This report was prepared for the membership of the Southern Legislative Conference under Chairman David H. Wilkins, Speaker of the South Carolina House of Representatives. It is in part due to his interest and commitment to the institution of the legislature that this report was initiated.
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Change is inevitable and takes many forms. State legislatures feel the force of change in several ways, and react to it with new approaches to address the business at hand. For many legislatures in the South, term limits and shifting party structure are radically altering the way seniority and leadership operate, and how business gets done. Behind the scenes, pressure to continually improve services, to streamline, and to optimize scarce resources in an era of increasing complexity are presenting legislative staff with new challenges and opportunities.

This report profiles changes some state legislatures in the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC) region (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia) have made in their committee and staff structures to address challenges they face. In many ways, this is just a snapshot of how legislators and staff work, and it is intended to provide a new perspective on problems that every legislator faces in the operation of a constantly evolving system.

Every state legislature is unique and has developed over time to reflect the needs, experience, and expectations of its constituents. Differences in size, structure, tenure, leadership and membership can have a profound influence on the organization of committees and staff. Because of this, comparisons across the region are often difficult, and generalizations impossible. The concept of a “traditional” model of governance and operation is contradicted by the broad diversity of approaches each state has developed to accomplish its work.
A brief review of some pressures facing state legislatures

Term Limits
Five SLC states have term limit laws. Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Missouri, and Oklahoma all have limited the time any individual can serve in the legislature. Arkansas will be the first state in the region to feel the effect of term limits with at least 50 legislators barred from seeking reelection this year, and the remaining states are phasing these laws in over the next 10 years. Table 1 outlines the first year legislators will be term-limited and for how long.

Table 1: Term limits in the SLC as of January, 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>House</th>
<th></th>
<th>Senate</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective date</td>
<td>Term limit</td>
<td>Effective date</td>
<td>Term limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>6 years (3 terms)</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>8 years (2 terms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>8 years (4 terms)</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>8 years (2 terms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>12 years (3 terms)</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>12 years (3 terms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>8 years (4 terms)</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>8 years (2 terms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>12 years in legislature</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>12 years in legislature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The effect these laws could have on both chamber leadership and committee structure is tremendous. For example, beginning with the 1999 session, the most senior representative in the Arkansas House will have entered the Legislature in 1994. With the loss of seniority, freshmen or sophomore legislators can often find themselves in positions of leadership in both committees and in the full chamber, as has been the case already in the Missouri House of Representatives. Additionally, committees will experience changes in leadership as senior legislators see their terms limited and newer members gain more powerful roles in conducting business and setting legislative agendas.

While some critics of term limits lament the loss of institutional memory and experience this brings, others point out that term-limited legislators may be more likely to push reforms and would be less tied to the traditions of the chamber. Regardless of the impacts of term limits, the outcome will certainly require novel ways to develop leadership and conduct business within the legislature.

Party Turnover
For generations, the Democratic Party reigned almost unchallenged in state capitols across the South. During the 1980s, the Republican Party began experiencing success in winning seats in many states, chipping away at what were once thought insurmountable margins. Today in the SLC region, two house chambers and two senate chambers are controlled by Republicans, and one is essentially tied. This change in partisan control has placed Republicans in positions of chamber leadership in the South for the first time since Reconstruction.

More than this, party dominance in almost all SLC states is becoming less and less assured as Republican gains at the polls increase their numbers in the legislatures. Republican caucuses and leadership, as well as the rank and file members, are demanding increased representation and power commensurate with their increased numbers. This dynamic
can have a profound impact on the level of partisan cooperation (or its absence) in chambers where Republican numbers are approaching dominance.

Public Pressure
Legislatures and the legislative process are more accessible than ever before. Their work is often on the Internet, highly visible on local broadcast and cable television, and has become the focus of increased attention by the media in general. Complementing this heightened access is an ever-increasing level of public scrutiny, especially by the media, of legislators, their activities, and their agendas. While it is possible to argue that this attention is both positive and negative, public pressure and public awareness of what legislators do is never far from most legislators' minds.

