

Hi, this is Chris Micheli with the Sacramento governmental relations firm of Aprea & Micheli and an adjunct professor at McGeorge School of Law. Today's podcast is a consideration of some of the phrases that you might hear on the floors of the California State Legislature.

Now, as capitol observers watch the floor session of the California State Assembly and State Senate, you might hear one or more of the following phrases.

The first is a parliamentary inquiry. This is a phrase that is used by a member of the Senate or Assembly during a legislative proceeding - meaning either in a committee or on the floor - in order to raise a question about a parliamentary procedure. Basically, the member is recognized for this motion by the Committee Chair or the house's Presiding Officer, and then the Chair or the Presiding Officer answers the parliamentary inquiry for the member who's made it.

Next is point of order. This is a phrase based on parliamentary procedure that used by a Senator or an Assemblymember to bring to the attention of the chamber's Presiding Officer or a Committee Chair that there is an alleged violation of the house or the committee's rules. After the member states his or her point of order, the Presiding Officer or the Committee Chair issues a ruling on the validity of the stated point of order.

Privileges of the floor. This is a phrase that is used to describe when a member of the Legislature has been granted permission by the respective house's Presiding Officer for a guest, for example a family member or constituent, to view the legislative proceedings from the floor of the Assembly or Senate Chambers, rather than in the gallery.

Condition of the file. This is a phrase used by a member to make a brief statement at the close of a legislative floor session. In essence, the member is speaking to his or her colleagues regarding why it's not appropriate for the house to adjourn at this time. The Senate doesn't formally set a time limit, although Senators are generally limited to about five minutes. On the other hand, under Assembly Rule 84, "a member may state a fact relating to the condition of the business of the Assembly, but is limited to two minutes, and no debate is allowed."

Adjourn in memory. This is a phrase used to describe when a member has been granted permission to adjourn the house, either the Senate or the Assembly, in memory of an individual. The legislator's request must be made in writing and is read by the house's Presiding Officer, and then the member's statement - a formal statement - occurs prior to adjournment of the day's session.

And, the desk is clear. This is a phrase used by the Presiding Officer of the Assembly or the Senate that is made prior to recognizing a motion to adjourn. The phrase essentially means that there's no further official business to come before the house that particular day.

These are just some of the phrases that you might hear on the floors of the Assembly or Senate of the California Legislature.