

Item Veto: Allows the Governor to veto (return unsigned a legislative proposal or indicate points of disagreement) objectionable parts of a bill without rejecting bills in their entirety.

Chaptered: A bill that has passed both houses and has been signed by the Governor is said to be “chaptered.” The bill becomes law January 1 of the following year unless it contains an urgency clause (takes effect immediately) or specifies its effective date.

Sunset Clause: Acts of the state Legislature that expire after a certain date unless renewed by the Legislature.

Voter Responses

In recent years there has been a renewal of interest in the techniques of direct democracy, whereby citizens are able to bypass elected government bodies and act directly on policy matters.

Initiative: A local or state measure that is placed on the ballot after a certain number of registered voters sign petitions supporting its placement on the ballot. Initiatives often are used by groups or individuals when the Legislature fails to pass a law they want to enact.

Referendum: A procedure whereby the voters may approve or disapprove proposals recommended by a legislative body, such as a proposal for an increase in the tax rate.

Recall: A procedure whereby petitions are circulated calling for removal of a public official from office. If a sufficient number of signatures is obtained, an election is held in which voters decide whether to keep the official in office.

PAC: A Political Action Committee is a nonprofit committee that provides a lawful means to help elect and re-elect political candidates selected on the basis of their positions on industry-related issues, committee assignments and leadership in the Legislature. PACs make contributions to candidates or in support of or opposition to ballot measures.

Adapted from California Grocers Association publication.

California State Government — The Executive Branch

The organizational structure of the executive branch underwent a comprehensive overhaul under Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.’s Reorganization Plan. The plan took effect on July 1, 2013, and cut the number of state agencies from 12 to 10, eliminating or consolidating dozens of departments and entities.

Many unrelated departments were housed together, while many related programs were scattered throughout different agencies. In many cases, departments and programs were duplicative. The Reorganization Plan changed the reporting relationships of dozens of entities to improve coordination and efficiency.

Upon implementation of the reorganization, five state agencies were replaced by the following three:

- The Government Operations Agency: responsible for administering state operations, such as procurement, information technology and human resources;
- The Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency: responsible for licensing and oversight of industries, businesses and other professionals; and
- The Transportation Agency: aligns all the state’s transportation entities.

Governor Brown’s plan was unanimously approved by the Little Hoover Commission, the state’s top independent government oversight body.

In a May 2012 report, the commission stated the plan’s restructuring was “long overdue,” and should provide “greater transparency and accountability as well as the opportunity for improved program performance.”

To find a state agency, department, board or office, visit www.ca.gov/agencies.

The organization chart is available at http://cold.ca.gov/CA_State_Gov_Orgchart.pdf.

Referral number for state agencies: (800) 807-6755.

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