

Hi. This is Chris Micheli with the Sacramento governmental relations firm of Aprea & Micheli and an adjunct professor at McGeorge School of Law. Thanks for joining today's podcast on bills in the California Legislature. What is a bill?

Well, although the term "bill" is mentioned more than two dozen times in the California Constitution, the word is not defined in this document. It's also not defined in the California Government Code. A traditional definition of a bill is simply proposed legislation that's considered by a legislative body.

Of course, a bill does not become law until it's been passed by the legislative branch and approved in some form by the executive branch. Bills only apply to the Legislature. In the two dozen states that have direct democracy, including California, the people can enact statutes but only by initiative, not by bill.

California's Legislative Counsel defines a bill as a proposed law introduced during a session for consideration by the Legislature and identified numerically in order of presentation. Also, it's a reference that may include joint and concurrent resolutions and constitutional amendments for rules purposes.

Pursuant to the California Constitution, the use of legislation is granted solely to the legislative branch of our state government. Article IV Section 8 (b) (1) provides that the Legislature may make no law except by statute and may enact no statute except by bill. Hence, the law-making process in the state of California requires the use of bills.

There are a few other state constitutional provisions that apply to bills. For example, in Article IV Section 8 (b) (3) it states that no bill may be passed unless, by rollcall vote entered in the Journal, a majority of the membership of each house concurs.

Section 10 (a) of Article IV requires that each bill passed by the Legislature shall be presented to the Governor. Section 12 of Article IV deals with budget bills in particular.

Article IV deals with the legislative branch of state government. It sets forth the general legislative activities and process. Again, a bill is required to create a law or a statute. It is the form that is utilized by the legislature to create a statute.

That's our brief look at bills in the California Legislature. Thanks for joining.