This has, in part, influenced the way business is conducted in capitols. For many legislators and their staff, constituent service has become a major part of what they attend to on a daily basis. Attention to public awareness and the need to engender public trust and confidence in the legislature, and an understanding of the role it plays, is becoming important to legislators across the region.

Issue Complexity
In the years since World War II, legislatures in most states have witnessed a tremendous increase in the complexity of the issues they must address. Budgets are much larger, tax structures more complicated, and social issues are more complex. In 1952, a total of 10,525 bills and resolutions was introduced into the 16 SLC legislatures. By 1980, this number had grown to 35,493, and by 1997, to 47,529. This astronomical growth has put pressure on legislators and staff alike to process, consider, and act on a tremendous array of bills and resolutions.

Increasingly, legislatures are working on technologically complex issues such as telecommunications, environmental regulation, health care and utilities deregulation. They are also addressing more complicated policy issues due to federal devolution of authority to the states. A side effect of this issue complexity is an increase in study and special committees which require professional staff out of session. All of this has provided more work for legislators and staff, and has increased the workload of staff in the usually more subdued interim.

Additionally, in the first half of this century, state legislatures generally were weak in relation to the executive branch, and legislative work was considered "lighter." Since then, power in many states has begun shifting, increasing legislative input on states' budgets and policy and oversight of state agencies. Because of this change in power distribution, legislators have become responsible for more and more areas of state business, increasing both the volume and complexity of a member's work.

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A brief history of the development of legislative staff

Legislative staff in America dates back to the very earliest colonial representative bodies, when staff were mostly scribes and clerks. Throughout much of our history this pattern held, and it was not until the early part of this century that legislatures began to develop research, policy analysis, and bill drafting services. In general, these were centralized agencies that provided services to both chambers in limited ways and often were referred to as "legislative councils." In the years just before and after World War II most states adopted these institutions, so that by the 1960s, the majority of states had established some internal resource of this nature.

Legislatures began adding fiscal and budget staff in the late 1950s and early 1960s, reflecting a trend noted previously for increased input on state budgets. By the 1970s, this budgetary and fiscal staff were often involved in reviewing the fiscal implications of legislation, program auditing, and fiscal oversight. Committee staff, usually a function of the centralized legislative council, increased as well during this period as committees became more involved in the development of legislation.

At about the same time legislative staffs were increasing in size and specialization, a proliferation of federal programs, the need for specialized state oversight, and the growing power of the legislatures began to encourage some states to decentralize their councils. The motivations and implications for decentralization are addressed later in this report, but it is enough to note here that decentralization did not happen in a uniform manner or pace across the states and, indeed, many states have retained centralized staff up to the present. This trend also is reflected in many centralized agencies by the specialization of staff professionals and the assignment of staff to specific committee duties.

In the 1980s, legislative staff grew tremendously. The Reagan administration cutback federal programs increased the importance of state governments and was partly responsible for this trend, particularly in the areas of legislative oversight and review of programs. Staff growth during this period was concentrated most in large states, including Florida and Texas. Current trends indicate rather static staff sizes, reflecting both budgetary constraints and an interest in redesigning government operations to be leaner and more efficient. Future changes will likely be driven by efficiency and productivity within a framework of limited budgets.
Selected state profiles

Committee Structure
Sharing the Power

Committee structure depends largely on chamber leadership, who have the authority to create, combine, or disband committees; select their memberships; and determine their leadership. Continuity is generally the rule for most states, with committee structure relatively static during a given leader's term, and only small changes occur when leadership is passed on within the same party. Committee structure may be in place for decades with only minor alterations, especially in states with few committees. But in others, particularly states with numerous committees, or where leadership has gone through frequent changes or partisan change, the alterations can be substantial.

In some cases, change in committee structures reflects changing times and changing interests: the inclusion of technology committees, the separation of environment from agriculture committees as issues become more complex, and so on. Other committee changes reflect priorities for the chamber leadership. Still more reflect a growing need to share power equitably, and to develop leadership skills in newer members. This last engine of change might be brought on by changes in partisan leadership in a chamber, as has been seen in recent years, by the reality of term limits in force in many states, and in a shift in the way the legislature wants to operate.

