

The Calendaring Process

A legislative calendar is the chamber's daily "work order." It is a published list of proposals, arranged according to the agenda of business to be conducted in floor sessions. Almost every legislature has a calendar system to organize the legislature's business. In fact, the New Jersey General Assembly is the only chamber reporting that it does not (see table 98-5.11).

Types of Calendars. Table 98-5.12 illustrates considerable variety in the types of calendars used by legislative bodies. Sixty-two chambers employ a daily calendar that is broken into subheadings or subdivisions. Most state constitutions contain provisions that require three readings of bills; as a result, legislatures frequently title calendars first reading, second reading or third reading to mirror this requirement. Twenty-eight legislative assemblies use a special orders calendar, and 11 have rules calendars. General orders, resolution, local bill and confirmation calendars also are common. Fourteen chambers use other types of calendars--for example, budget bill, message, supplemental, and veto calendars.

Many measures introduced and enacted by state legislatures are not controversial. Legislative assemblies have established procedures to avoid spending a great deal of floor time on items that precipitate little, if any, debate. The consent calendar is one of the streamlining mechanisms. Forty-four chambers (shown below) use consent calendars or subdivisions to identify uncontested legislation and to speed floor consideration.

Chambers That Use Consent Calendars or Subheadings

Arizona Senate and House	Missouri Senate
Arkansas Senate	Montana Senate and House
California Senate and Assembly	Nebraska Senate
Connecticut Senate	Nevada Senate and Assembly
Delaware House	New Mexico Senate
Florida Senate and House	North Carolina House
Georgia Senate	North Dakota Senate and House
Hawaii Senate	Rhode Island House
Illinois House	South Dakota Senate and House
Kentucky Senate	Tennessee Senate and House
Louisiana House	Texas Senate and House
Maine House	Utah Senate and House
Maryland Senate and House	Virginia Senate and House
Michigan Senate	Washington Senate
Minnesota Senate and House	Wyoming Senate and House

Placing bills on a calendar. How the calendar is set and who controls it determine the priority of legislation for action and debate. There are different philosophical views on how calendars should operate.

One perspective holds that the calendar must be strictly controlled by leadership so that important bills are not delayed by less critical measures. An opposite viewpoint argues that

legislation should come up for debate in a fair and expeditious fashion, unimpeded by the priorities or preferences of one or two legislators. Reflecting these different opinions, there are three general methods to calendar bills for floor debate.

1. Bills are listed automatically in numeric sequence, alphabetical order by committee name or the order reported from committee; this is called an automatic calendar.
2. A specific order is set by the presiding officer or another individual leader.
3. The priority is determined by a calendar, rules or management committee.

Chambers often vary the placement method, depending upon the type of calendar. For example, the Alabama Senate and House place bills on their third reading calendars in the order reported from committee, but their rules committees establish the order in which measures are heard on special orders calendars. Tables 98-5.13 through 98-5.17 illustrate the methods used to place bills on selected calendars.

Legislative assemblies often adopt special procedures or conditions for placing bills on the consent calendar. Several examples are described below.

- In the Arizona Senate, the rules committee chair creates the consent calendar by drawing from "... all bills, resolutions and memorials on the calendar of the Committee of the Whole that are unamended as reported by all standing committees to which they were referred."
- California joint rules specify that standing committees may recommend that an uncontested bill be placed on the consent calendar. Here, "uncontested bill" means a bill that "... (a) receives a do-pass or do-pass-as-amended recommendation from the committee to which it is referred, by unanimous vote of the members present provided a quorum is present, (b) has no opposition expressed by any person present at the committee meeting with respect to the final version of the bill as approved by the committee, and (c) prior to final action by the committee, has been requested by the author to be placed on the consent calendar." However, a bill ceases to be a consent calendar bill if it is amended from the floor.
- In the Minnesota and New Mexico senates, if a committee "... determines that a bill ... is of a routine nature or otherwise of a nature which likely will not be opposed," it may recommend that the bill be placed on the consent calendar.
- The Texas House local, consent and resolution calendar may contain only "... bills, house resolutions, and concurrent resolutions, not emergency in nature, regardless of extent and scope, on which there is such general agreement as to render improbable any opposition to the consideration and passage thereof, and which have been recommended by the appropriate standing committee for placement."
- The uncontested calendar in the Virginia Senate and House cannot include bills that receive a dissenting vote or abstention in committee or to which objection is made by any senator or delegate. A member may remove a bill from the uncontested calendar at any time during session.

