



## Quick Reference Explanation of Terms

The following are simple explanations of commonly used terms within the context of politics and advocacy.

### **Appointed officials**

Public officials who are not elected but conduct public service

### **Coalition**

Affiliation of individuals or groups united to increase their effectiveness

### **Committees of jurisdiction**

Bodies within legislatures specializing in defined subject matter and tasked with reviewing corresponding legislation

### **Conference committee**

Committee consisting of members from House and Senate committees of jurisdiction tasked with reaching a compromise on similar pieces of legislation that have passed both Houses

### **Congressional committee**

A defined group of members of Congress assigned to handle subject matter-specific legislation

### **Constituents**

Individuals living within an elected official's district or state

### **Debate**

Formal discussion of legislative issues in a legislative body

### **Executive Branch agencies**

Institutions that report to the President, Governor or Mayor

### **Foot soldiers**

People who volunteer to work in a grassroots effort

### **Geographical reach**

The area in which an individual or group has potential influence

### **Grassroots**

Group efforts in local areas where individuals live (and vote)

### **Group task force**

Unit formed to carry out an assignment for a grassroots entity

### **Key Contact Constituency Group**

The most effective grassroots message/action tool

**Legislators**

Elected officials, at all levels, representing constituents and consider legislation

**Legislative bodies**

Groups of elected officials, typically called the Senate and the House, where legislation is debated and voted upon

**Legislative district**

Geographic area that contains the legislator's constituents

**Legislative recess**

Period of time when Congress has adjourned and legislators often return to their districts

**Mark-up**

Process by which legislators discuss and revise proposed legislation to increase member support and the support for passage

**Materials package**

Brief, printed materials which are given to legislators and staff

**Mass media**

Print and electronic coverage and analysis of legislative activity for distribution to interested parties

**Media outlets**

Organizations that generate and/or transmit news items such as legislative analysis

**Mission statement**

Statement of purpose issued by a grassroots or related organization

**Network**

An organization established to conduct grassroots activities

**Private-sector interest group**

Company, association, etc., with a defined set of common interests

**Professional association**

An organized group of individuals, such as audiologists, teachers, etc., with a defined set of common interests

**Profile information**

Information listing and describing the background and contact information for members of a grassroots organization

**Public affairs coordinators**

Volunteer or professional staff assigned to handle external communications

**Public-interest group**

Non-profit groups with a common set of interests

**Recruitment procedure**

Specific, systematic methods to increase grassroots involvement

**Right to representation**

Right of citizens/constituents to have an elected representative to advocate on their behalf

**Rollout**

Process by which information is systematically distributed

**Staff**

Non-elected, appointed individuals who serve voters without pay and serve elected representatives for compensation

**Subcommittee**

Separate, more specialized committee in a full legislative committee

**Talking points**

Brief list of ideas used as an outline for discussion in a meeting

**Trade association**

Group of individuals or organizations with a defined set of common interests

**Training module**

Set of principles, methods and materials to accompany a seminar for training individuals to conduct grassroots activities

**Veto**

Action taken by a public sector, elected chief executive to block legislation or action by an elected legislative body

For a more detailed list, or to search for a specific term, visit the United States

Senate Glossary page:

[http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/b\\_three\\_sections\\_with\\_teasers/glossary.htm](http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/b_three_sections_with_teasers/glossary.htm)