Comprehensive Advocacy & Legislative Glossary

This glossary defines key terms commonly used in advocacy, policymaking, and the legislative process. It is designed to support advocates, organizers, and community members in understanding and participating in civic action.

ABC QUALITY
A voluntary statewide rating and improvement system for child care and early education programs.

ACT
Legislation enacted into law. A bill that has passed both chambers, been ratified, and signed by the Governor or allowed to become law without signature.

ADJOURNMENT
The end of a session for a day, with the hour and day of the next meeting set before adjournment.

ADOPTION
Approval or acceptance, usually of amendments or resolutions.

ADVOCATE
To actively support a cause or policy through lobbying, educating policymakers, and mobilizing the public for change.

AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE
Childcare costs that consume a reasonable portion of a family's income, allowing them to meet other essential needs.

AMENDMENT
Any change made or proposed in a bill by adding, changing, substituting, or omitting language.

APPROPRIATION
Funds allocated by formal action for specific government uses.

BILL
A draft of proposed law presented to the legislature for consideration.

CAUCUS
An informal meeting of a group of members, often based on party affiliation or shared interests.

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CENSURE
An act to officially reprimand an official for actions while in office.

CHAMBER
The hall or room where a legislative body meets.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
Encouraging individuals to actively participate in political and community processes such as voting or contacting legislators.

COALITION BUILDING
Creating alliances among individuals, groups, and organizations to strengthen advocacy efforts and impact.

COMMITTEE
A group of legislators appointed to consider and make recommendations on bills or issues.

CONCURRENCE
Agreement by one chamber to accept a proposal or action approved by the other chamber.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE
A committee composed of members from both chambers appointed to resolve differences in a bill.

CONSTITUENT
A person who lives within the district represented by an elected official.

DEBATE
Discussion on a bill or issue according to parliamentary rules.

DISPARITY
A difference in level or treatment, especially one that is seen as unfair.

DOULA
A non-medical professional who provides guidance and emotional support before, during, and after pregnancy.

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING
Financial stability and opportunity, enabling people to meet basic needs and invest in their futures.

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EQUITABLE EDUCATION
Ensuring all individuals, regardless of gender, race, or socioeconomic status, have access to quality education.

FILIBUSTER
A strategy used by legislators to delay or prevent action on a bill through extended debate.

FISCAL YEAR
An accounting period of twelve months, often used for budgeting and appropriations.

FOOD DESERT
Communities that have limited access to affordable and nutritious foods.

GENDER EQUALITY
The state in which access to rights, opportunities, and resources is unaffected by gender.

GENDER EQUITY
Fair treatment for people of all genders, taking into account different needs and circumstances to achieve fairness.

GENDER JUSTICE
A framework aimed at dismantling barriers to equality based on gender identity or expression.

HEALTH ACCESS
Ensuring that all individuals have access to comprehensive, affordable, and quality healthcare services.

HEARING
A public meeting where committees gather information or opinions from experts and the public on proposed legislation.

INTERSECTIONALITY
Understanding how different forms of discrimination, such as racism or sexism, overlap and affect individuals uniquely.

LGBTQ+ RIGHTS
Advocating for the equal rights and protections of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other non-cisgender individuals.

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LOBBYIST
A person who represents a group or organization to influence legislation and policy decisions.

MATERNAL HEALTH
The health of women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period.

PAID LEAVE
Policies that allow employees to take time off work with pay for personal or family health issues, childbirth, or caregiving.

POLICY ADVOCACY
Strategic efforts to influence public policy in favor of specific causes or communities.

QUORUM
The minimum number of members required to conduct official legislative business.

RATIFY
To formally approve or confirm a legislative action, such as the final passage of a bill.

REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM
The right to make personal decisions about reproductive health, including birth control, pregnancy, and childbirth, without political interference.

RESOLUTION
A measure expressing the opinion or intent of the legislature, which may be used to take formal positions or direct certain actions.

SESSION
The formal period during which the legislature meets to conduct business.

SINE DIE
Final adjournment of a legislative session without setting a date to reconvene.

SPONSOR
The legislator who introduces a bill, amendment, or resolution.

STATE PROVISO
A temporary law that only lasts for one year. It goes into effect when the state budget for the next year is approved.

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VETO
The action of a Governor rejecting a bill passed by the legislature.

VETO OVERRIDE
When the legislature passes a bill over the Governor's veto with a two-thirds vote in both chambers.

VOTE
A formal expression of a legislator's decision on a matter.

WAGE GAP
A disparity in earnings for the same or similar work between different groups.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT
Engaging young people in leadership and advocacy roles to drive social change.