



American Counseling Association Government Affairs and Public Policy Glossary

- **Act** - Legislation (a bill or joint resolution) that has passed both chambers of Congress (the House of Representatives and the Senate) in identical form, been signed into law by the president, or passed over his veto, thus becoming law. This term also refers to a bill that has been passed by one house and engrossed (prepared as an official copy).
- **Action Alert** – A message that ACA sends out to its members asking them to contact an elected official and advocate for an issue.
- **Amendment** – A change to a bill or a change to existing law.
- **Appropriations** – A legislative action that assigns public monies for a program or for implementation of a policy.
- **Bill** – A proposal to change a law, or in some cases, a proposal for a new law.
- **Campaign** – An activity in which members of ACA contact their elected officials in several different ways and multiple times in order to advocate for an issue.
- **Coalition** – A group of organizations that work together for a common purpose.
- **Congress** – The legislative branch of the federal government, where bills are considered. The Congress is made up of two chambers, the House of Representatives (the House) and the Senate.
- **Cosponsor** – A legislator whose name is added as a supporter of a bill.
- **Champion** – A legislator who can directly promote or affect legislation and policy.
- **ESEA** – The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a federal law that authorizes programs that offer grants to districts serving low-income students, provides federal grants for text and library books, creates education centers, and creates scholarships for low-income college students. The law also provides federal grants to state educational agencies to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education.
- **ESSCP** – The Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program, a federal program that provides grants to schools for hiring school counselors.
- **Hearing** – A hearing occurs when a committee of a legislative body convenes to gather information or review bills.
- **Law** – Bills that are passed in identical form by both chambers of Congress and signed by the president (or passed by Congress over a presidential veto). Also known as legislation.

- **Legislator** – A person who is elected to a state legislature or the U.S. Congress.
- **Legislature** – A group of elected individuals who create or pass new laws.
- **LMHC** – Licensed Mental Health Counselor
- **LPC** – Licensed Professional Counselor
- **Markup** – A committee hearing during which a bill is amended by a committee.
- **Medicare** – A federal program that provides health insurance to persons 65 years of age and older.
- **NDAA** – The National Defense Authorization Act, the bill that lays out rules for the Department of Defense and authorizes spending.
- **Omnibus spending bill** – A bill that packages many smaller regular appropriations bills into one larger single bill that could be passed with only one vote in each chamber of the Congress.
- **Recess** – When the Congress takes a break from its work schedule and is not in session.
- **Regulation** – A rule that is created by a department, board, or commission that usually has the force of law.
- **Representative** – Also referred to as a Member of Congress, each representative is elected to a two-year term serving the people of a specific congressional district. Among other duties, representatives introduce bills and resolutions, offer amendments, and serve on committees.
- **Senator** – A person elected or appointed to the Senate and duly sworn is a senator. Each senator is elected to a six-year term serving the people of a specific congressional district. Among other duties, senators introduce bills and resolutions, offer amendments, and serve on committees.
- **Sponsor** – A legislator who introduces a bill and champions it through the legislative process to garner support to pass the legislation into law.
- **Telebehavioral Health** – The use of a digital platform that provides secure, encrypted, audio-video conferencing to communicate with a client in real time. This is also known as “distance counseling.” This does not include nonsynchronous (not real-time) texts, calls, digital chats, and emails to and from counselors and their clients.
- **TRICARE** – The medical insurance program for members of the military, their dependents, and in some cases, retirees of the military.
- **VA** – The Department of Veterans Affairs, the federal department that provides (among other things) medical care for the service-related injuries of persons who served in the Armed Forces.
- **Voter Voice** – The software program that ACA uses to enable its members to communicate with their elected officials.