

Wild Friends Legislative Glossary

Adjourn - to close or end a meeting or session

Advocate/Advocacy - a person or group working for change in order to improve the quality of life on behalf of one's self or others

Amendment - a change or addition to a bill

Bill - a proposed law presented to legislators

Capitol - the building in which state legislative bodies meet. New Mexico's state capitol building which is called the **Roundhouse** is located in Santa Fe.

Caucus - a private meeting of a group of people that belong to the same political party or have the same goal that decide policy, choose candidates or promote certain causes

Chamber - a room in the Roundhouse used for meetings of Representatives or Senators

Committee - a group of appointed legislators that review, discuss and possibly amend bills to be voted on the floor of either house, usually in specific areas, e.g. finance, education

Conference Committee - three senators and three representatives, each appointed by their presiding officers, meet to resolve differences between two house versions of a bill

Constituents - people represented by an elected lawmaker

Convene - to come together in a body or group for meeting or gathering

Debate - to discuss or listen to opposing arguments on a bill

Democracy - a form of government in which the supreme power is given to the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation. This is usually done through periodically held free elections.

Democrat - a member of the Democratic party of the United States

Democratic - to act according to the wishes of the majority

Enrolling and Engrossing "E&E" - when a copy of a passed bill is prepared for presentation to the governor

Filibuster - Allowed in both the Senate and House in New Mexico, a filibuster is when one legislator holds the floor through talking or long speeches, without sitting down or leaving the area of his desk. This is often used to kill a bill or delay a vote as long as possible. In the New Mexico, the time limit for how long a legislator can speak before a vote is called is 3 hours.

Forums - public meetings for open discussion of issues

Floor action - when members of the legislature debate or vote on a bill

Gavel - a mallet or hammer used by the presiding officer of a legislative body to begin or end a meeting, call for order, or call a vote.

Governor - the chief executive of a state

Hearings - an opportunity for the general public to give testimony to legislators on filed or planned legislation or other purposes

House of Representatives - a legislative body or group; a chamber in the bicameral legislature of a nation, state, or province; there are 70 members in the NM House

Law - a principle governing action, rule, or procedure that is enforced by a specific authority

Legislator - a person who makes laws

Legislature - a body or group that has the power to make laws; there are 112 members in the NM Legislature

Lieutenant Governor - second in command to the Governor of a state; presides over the New Mexico Senate

Line Item Veto- The governor can approve or disapprove any part of a money bill; the parts disapproved do not become law

Lobbyist - a person who meets with legislators with the intent of influencing legislation. Originally, the term referred to persons who frequented lobbies or corridors outside legislative chambers waiting to speak with lawmakers.

Majority - the greater number of votes that determines the whole vote of the members on the passage of a bill or other action.

Memorial- An expression of legislative desire or a call to action, usually addressing another governmental body such as the Public Education Department in the form of a petition or declaration of intent

New Mexico Constitution - the law that determines the powers of the government, including the legislature, and protects the rights of New Mexican citizens; It was adopted January 21, 1911.

Override - when the Legislature passes a bill, again with a 2/3 vote, after it has been vetoed by the governor

Pocket Veto- The governor does not sign a bill 20 days after the adjournment of the session and the bill does not become a law

Quorum - the number, usually a majority, of officers or members needed to be able to officially start a meeting and conduct business

Representative - a member of the House

Republican - a member of the Republican party of the United States

Resolution - a formal expression, usually written, of the opinion or will of members of the House or Senate. Resolutions can be used to commemorate an occasion, show appreciation for a visitor or outstanding citizen, or provide constitutional provisions for a bill.

Senate - a legislative body or group; a chamber in the bicameral legislature of a nation, state, or province; there are 42 members in the NM Senate

Senator - a member of the Senate

Session - a term or number of days that the Legislature is in meetings, including the Interim. In New Mexico, odd numbered years like 2009 are considered "long" and are 60 days and in even numbered years like 2008, the sessions are "short" and are 30 days.

Sine Die - Latin for "without another day." Final adjournment of a regular or special session of the legislature

Speaker - serves as the presiding officer of the House of Representatives

Term - the length of time a political official may serve once elected

Testimony - comments made by individuals during a public hearing such as before a committee or board, and which becomes public record

Veto - rejection or disapproval of a bill instituted by the governor. The governor has 3 days to veto a bill once it has been submitted or 20 days if it has been submitted during the last 3 days of the session. A veto may be overridden by a two-thirds vote of the membership in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Vote - a formal expression of one's opinion or will in response to proposed decision, i.e. a bill, resolution, or motion.