



STATE BUDGET KEY TERMS

Ways and Means Committees: The House and Senate each have their own **Ways and Means Committees** that oversee all legislation affecting the finances of the Commonwealth, respectively for each chamber. These Committees are some of the biggest actors in the state budget process. The House and Senate Ways and Means Committees, and particularly the leadership of each of those Committees, prepare each chamber's budget proposal, which serves as the basis for each chamber's budget deliberations.

Line item: A **line item** is an allocation of dollars to be spent on a program, service, office, or initiative. Line items are identified by a particular account number and include a description of how the money should be spent.

Earmark: An **earmark** is a designation of dollars, usually within a line item, for a particular purpose. For example, in the House budget, Representative Robinson secured an earmark to address the water chestnuts problem in Framingham, and in the Senate budget, Senator Rausch secured an earmark for Franklin to implement an anti-vaping pilot program in the high school.

Amendments: During the budget debate on the floor of the House, legislators file **amendments**, or changes to the proposed budget. An amendment might add or subtract money from a line item, add language to or entirely strike out a line item, or add, modify, or delete an outside section at the end of the budget.

Consolidated amendment: To expedite the budget process in the House, amendments are often bundled together by issue area, then voted as a single **consolidated amendment** on the floor.

Bundled amendments: To expedite the budget process in the Senate, during deliberations, Senators will **bundle amendments** together based on acceptance or rejection. The vote then proceeds to approve or reject the bundles in full.

Conference committee: After the House and Senate pass their separate versions of the state budget, each chamber appoints three members to a **Conference Committee** to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate budget proposals. One member of the minority party must be appointed by each branch. The Conference Committee reports a final compromise bill to the House and Senate for a final vote of acceptance in each branch.

Line item veto: When disagreements arise between the Governor and the Legislature about components of the budget, the Governor can use a **line item veto** to strike out particular budget elements with which he disagrees, rather than vetoing the entire budget.

Have a resource in mind that we should create?

Please send your suggestion to the Senator via email at becca.rausch@masenate.gov