In this section, the focus is on sharing power. The four chambers profiled — the Arkansas and Florida Houses and both chambers of the Virginia General Assembly — all responded to one pressure or another with a new way of using committee structure and leadership to do business. The Arkansas House overhauled its committee structure in response to term limits which are set to take effect in the 1999 session. The Florida House changed partisan control for the first time this century, and the new speaker introduced a structure that substantially changed the ways committees were arranged and how they fit into the legislative process. Both the Virginia Senate and House, faced with the dilemma of a split chamber, effected two different compromises that endeavored to equitably distribute power and responsibilities between the two political factions.

Arkansas

In Arkansas, term limits, which will remove at least 50 members of the House of Representatives in January 1999, posed a problem for the leadership. How will legislators who only serve for six years, and are only in session every other year, become effective leaders and achieve their legislative agenda? How do committees operate in a situation where seniority is only a matter of one or two terms? In an effort to address these issues, Speaker Bobby Hogue redesigned the appointment process for committees, removing a system based on seniority and replacing it with one based on interest, ability and capacity. The end result shifts power from the committee chairs to the caucuses (which draft membership lists for the committees) and the speaker (who appoints the chairs and vice chairs of the committees), but also encourages newer members to develop their leadership skills quickly and to develop and push their own issues forward.

Prior to 1995, seniority determined the committees on which a member would serve and who would serve as chair. This arrangement made committee chairs relatively independent of the speaker, and did nothing to encourage cooperation between committees and the House leadership. The speakership, without the power to appoint committee leadership, was a
largely honorary position with little real
power.

For the 1995 session, the
Speaker (who began his tenure in the
Arkansas House in 1979) asked
legislators to support him in his effort to
prepare the institution for term limits.
The new arrangement established four
regional caucuses (underscoring the
importance of regional concerns in this
largely Democratic state) each of
which appoint five members to each of
the House's 10 standing committees.
Representatives can serve on only two
committees, can chair one, and some
members can also serve on one select
committee. The speaker appoints the
chair and vice chair for each
committee.

When the Arkansas House
adopted these rules for its 1995
session (Arkansas' biennial session
meets in odd-numbered years), some
senior members had to give up their
committee chairs.

term of service, change of some kind
was inevitable. The Speaker's
leadership and the trust members have
in him have been credited as crucial to
the adoption of the new structure.

The Speaker had help in
crafting the new structure, however.
Realizing that term limits would remove
the chamber's legislative experience,
the House formed a special committee
in 1993 to study the issue. This
committee continued to meet into
1995 and recommended changes that
were part of the new arrangement
adopted during the 1995 session.

One of the outcomes of this
new structure has been to increase the
power of the speaker and the
committees. Legislators also report
increased cooperation and sense of
teamwork between committees and
committee chairs. The final assess-
ment of how well this arrangement is
able to buttress the Arkansas House
against an erosion of influence due to
term limits will play out in the years to
come. The system is expected to be fine
tuned by future generations of
speakers who will spend their entire
service in a term-limited environment.

Florida

Historically, the speaker of the
Florida House of Representatives
changes every two years. As a result,
the Florida House has a long history of
change in committee structure and
staffing patterns. For decades, each
new speaker would alter the numbers,
purviews, names, and composition of
committees to reflect new issues,
changing concerns, and new agendas.
Usually these changes were minor and
involved small changes in the legisla-
tive process and in staffing patterns, if
at all. Committee staff in high priority
committees might be reinforced with
staff from committees further down the
list; Conversely, staff in lower priority
committees might be shifted to 'hot'
areas of interest.

Republican Daniel Webster
became Speaker of the House in the
1996 organizational session, when the
Florida House changed partisan hands
for the first time in over a century. A
veteran member of the House, he
approached his first session as speaker
with the intent of changing more than
just the composition and names of
committees. Before the session was to
begin, he delivered new and substan-
tially different rules than those by which
the House had previously operated.

At the heart of the Speaker's
proposal was an interest to shift power
from the House and committee
leadership to individual members. To
do this, he suggested changing the
committee structure, which in turn
would effect staffing patterns and the
legislative process.