Removing bills from a calendar. The general rule of thumb is that it takes a majority vote to remove legislation from a calendar. In many chambers, however, removing a piece of legislation from the consent calendar is much easier, often requiring only the verbal or written

objection of one member. Sometimes, a consent item is stricken only if several legislators support the objection. For instance, the dissent must come from two legislators in the Texas Senate or from three members in the Minnesota Senate, Montana Senate, or Utah Senate. In the Illinois House, a bill is removed upon the written objection of one appointed challenger, the sponsor or four members. In the New Mexico Senate and Texas House, five members must object. Six members of the Utah House or 10 members of the Minnesota House must oppose the placement. In the Louisiana House, 21 representatives must verbally object. For more information about the procedures used to remove bills from a consent calendar, see table 98-5.18.

Voting upon calendar items. The majority of legislatures dispense with the bills on a calendar by taking a separate vote upon each item listed. However, some chambers expedite their voting procedures on selected calendars. For example, table 98-5.19 illustrates the various methods used by legislative assemblies to vote on bills placed on the consent calendar. The entire resolution calendar is passed with one vote in the Colorado House, Delaware House, Georgia Senate, Ohio Senate, Tennessee Senate, and Texas House. Local bills on the daily calendar of the North Carolina House may, without objection, be voted upon as a group and the vote is applied to all bills within the group. The Maine House generally enacts its final passage calendar with one vote; however, final passages for emergency measures, constitutional amendments, bond issues and mandates are voted upon separately.

Table 98-5.11 Use of Calendars**The following chambers use a calendar system to organize floor business**

Alabama Senate and House	Montana Senate and House
Alaska Senate and House	Nebraska Senate
Arizona Senate and House	Nevada Senate and Assembly
Arkansas Senate	New Mexico Senate and House
California Senate and Assembly	New York Assembly
Colorado Senate and House	North Carolina House
Connecticut Senate	North Dakota Senate and House
Delaware House	Ohio Senate and House
Florida Senate and House	Oklahoma Senate and House
Georgia Senate and House	Oregon Senate and House
Hawaii Senate and House	Pennsylvania Senate and House
Idaho Senate and House	Rhode Island House
Illinois Senate and House	South Carolina Senate and House
Indiana Senate and House	South Dakota Senate and House
Iowa Senate and House	Tennessee Senate and House
Kansas Senate and House	Texas Senate and House
Kentucky Senate and House	Utah Senate and House
Louisiana Senate and House	Vermont Senate and House
Maine House	Virginia Senate and House
Maryland Senate and House	Washington Senate
Massachusetts Senate and House	West Virginia Senate and House
Michigan Senate and House	Wisconsin Senate and Assembly
Minnesota Senate and House	Wyoming Senate and House
Mississippi Senate and House	Puerto Rico Senate
Missouri Senate	

The following chamber does not use a calendar system to organize floor business

New Jersey General Assembly

Table 98-5.12 Types of Calendars Used

State (1)	General orders	Daily calendar with no subheadings	Daily calendar with subheadings	First reading	Second reading	Third reading	Final passage	Special orders	Rules	Resolution	Local bill	Consent	Confirmation	Other
Alabama						B	H	B						
Alaska			B											
Arizona			B	B	B	B	B					B		
Arkansas			S				S	S		S		S	S	2
California			H		B	B		B				B	S	
Colorado			B					B						
Connecticut			S	S	S	S	S	S		S		S	S	
Delaware			H	H						H		H		
Florida	H		B		B	B		B		B	B	B		3
Georgia		B		S	S				B	S	B	S		
Hawaii			B									S		
Idaho	B	S			B	B		S		S			S	
Illinois			B					H				H		4
Indiana			B											
Iowa			B										S	5
Kansas			B											
Kentucky	S		H	B	B	B	B		B			S		
Louisiana	S		B	B	B	B	B	B		H	H	H		6
Maine			H											
Maryland	S			H	B	B	B	B	S		S	B		
Massachusetts		H	S											
Michigan	S		B		H	B		H		S		S		
Minnesota	B			S		B		B				B	S	7
Mississippi			B					H	H		H			8
Missouri			S	S	S	S				S		S		9
Montana				B	B	B						B		

Table 98-5.12 Types of Calendars Used, cont'd.

