

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

The techniques of direct democracy enable citizens 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 executive branch administers and enforces the laws of California. Led by the Governor, the California executive branch is made up of more than 200 state entities.

The executive officials of the branch—such as the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State and Attorney General, to name a few—are elected by the people of California. Each of these officers is elected to serve a four-year term, and may be elected to an office a maximum of two times.

Within the executive branch there are four types of entities: agencies, which are headed by a secretary; departments, which are headed by a director; and boards and commissions, which are headed by an executive officer or board member.

A number of entities, such as the

Regents of the University of California and the Public Utilities Commission, are intended to be independent of direct control by all three branches of the state government. Most of the leaders of these entities are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the California Senate.

The Governor also is responsible for appointing the secretaries/directors of 11 Cabinet-level state agencies/departments: Business, Consumer Services and Housing; Corrections and Rehabilitation (department); Environmental Protection; Finance (department); Food and Agriculture (department); Natural Resources; Government Operations; Health and Human Services; Labor and Workforce Development; Transportation; and Veterans Affairs (department).

Each Cabinet-level agency includes multiple departments, whose leaders

also are appointed by the Governor and usually subject to confirmation by the Senate. The Cabinet-level Natural Resources Agency, for example, includes the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the California Energy Commission, to name three of 13 entities within that agency.

Each state entity wields significant power and plays a large role in interpreting and applying the laws of the state.

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

The organization chart is available at <https://www.gov.ca.gov/orgchart/>.

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

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