Although the Florida House
saw a net gain in the number of
standing committees from the 1996
The Speaker eliminated 72 subcommittees at a cost savings to the House of Representatives of more than $1 million.

Speaker Webster saw inefficiencies in this "pyramid" structure, as well as a concentration of power in the speaker's office and committee chairs which threatened to stifle backbenchers' legislative efforts. To remedy this, Webster's plan "flattens out" this power pyramid. Instead of committees and subcommittees, the House now has seven legislative councils, each with four to seven committees grouped under them. Bills are referred by the speaker to committees for discussion, voted upon within that committee and then sent to its legislative council. The council is composed of the chairs and vice chairs of each committee along with a council chair and the steering and liaison member, who is the same for every council. The council then can give the bill a priority rank among all of the other legislation under review by the council, refer the legislation back to the committee or, rarely, close the voting without minutes.

The rankings of the bills are then delivered to the speaker, who assigns council "folders" to the calendar. Bills are voted upon in the order in which they are ranked when the council's calendar is on the floor. When voting closes for the day, any bills that have not been acted upon are returned to the council, where new business will be added and new rankings assigned. Through this process the speaker is less of a factor in bringing a bill to the floor. It also is expected that teamwork will be enhanced, a key part of the plan.

The net result of this process gives more power to the committees and less to the speaker or committee chairs. Part of this process is accomplished by reducing the size of the committees. Prior to the reorganization, committees often had 14-16 members, with perhaps three subcommittees of six or seven members each. A legislator may have been appointed to sit on five, six, or seven committees, with additional subcommittee assignments attached. This resulted in legislators being spread thinly over too many committees and subcommittees. By reducing the number of committee members, and by eliminating subcommittees, individual members of a committee can play a greater role.

Currently, House members sit on two or three committees, and can focus their attention and activity on the business before the committee.

Speaker Webster hopes to develop teamwork among House members in preparation for the chamber's first experience with term limits in the 2000 session, when at least 75 new members will join the chamber. By distributing power to the membership and providing a framework for working together, it is hoped that the chamber will be able to develop the leadership and cooperative relationships that may suffer when legislators have less time to learn the ropes and establish relationships with other representatives.

Virginia

In 1996, the Virginia Senate sat on the cusp of change that has swept through much of the South in the past decade — the change of partisan leadership from Democrat to Republican. The Senate was split 20-20 between the two parties with the
deciding vote cast by the lieutenant governor who was a Democrat. This situation offered an unusual opportunity for sharing power and for experimenting with the structure of the Virginia General Assembly.

When the Senate convened in 1996, the process of appointing committee members and chairs could have proceeded as usual since, with a Democratic lieutenant governor, the Senate ostensibly had not changed hands. But one Democratic senator urged a change in the way power was shared between the two parties. In the spirit of fairness, it was felt that committee composition and leadership needed to reflect the partisan makeup of the chamber. Usually when states are faced with this issue, chairmanships are alternated year to year. In this instance, committees were appointed by both the Democratic and Republican leadership, and chairmanships were divided between the two parties, with six Democratic and four Republican committee chairs. The important finance committee had Republican and Democratic co-chairs.

Since January 1998, the situation has changed in the Senate with the special election of a Republican to fill a vacant seat previously held by a Democrat who retired, and the election of a Republican lieutenant governor. With this victory, the Senate had its first Republican majority since Reconstruction in either chamber, 21-19.

In what can be understood as a test of the arrangement’s success, the Republicans added one chairmanship, the Transportation Committee, which was previously chaired by the retiring Democrat, but the terms of the arrangement were mostly unchanged. The president pro tem remains a Democrat, and the finance committee continues to have co-chairs. The fact that the special election occurred following the first day of session, when rules are adopted, may have contributed to the continuity of the arrangement. But many Senate insiders point to the relative harmony of the addition of this new member and the reapportionment of chairmanships as an indication that the Senate’s early foray into power-sharing has prepared it somewhat for the shift of partisan control. While there is a possibility of changes to the rules in future sessions, there is every reason to believe that the principle of power sharing will continue in the Virginia Senate.