State (1)	General orders	Daily calendar with no subheadings	Daily calendar with subheadings	First reading	Second reading	Third reading	Final passage	Special orders	Rules	Resolution	Local bill	Consent	Confirmation	Other
Nebraska			S									S		
Nevada			B											
New Hampshire														
New Jersey														
New Mexico			B									S		10
New York			H	H	H	H			H					
North Carolina			H									H		11
North Dakota	B		B	B	B		B					B		
Ohio			B			H			H	S			S	
Oklahoma	S	S	H	S	S	S	S							
Oregon				H	H	B	B	H		H			S	12
Pennsylvania	S		B	S	S	S	S			S			S	
Rhode Island	H									H	H	H		
South Carolina	S		B		B	B		S			B			
South Dakota			B									B		
Tennessee	S		S			S	B	S		S	S	B		13
Texas			H		S	S				H	B	B		14
Utah					S	B		B				B		
Vermont	S		B		S	S								15
Virginia			B	S	S	S	S			S		B		
Washington				S	S	S			S			S	S	
West Virginia			B	S	S	S		S	B		H			
Wisconsin			B											
Wyoming			B	B	B	B	B					B		
Puerto Rico								S						

Table 98-5.12 Types of Calendars Used, cont'd.**Key:**

- S=Senate
- H=House or Assembly
- B=Both chambers

Notes:

1. The following chambers did not return a survey: Arkansas House, Connecticut House, Delaware Senate, Maine Senate, Missouri House, New Hampshire Senate and House, New York Senate, North Carolina Senate, Rhode Island Senate, Washington House, American Samoa Senate and House, District of Columbia Council, Guam Senate, Northern Mariana Islands Senate and House, Puerto Rico House and Virgin Islands Senate.
2. Arkansas Senate: The Senate also has calendars for joint budget bills and amendments.
3. Florida House: A trust fund calendar also is used.
4. Illinois Senate: The Senate also uses a supplemental calendar.
5. Iowa House: The majority leader's office prepares a daily debate calendar.
6. Louisiana House: The House also has calendars for vetoed bills, bills reported by conference committee, bills to be rescinded, concurrence in Senate amendments, bills of statewide effect, and notice given subject to call.
7. Minnesota House: The House uses a Rule 1.10 calendar for tax and ways and means bills.
8. Mississippi House: Ways and means and appropriations calendars also are used.
9. Missouri Senate: Another calendar is Senate bills for perfection.
10. New Mexico House: A supplemental calendar is used during the last week of session.
11. North Carolina House: A supplemental calendar is used during crossover deadline and at the end of session.
12. Oregon House: The House also has a propositions and motions calendar.
13. Tennessee House: The House uses a message calendar to process items changed by the Senate.
14. Texas Senate: Each member may submit three to five bills to the intent calendar; bills on this calendar are eligible for floor debate and passage.
15. Vermont Senate: The Senate also uses a notice calendar.

Table 98-5.13 How Bills Are Placed on a Daily Calendar with Subheadings

In order by bill number	
Alaska Senate and House	North Dakota Senate and House
Colorado House	Oklahoma House
Illinois Senate and House	Pennsylvania Senate
Indiana Senate and House	South Dakota Senate
Louisiana Senate	Vermont Senate
Massachusetts Senate	Virginia Senate and House
Nevada Senate and Assembly	West Virginia Senate
New Mexico House	Wyoming Senate and House
In the order reported from committee	
California Senate and Assembly	Mississippi Senate and House
Colorado Senate and House	New Mexico Senate
Hawaii Senate and House	North Carolina House
Illinois House	Oklahoma House
Iowa Senate and House	South Carolina Senate
Massachusetts Senate	South Dakota House
Michigan House	West Virginia House
In the order set by the Senate president or House speaker	
Delaware House	Nebraska Senate
Illinois House	New York Assembly
In the order set by a calendar or rules committee	
Florida House	Tennessee Senate
Illinois House	Texas House
Massachusetts Senate	West Virginia Senate and House
North Carolina House	Wisconsin Senate and Assembly
Ohio Senate	

Table 98-5.13 How Bills Are Placed on a Daily Calendar with Subheadings, cont'd.**Another method**

Arkansas Senate (by request of the bill author or another member)
Colorado House (in alphabetical order by committee name)
Connecticut Senate (in the order received from the Legislative Commissioner's office)
Michigan Senate (by order of business and then by the order set by rules--that is, order read in, order advanced from general orders to third reading and the order reported from committee)
Missouri Senate (in the order set by chamber rule)
North Dakota Senate and House (in the order set by the majority leader or by the request of the bill author or another member)
Pennsylvania House (in alphabetical order by committee name)

