

# U.S. Government Terms

## “DC Jargon”



**Amendment:** A formal change or addition proposed during the debate on a bill in a legislative assembly.

**Appropriations:** Legislation that authorizes the expenditure of government funds.

**Authorization Bill:** Legislation that establishes or continues a federal program or agency and sets forth the guidelines to which it must adhere.

**Bill:** A proposed piece of legislation introduced in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. A bill outlines specific details of a proposed law, including its purpose, the actions it mandates or prohibits, and any funding provisions. It must go through several stages of review, debate, and approval in both chambers of Congress. If both the House and Senate approve the bill, it is sent to the President for signature or veto. If signed by the President, it becomes law.

**Block Grants:** The full name is Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) and it provides grants to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

**Caucus:** A group of members of the United States Congress who meet to pursue common legislative objectives. Members typically share similar interests, and the caucus serves as a forum to coordinate strategies, discuss policy issues, and advocate for specific legislation. Caucuses can be based on party affiliation, such as the Democratic or Republican caucuses, or on shared interests, such as the Congressional Specialty Crop Caucus or the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. Caucuses play a significant role in shaping legislative priorities and influencing the legislative process.

**Climate Smart Agriculture:** Refers to an approach to farming that aims to increase agricultural productivity and incomes, adapt and build resilience to climate change, and reduce or remove greenhouse gas emissions where possible. This approach involves practices and technologies that enhance the sustainability and efficiency of agricultural production, such as improving soil health, optimizing water use, integrating agroforestry, and adopting precision farming techniques. The goal of Climate Smart Agriculture is to create a more sustainable and resilient agricultural system that can withstand the challenges posed by a changing climate while contributing to the overall mitigation of climate change impacts.

**Cloture:** A procedure for ending a debate and taking a vote in the Senate, typically used to break a filibuster.

**Conference:** Temporary committees formed to reconcile differences between House and Senate versions of a bill. Example: the Farm Bill will go through the conference committee process once a Senate version of the bill is passed

**Committee:** A subgroup of legislators in the House of Representatives or the Senate assigned specific duties and responsibilities. Committees play a crucial role in the legislative process, including the drafting, analysis, and holding hearings to gather information and revision of proposed laws, before deciding whether to advance them to the full chamber for consideration. Each committee focuses on certain policy areas, such as finance, agriculture, education, or foreign relations.

**Commodity:** In the context of DC agriculture policy fresh fruits and vegetables are *not* commodities. In federal policy a "commodity" refers to a raw agricultural product that can be bought and sold quality and produced in large quantities, making them interchangeable with goods of the same type. Examples are grains (e.g., wheat, corn, rice), livestock (e.g., cattle, pigs, poultry), dairy products (e.g., milk, cheese, butter), and other crops (e.g., cotton, soybeans, coffee, sugar). These commodities are traded in commodity markets, where their prices are determined by supply and demand dynamics.

**CR:** Continuing Resolution is a type of appropriations legislation used to fund government agencies temporarily when the formal budget process has not been completed.

**Earmark:** A provision in legislation that directs funds to specific projects, often within a legislator's district.

**Farm Bill:** The largest federal investment in the fresh produce industry. It is a comprehensive piece of legislation, passed every five years and critical tool for setting the direction of U.S. agriculture and food policy. Covers a wide range of topics, including Agricultural Subsidies, Nutrition Assistance, Conservation, Crop Insurance, Rural Development, Research and Extension

**Filibuster:** A prolonged speech or series of speeches made to delay action in a legislative assembly, particularly in the Senate.

**"The Four Corners":** In the context of U.S. farm policy, "the four corners" refers to the four key leaders of the agriculture committees in Congress. These leaders play crucial roles in shaping agricultural policy, drafting farm bills, and overseeing legislation related to agriculture. These positions are typically held by senior members of Congress with significant experience and influence in agricultural matters. Their collaboration and leadership are essential for developing and advancing farm policy and legislation.

- Chair of the House Agriculture Committee, Glenn Thompson (R-PA-15)
- Ranking Member of the House Agriculture Committee, David Scott (D-GA-13)
- Chair of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee, Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)
- Ranking Member of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee, John Boozman (R-AR)

**FreshPAC:** The IFPA Political Action Committee (PAC). A PAC is an organization in the United States that collects and pools personal contributions from donors to support federal candidates. Learn more at <https://www.freshproduce.com/advocacy/freshpac/>

**Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP):** Provides free fresh fruits and vegetables to students in participating elementary schools.