Just as the Senate was shifting from a split chamber to Republican control, the Democrats’ thin advantage in the House evaporated due to special elections this year. The elections, which were held the day before the House convened, could not be certified by the State Elections Board until three days later. Because of this, the Democrats technically controlled the chamber by three votes on the day the Speaker of the House was elected, when in reality there were 50 Democrats, 49 Republicans and one Independent (who historically votes with the Republican block).

The Virginia House of Delegates’ first day of session was rancorous. The Republicans defiantly abstained in the re-election of the speaker (a Democrat). The following day, the House convened to negotiate new rules. The single Independent delegate in the house had indicated his intention of joining the Republican Caucus, but would remain designated as an Independent so the House was split 50-50. From these negotiations, the House adopted rules, including certain committee rules, that are to stand through the year 2002, unless one caucus exceeds 52 members. The rules vary little from the previous rules with a few exceptions.

Under the new rules all committees, except the Committee on Rules, have equal numbers of members of the majority party caucus (Democrats) and nonmembers of the majority party caucus (Republicans and the one Independent) and a co-

By increasing the size of most committees to achieve parity, more Republicans are serving on more committees.
chair from each caucus. The Rules Committee is the only committee without an even split from the two caucuses. Of the Rules Committee's 15 members, there are eight Democrats, six Republicans, and one Independent. The Rules Committee is chaired by the speaker.

In order to achieve parity and because of the House tradition that no seated member is to be removed from a committee except of his own volition, committees had to be increased in size (e.g., the Committee on Appropriations increased from 22 members to 30 members). The House average of members per committee increased from 19 to 22.

Committee chairmanships are to be shared between the current Democratic chair and the ranking nonmember of the majority caucus (Republicans and one Independent) on the committee who is eligible (members can only chair one committee). The rules stipulate the procedures by which the co-chairs will determine who presides. The chairmanship is expected to alternate annually between the co-chairs unless they agree on another arrangement. It is significant to note that all the co-chairs resolved their internal procedures in various manners and did not have to default to the parameters set forth in the rules.

This "power sharing" arrangement, similar to that in the Senate in terms of committee composition, insists on reciprocity with respect to committee chairmanships. This is a more typical arrangement than that found in the Senate, and indicates the power House committee chairmen have in the legislative process. By increasing the size of most committees to achieve parity, more Republicans are serving on more committees, a move that is involving more legislators in a broader range of legislative activities and is developing broader experience among Republican members.

### Staffing Patterns

Legislative staff have developed gradually in each of the 16 SLC states according to the needs and history of their legislature. In general, in the years just before and after World War II, professional legislative staffs began to be established, albeit with relatively limited roles, as spot research and analysis agencies. Over time, these roles began to expand as legislatures increased their power relative to the executive branch and as the issues legislatures dealt with became increasingly complex.

It is difficult to compare legislative staff between chambers or between states. Staff duties and responsibilities can and do vary widely. Each state has developed in its own way, reflecting the political culture, history, and needs of the body. As an example, in some states, a committee clerk may be responsible for only clerical duties for the committee. In other states, especially those with smaller professional staff, committee clerks have greatly expanded roles, fulfilling clerical, research, logistical, and administrative roles. In assessing legislative and committee staff size, this review is restricted to "professional" staff, generally meaning research, legal, and fiscal staff and management.

The basic functions performed by staff can be found in every state. Every legislature drafts bills and researches and analyzes the fiscal implication of its legislation. Every legislature studies issues of importance to its constituency. The process by which these tasks are accomplished varies tremendously from state to state and from chamber to chamber.

For convenience, terms like centralized and decentralized are used to describe staff structure. A centralized staff or resource is one where both chambers share staff for any or all of the three primary staff functions: legislative research, bill drafting, and fiscal analysis. Committees often are staffed out of this centralized resource as well. This is the "legislative council"
model. A decentralized staff or resource involves having one, several, or all staff functions separated by chamber. Levels of centralization vary from state to state. Additionally, within each centralized or decentralized agency, levels of specialization occur. In some instances this can be seen in the splitting of bill drafting (or legal) work from research, fiscal work from bill drafting, and all three from committee responsibilities. Another form of specialization is found in states where all aspects of legislative work are combined in one agency, but where staff act as “resident experts” in particularly subject areas.

