rules that apply to both houses; to deal with issues or matters affecting both houses, such as a concurrent budget resolution; or to create a temporary joint committee.

Enact (enactment): To enact a bill is to make it into law. Generally, a bill is enacted into law when it passes both houses of a legislature in identical form and is signed by the president or governor; when it becomes law without the president's or governor's signature; or when it is passed over the president's or governor's veto.

Engrossed bill (engrossment): The official copy of a bill or joint resolution passed by one house of Congress, certified by the secretary of that house, and sent to the other house for consideration.

Enrolled bill (enrollment): The final copy of a bill or joint resolution that has passed both houses of Congress in identical form. It is signed by appropriate House and Senate officials and submitted to the president for signature.

European Union (EU) Directive: A type of legislation promulgated by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union that binds member countries to achieve stated objectives within a certain time limit, but allows the national authorities in each country to choose the choice of form and means to be used to meet those objectives. Directives must be implemented in national legislation in accordance with the procedures of the individual member countries. EU Directives are published in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*.

Executive Order: A declaration issued by the president or by a governor that has the force of law. Executive Orders are usually based on existing statutory authority and require no action by Congress or the state legislature to become effective. At the federal level, Executive Orders are published in the Federal Register as they are issued, and then in *Statutes at Large* and title 3 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* each year.

Final Rule: A regulation that has gone through the review and public comment process and is published in official form in the *Federal Register* (or the equivalent State publication). Final rules are published with an effective date, as of which they have the force of law.

Joint Resolution: A legislative measure that requires the approval of both houses of Congress and is submitted (just as a bill is) to the president for possible signature into law. Joint resolutions are also used to propose constitutional amendments to the Constitution. These resolutions require a two-thirds affirmative vote in each house but are not submitted to the president; they become effective when ratified by three-quarters of the states. Joint resolutions that become law are published annually in *Statutes at Large*.

Part: A division of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) that covers a specific regulatory area within a title (one of the 50 major subject-matter divisions) and a chapter (a division within a title that deals with a specific department or agency). Specific sections of the CFR are usually cited by title, part, and section (e.g., 42 CFR 2a.5).

Proposed Rule: A regulation published by an executive-branch department or administrative agency in the *Federal Register* (or the equivalent state publication) for review and public comment prior to its adoption. Proposed rules do not have the force of law.

Provision: A requirement or stipulation set forth in a statute or regulation.

Public Law: A public bill or joint resolution that has passed both houses of Congress and been enacted into law, either by the President's signature or by passage over the President's veto. Public laws have general applicability nationwide. They are numbered according to the number of the Congress in which they were enacted, then consecutively in chronological order (for example, the first public law signed during the 109th Congress is Public Law 109-1). Public laws are published annually in *Statutes at Large*.

Regulation: A rule or order issued by a federal or state executive-branch department or administrative agency, generally under authority granted by statute, that enforces or amplifies laws enacted by the legislature and has the force of law.

Resolution (Simple Resolution): At the federal level, a legislative proposal by one house of Congress that addresses matters concerning that house only. Generally, a resolution addresses the rules of that house or expresses the sentiments of that house. It does not require the approval of the other house, and it does not have the force of law.

Session: The period set by law during which Congress or a state legislature assembles and carries on its regular business. At the federal level, each Congress generally has two regular sessions (a first session and a second session), based on the constitutional mandate that Congress assemble at least once each year. At the state level, a session may be held during a set time every one or two years, or the legislature may meet continuously. The legislature may call a special session to deal with specific matters.

Session Law: A law that is published in an annual or other periodic volume that presents laws enacted during a particular session or sitting of the legislature in the order in which they were passed. Session laws at the federal level are designated public laws or private laws and are published in *Statutes at Large*. Session laws at the state level are published in volumes printed by the state or by a private legal publisher.

Statute: A law that has been enacted (passed by Congress or a state legislature and either signed by the chief executive [president or governor] or passed over the chief executive's veto).

"Sunset" law: A law or provision that limits how long a law, regulation, government agency or board, or government program will remain in effect unless it is formally re-enacted or renewed.

Title: A division of a code or other compilation of laws or regulations by subject matter. Also, individual statutes may be divided by subject matter into titles. Usually, a title is the largest major division of a code or other compilation or of a bill or session law. For instance, in the citation of a law from the United States Code, the title number precedes "U.S.C." and the section number follows it (e.g., 42 U.S.C. 1983).

Statutory and Regulatory Compilations

Administrative Code: A compilation of general and permanent state regulations that have the force of law. Administrative codes present a collated version of the regulation, incorporating all additions and deletions. Like statutory codes, administrative codes are organized by subject matter and are updated regularly.

Annotated Code: A compilation of general and permanent state statutes that are currently in force, organized by subject matter. Annotated codes also include commentary on the statutes and case law relating to the application of the statutes. In some states, the official state code is designated as an annotated code; in others, the annotated code is an unofficial code published by a private legal publisher. Both official and unofficial codes present complete compilations of state law.

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR): The compilation of general and permanent rules published in the *Federal Register* by the executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government. Like the *U.S. Code*, it is divided into 50 subject-matter titles that represent broad areas subject to federal regulation. Each volume of the CFR is updated once each calendar year; updates are issued quarterly. Each title is divided into chapters, which usually bear the name of the issuing agency. Each chapter is further subdivided into parts that cover specific regulatory areas. Large parts may be subdivided into subparts. All parts are organized in sections, and most citations in the CFR are provided at the section level.

Congressional Record: The substantially verbatim account of daily proceedings on the floors of both houses of Congress. It is printed for each day that Congress is in session. At the back of each daily issue is the "Daily Digest," which summarizes the day's floor and committee activities.

Federal Register: The official daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of federal agencies, departments, and organizations, as well as executive orders and other presidential documents. It is published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

Statutes at Large: A series of volumes published annually by the Government Printing Office that includes the laws passed by Congress and signed into law during an annual session of Congress. Unlike the *U. S. Code*, which presents federal laws by subject matter, *Statutes at Large* presents laws chronologically in the order enacted. *Statutes at Large* also includes Joint and Concurrent Resolutions that have been enacted into law and the text of Executive Orders issued during the year.

United States Code (U.S. Code): The official compilation of most general and permanent public laws of the United States that are currently in force, organized by subject matter into 50 titles. The *U.S. Code* collates the original law with subsequent amendments and deletes language that has been repealed or superseded, so as to provide the current text of the law. The *U.S. Code* is updated every six years, but supplements are published regularly to incorporate changes to statutes between updates.

THOMAS, *Legislative Information on the Internet:* [thomas.loc.gov]

A Web site operated by the Library of Congress that provides federal legislative information, including the text of bills from the 101st Congress to the current (109th) Congress (1989-present), the status and summaries of bills from the 93d Congress on (1973-present), the text of public laws from the 93d Congress on (1973-present), and the text and index of the daily editions of the *Congressional Record*. This site also presents information about roll call votes from the 101st Congress on (1989-present), current information about legislative calendars, information about Congressional committees, and historical documents.

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