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by-law  (bī lō')

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n.

1. A law or rule governing the internal affairs of an organization.
2. A secondary law.

[Middle English *bilawe*, body of local regulations; akin to Danish *by-lag*, township ordinance : Old Norse *bȳr*, settlement; see **bheu-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#) + Old Norse **lagu*, law; see **leg-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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