Table 98-5.14 How Bills Are Placed on the Second Reading Calendar

In order by bill number	
Arizona Senate and House	Nevada Senate
Florida Senate and House	North Dakota Senate and House
Georgia Senate	Oklahoma Senate
Kansas House	Pennsylvania Senate
Louisiana Senate and House	Vermont Senate
Maine House	Virginia Senate
Maryland Senate	West Virginia Senate
Missouri Senate	Wyoming Senate and House
Montana Senate	
In the order reported from committee	
California Senate and Assembly	Michigan House
Colorado Senate	South Carolina Senate and House
Idaho Senate and House	Texas Senate
Kentucky Senate and House	Utah Senate
Maryland House	
In the order set by the Senate president or House speaker	
Montana House	New York Assembly
Another method	
Connecticut Senate (in the order received from the Legislative Commissioner's office)	
Maryland Senate (in alphabetical order by committee name)	
North Dakota Senate and House (in the order set by the majority leader or at the request of a member)	
Oregon House (in the order set by chamber rule)	
Washington Senate (in the order set by the rules committee)	

Table 98-5.15 How Bills Are Placed on the Third Reading or Final Passage Calendar

In order by bill number	
Kansas Senate and House	Oklahoma Senate
Louisiana Senate and House	Oregon Senate
Maine House	Pennsylvania Senate
Maryland Senate and House	Vermont Senate
Montana Senate	Virginia Senate
Nevada Senate	West Virginia Senate
North Dakota Senate and House	Wyoming Senate and House
In the order reported from committee	
Alabama Senate and House	Missouri Senate
California Assembly	South Carolina House
Idaho Senate and House	Tennessee House
Kentucky House	Texas Senate
Louisiana House	Utah House
Minnesota Senate	
In the order passed or reported from the preceding calendar or reading	
California Senate	Minnesota House
Colorado Senate	South Carolina Senate
Florida House	Utah Senate
Michigan Senate and House	
In the order set by the Senate president or House speaker	
Arizona Senate and House	New York Assembly
Montana House	
In the order set by a calendar or rules committee	
Florida Senate	Tennessee Senate
Georgia Senate	Utah House
Ohio House	Washington Senate

Table 98-5.15 How Bills Are Placed on the Third Reading or Final Passage Calendar

Another method

Arkansas Senate (by request of the bill author or another member)

Connecticut Senate (in the order received from the Legislative Commissioner's office)

Maryland Senate (in alphabetical order by committee name)

North Dakota Senate and House (in the order set by the majority leader or by request of the bill author or another member)

Oregon House (in the order set by chamber rule)

Table 98-5.16 How Bills Are Placed on the Consent Calendar

In order by bill number	
California Senate	Minnesota House
Georgia Senate	Montana Senate
Illinois House	Nevada Senate
Kentucky Senate	North Dakota Senate and House
Louisiana House	Texas Senate
Maine House	Virginia Senate and House
Maryland Senate and House	Wyoming Senate and House
Michigan Senate	
In the order reported from committee	
Arizona Senate	Kansas House
Arkansas Senate	Minnesota Senate
California Assembly	Missouri Senate
Florida House	North Carolina House
Hawaii Senate	Rhode Island House
Illinois House	Utah Senate and House
In the order set by the Senate president or House speaker	
Arizona House	Montana House
Delaware House	Nebraska Senate
Illinois House	New Mexico Senate
In the order set by a calendar or rules committee	
Florida Senate	Texas House
Kansas Senate	Utah House
Kentucky Senate	Washington Senate
Tennessee Senate	
Another method	
Hawaii Senate (by request of the bill author or another member)	
Louisiana House (by vote of the committee or consent of the House at second reading)	
Maryland Senate (in alphabetical order by committee name)	
Minnesota Senate (by order of the Senate or the rules committee chair)	
North Dakota Senate and House (in the order set by the majority leader or by request of the bill author or another member)	
Tennessee House (in order by type of document)	

