*Policy 101 Key Terms:*

***Act:*** A bill that has been passed by the Legislature and become law. (A bill passed by the Legislature does not become law unless the Governor signs it, the Legislature overrides the Governor’s veto of it, or the Governor fails to take action on it within six days of receiving it from the Legislature)

***Amendment:*** A suggested change or alteration to a bill or law.

***Appropriations:*** An authorization for the spending of funds.

***Bill:*** Proposed legislation under consideration by the legislature.

***Budget:*** A bill first proposed by the governor and then introduced in the Legislature that outlines the expected state revenue and proposed expenditures for the upcoming fiscal biennium (a two year budget).

***Co-sponsorship:*** Co-sponsorship occurs when a member of congress adds their name, as a supporter, to a proposed bill.

***Executive Session:*** A legislative committee meeting during which the committee votes, or takes “executive action,” on a bill or other proposal. The public is generally not allowed to testify at an executive session.

***General Purpose Revenue (GPR):*** A fund of money raised by the state mainly through taxes. The GPR is available for appropriation by the Legislature for any purpose.

***Grasstop:***  A person who represents a specific group of supporters or constituents who has a leadership role in their respective organization and has interest in participating in policy with their senator or representative (ie- non-profit leaders, business owners, health system representatives, newspaper editors, social media influencers, and elected officials).

***Joint Finance Committee (JFC):*** The committee comprised of legislators (8 members of the Assembly and 8 members from the Senate) that is tasked with reviewing all state appropriations and revenues. Specifically, they review the Governor’s proposed biennial budget.

***Law:*** There are four types of law:

* The state and federal Constitutions organize the structure and principles of government and establish certain fundamental principles of law, such as the individual rights established in the Bill of Rights.
* Statutes are the compiled general laws of the state created by legislation. Individual enactments, which have been passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, are referred to as “session laws.”
* Administrative rules are regulations, standards, or policies promulgated by executive branch agencies to implement statutes and administer agency programs. Administrative rules are compiled in the Wisconsin Administrative Code.
* Case law or common law is the law established by decisions of the courts.

***Legislative Council:*** A committee of members chosen from both houses that meets between legislative sessions to study state problems and plan a legislative program.

***Legislation:*** A proposed or enacted law.

***Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB):*** The LRB is a nonpartisan legislative service agency that provides legal, research and information services to the WI legislature. The LRB drafts all legislation for introduction in the legislature drafts all amendments, writes analyses of legislation, conducts legal, public policy, and historical research, and provides information about the legislature and its proceedings.

***Preempted:*** When the higher level of government limits the power of lower levels of government on specific issues involving policy creation and implementation. \*Lower levels of governmental policy cannot conflict with or be stronger than the higher level of governmental policy.

***Proposal:*** A bill, amendment or resolution before a legislative house awaiting action.

***Statutes*:** Laws passed by a legislative body at the state or federal level.

***Referral:*** The process of assigning proposed legislation to a legislative committee for review.

***Regulations****:* Unlike statutes, which originate in legislature, regulations are issued by various federal or state government departments and agencies to carry out the more specific intent of legislation enacted by Congress. Regulations provide the details necessary to put a statute into practice.

***Recess:*** A time when a legislative body is not in session.

***Veto:*** The action by which all or part of a bill is rejected by the Governor.

***Veto Override:*** A vote of by the Senate and Assembly to overturn the Governor’s veto. To be successful, two-thirds of the Senate and House by vote to override the veto.