**GusNIP:** Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program. Formally known as FINI, these are fruit and vegetable incentive programs in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These often have different names at the state and local level – Double Up Bucks, etc.

**H-2A:** Visa program is a U.S. temporary agricultural worker program that allows employers to bring foreign nationals to the United States to fill temporary or seasonal agricultural jobs.

**Hearing:** A session at which a committee listens to testimony from people interested in the bill.

**Hill:** Short for Capitol Hill, where the U.S. Capitol building is located. It often refers to the activities of Congress.

**House:** Refers to the House of Representatives, which is one of the two chambers of the United States Congress. The House consists of 435 members who are elected every two years. The number of representatives for each state is based on its population, with each state guaranteed at least one representative.

**Labor vs Immigration:** Both are distinct yet often interconnected policy areas, each with its own set of laws, regulations, and governmental oversight.

- Labor policy encompasses laws and regulations related to the workforce, employment practices, and workplace conditions. It focuses on the rights and responsibilities of workers and employers within the United States. Examples: minimum wage, overtime pay, health care and working hours
  - Governing Body: Department of Labor (DOL)
- Immigration policy refers to the laws and regulations governing the entry, stay, and naturalization of foreign nationals in the United States. It deals with who can enter the country, under what conditions, and for how long. Examples: H2-A, H2-B, and border security
- Governing Bodies:
  - Department of Homeland Security (DHS): Oversees immigration enforcement and services through agencies like U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).
  - Department of State (DOS): Manages visa issuance and consular services abroad.

**Legislation:** Laws and legal rules that are proposed, debated, and enacted by a legislative body. Must be approved by both the House of Representatives and the Senate and then signed by the President to become law. Bills can address various issues, including creating new laws, amending or repealing existing laws, and appropriating funds. Legislation is the primary means by which the government enacts policy, regulates behavior, appropriates funds. It forms the foundation of the legal system.

**Markup:** Key step in the legislative process where a congressional committee or subcommittee reviews, debates, and amends proposed legislation. Allows committee members of congress to examine the details of a bill, propose changes, and refine the legislation before it is reported out of the committee for consideration by the full chamber (House or Senate).

**Nutrition Title:** Part of the Farm Bill that includes programs like SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and other food aid.

**Omnibus Bill:** A single document that packages together several measures into one or combines diverse subjects.

**Policy:** A course of action or a set of principles adopted and implemented by government entities, such as federal, state, or local agencies, to achieve specific goals and address public issues. Provide a framework for consistent decision-making and action.

**Procurement:** Process by which government agencies acquire goods, services, and works from external sources. Ensure that the government obtains what it needs in a manner that is fair, transparent, and cost-effective.

**Regional Food Center:** Typically refers to a hub or facility designed to support local and regional food systems by aggregating, processing, distributing, and marketing locally and regionally produced food. These

centers aim to improve access to fresh, healthy food, support local farmers and producers, and stimulate regional economies.

**Ranking Member:** The most senior member of the minority party on a congressional committee.

**Regulation:** Designed to provide detailed instructions on how laws will be implemented and enforced. Regulatory agencies have the authority to enforce regulations. This can include conducting inspections, issuing fines, and taking legal action against individuals or entities that violate the rules. Example) Food and Drug Administration (FDA): Oversees the safety of food, drugs, and medical devices.

**Recess:** A break in a congressional session. TIP: This is a great time to invite Members of Congress to tour your operation.

**Senate:** refers to the United States Senate, which is one of the two chambers of the United States Congress, the other being the House of Representatives. The Senate is composed of 100 senators, with each state being represented by two senators regardless of its population. Senators serve six-year terms, with approximately one-third of the Senate seats up for election every two years.

**SNAP:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), a federal aid program providing food-purchasing assistance to low-income people. In the past, this was called food stamps.

**Specialty Crops:** Fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops are called specialty crops by the federal government.

**Sunset Provision:** A clause within a law that sets an expiration date for the law unless further legislative action is taken to extend it.

**Title \_\_\_\_:** Refers to one of the titles of the farm bill. There are 12 titles ranging from trade to forestry to rural development.

**WIC:** Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC): Federal assistance program for healthcare and nutrition of low-income pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and children under the age of five.

**Whip:** A party leader in Congress who ensures party discipline and secures votes for legislation.