Table 98-5.17 How Bills Are Placed on a Special Orders Calendar

In the order established by a special order of the body	
California Senate and Assembly	Nevada Senate
Idaho Senate	South Carolina Senate
Maryland Senate	West Virginia Senate
Michigan House	
In order by bill number	
Illinois House	Puerto Rico Senate
Maryland House	
In the order reported from committee	
Utah House	Puerto Rico Senate
In the order set by the Senate president or House speaker	
Illinois House	New York Assembly
In the order set by a calendar or rules committee	
Alabama Senate and House	Minnesota Senate and House
Florida Senate and House	Puerto Rico Senate
Kansas Senate	Utah House
By request of the bill author or another member	
Illinois House	Tennessee Senate
Louisiana Senate and House	Utah Senate
Another method	
Colorado Senate (in the order set by the majority leader)	
Connecticut Senate (in the order received from the Legislative Commissioner's office)	
Puerto Rico Senate (in the order set by the majority leader)	
Louisiana House (by committee recommendation)	

Table 98-5.18 Removing Bills from the Consent Calendar

By the verbal objection of one member	
Arkansas Senate	Maryland Senate and House
California Senate and Assembly	Michigan Senate
Delaware House	Nevada Senate and Assembly
Florida Senate	North Dakota Senate and House
Georgia Senate	Rhode Island House
Illinois House	Tennessee Senate
Kansas Senate and House	Wyoming Senate and House
Maine House	
By the written objection of one member	
Arizona Senate and House	Nevada Assembly
Illinois House	North Carolina House
Missouri Senate	North Dakota Senate and House
Montana House	Tennessee House
By the verbal objection of more than one member	
Florida House	Nebraska Senate
Illinois House	New Mexico Senate
Kentucky Senate	South Dakota Senate and House
Louisiana House	Texas House
Minnesota Senate and House	
By the written objection of more than one member	
Florida House	Texas Senate and House
Illinois House	Utah Senate and House
Montana Senate	
By authority given to the presiding officer of the chamber	
Hawaii Senate	Nebraska Senate
Illinois House	Rhode Island House

Table 98-5.18 Removing Bills from the Consent Calendar, cont'd.

At the request of the bill's author	
Arkansas Senate	Nebraska Senate
Illinois House	
Another method	
Florida House (automatically removed if debate exceeds three minutes)	
Maryland Senate (by majority vote of the rules committee)	
Virginia Senate (by majority vote of the body)	

Table 98-5.19 Voting on the Consent Calendar

State (1)	An individual vote is taken for each item listed	A roll call vote is taken for the first item and then applied to all subsequent items	One vote is taken to pass the entire calendar	Other
Alabama				
Alaska				
Arizona	H			
Arkansas		S		
California		S	H	
Colorado				
Connecticut			S	
Delaware			H	
Florida	B			
Georgia			S	
Hawaii			S	
Idaho				
Illinois			H	
Indiana				
Iowa				
Kansas	H			2
Kentucky				
Louisiana	H			
Maine			H	
Maryland		H	S	
Massachusetts				
Michigan			S	
Minnesota	B			
Mississippi				
Missouri	S			
Montana	B			

Table 98-5.19 Voting on the Consent Calendar, cont'd.

State (1)	An individual vote is taken for each item listed	A roll call vote is taken for the first item and then applied to all subsequent items	One vote is taken to pass the entire calendar	Other
Nebraska	S			
Nevada			B	
New Hampshire				
New Jersey				
New Mexico	S			
New York				
North Carolina	H			
North Dakota			B	
Ohio				
Oklahoma				
Oregon				
Pennsylvania				
Rhode Island			H	
South Carolina				
South Dakota	H		S	
Tennessee			B	
Texas	S	H		
Utah	B			
Vermont				
Virginia			B	3
Washington	S			
West Virginia				
Wisconsin				
Wyoming				4
Puerto Rico				

Table 98-5.19 Voting on Consent Calendar, cont'd.

Key:

S=Senate

H=House or Assembly

B=Both chambers

Notes:

1. The following chambers did not return a survey: Arkansas House, Connecticut House, Delaware Senate, Maine Senate, Missouri House, New Hampshire Senate and House, New York Senate, North Carolina Senate, Rhode Island Senate, Washington House, American Samoa Senate and House, District of Columbia Council, Guam Senate, Northern Mariana Islands Senate and House, Puerto Rico House and Virgin Islands Senate.
2. Kansas Senate: The Senate uses a "bulk" roll call. All final actions, consent and confirmations are "bulked" together. A senator must inform the secretary if there are particular bills or confirmations on which he or she is voting "nay." Otherwise, the member is registered as voting "aye" for all.
3. Virginia Senate and House: The Senate and House may request that bills or resolutions be removed from the bloc; these are voted upon individually.
4. Wyoming Senate and House: One vote is taken on the entire calendar; then a member may change his or her vote from "aye" to "nay" on any particular bill.

