

# Lingo in the Texas Legislature

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Not unlike other communities, members of the Texas Legislature use their own set of specialized lingo in their dealings with each other. If you've never heard them before, these often colorful words and phrases can be confusing when encountered in a legislative context. With the 84th Regular Session right around the corner, we thought it would be a good time to define some of the legislative lingo frequently used in the Texas Capitol.

The following definitions are taken from the book *Texas Politics and Government*. For more serious glossaries of the legislative lexicon in Texas, see this helpful [guide](#) by the Senate Research Center, and the appendix in The Texas Legislative Council's [Guide to Texas Legislative Information](#).

## Gutting:

Amending a bill in committee or on the floor in such a way that it severely weakens the bill or changes its original purpose.

## Keying:

Watching another legislator to see which way he or she is voting before deciding how to vote. Floor leaders extend an arm with one finger held high to indicate that followers should vote "aye" or with two fingers held high to indicate that followers should vote "nay."

## Logrolling:

Supporting and voting for another member's bill (especially a "local" bill affecting only the author's district) with the assumption that he or she will then support you when you have a bill coming up.

## Pork barrel:

Appropriations of money to a project in a single legislative district.

## Sine Die:

Legislators use this Latin phrase to describe the 140th day (the last day) of a regular legislative session. Means literally "without day."

## That dog won't hunt:

A debating point suggesting that the legislator does not believe another member's argument.

From left to right: Representatives Menton Murray, Tom Uher and Dean Cobb demonstrating the act of "keying."