What follows is a review of how staff are structured in selected states. In compiling this report, the diversity of structures and operational styles became quickly evident, making these selections no easy matter. State legislatures are continually evolving “works in progress” which reflect the diverse needs of the populations they serve. The limitation of space prohibits the inclusion of every state or every chamber in this discussion, but every effort was made to make this discussion useful to everyone concerned. Some states appear below because they offer an interesting response to particular pressures. Others have been included because they exemplify patterns which reflect those found in many states. The selections are divided into four categories — smallness, centralized and decentralized structures, and how staff are organized into affinity, or issue specialty groups.

Small is Beautiful

Government, like every other enterprise, is under enormous pressure to keep its operating costs low. Small, lean operations are the rule of the day. Conversely, the increasing complexity and expectations on legislative staff have driven increases in the size of many legislative staffs. There are many examples in the South, however, of very small professional staffs. Among these, Mississippi, which ranks as having the smallest staff (21 professionals, including fiscal staff), and Alabama rank prominently among them.

Alabama

Alabama fits into several of our categories. Alabama is notable for having one of the smallest staffs in the region, second only to Mississippi. The research staff serves both House and Senate. And the staff takes a team approach to their work.

Part of the reason Alabama is able to maintain such a small professional staff is that committees are staffed by clerks with research or legal staff available “on-call.” The absence of committee responsibilities allows research staff to dedicate most of their time to research and legal activities. This use of professional staff is felt to optimize the use of this staff resource.

The centralized research staff serves both House and Senate in the areas of bill drafting and research. The exception is fiscal research and legal staff, which are a separate unit, although still shared between chambers. The shared research and bill drafting resource between the House and Senate eliminates duplication. It also allows information to be shared by both chambers and between staff working on related issues more easily than if research was divided between the chambers.

The research staff is divided into three teams which have broad, somewhat overlapping purviews. Research questions are submitted by members to the research director, who then assigns them to a team leader, who assigns them to a member of his or her team. Other questions of a similar nature are routed to the same team, and possibly the same staff person. Two of the three teams address substantive issues and the third provides support on policy issues and to the other teams. Each team has three or four attorneys.
The Legislative Reference Service, which is the office responsible for non-fiscal research and bill drafting, serves members of both chambers. Committees very seldom request research or issue reports, although much of the research they do for members is initiated or presented in committee discussions.

Mississippi
Ask legislative staff agency directors which state has the smallest staff and Mississippi inevitably is mentioned. This situation has long been the rule in Mississippi. Fiscal responsibilities are handled by the joint Legislative Budget Office, with a staff of seven analysts. These analysts provide fiscal analyses of every bill and staff the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. They also respond to member requests on budgetary analysis questions from both chambers.

Both the Senate and the House have independent legislative service agencies with five and nine attorneys, respectively, who provide bill drafting, research and analysis support. They are also responsible for staffing multiple committees — up to seven on the Senate side and between three and four on the House side. Staff are assigned to committees by expertise and remain with that committee for many years, which develops a substantial knowledge base. Since this staff member also is responsible for drafting legislation, they are able to follow an issue from beginning to end. A possible drawback to this aspect of the staff structure is the absence of a formal, structured review process for bills by other attorneys, such as a committee staff attorney reviewing the work of the attorney who drafted the bill.

Mississippi benefits from a veteran staff which experiences very little turnover. This experience and expertise result in a tremendous level of continuity between sessions and a high level of efficiency. Without such low turnover and staff longevity, the loss of institutional memory, efficiency, and the extensive training time required by new staff would strain the ability of the staff agencies to fulfill their duties. With such small staff, long hours and long weeks are the rule in Mississippi during session, as in most other states. To manage the workload and allow staff attorneys to focus completely on session business, special issue studies and non-bill drafting research is generally conducted during the interim.

In order to avoid duplication of effort, the separate chamber staffs work very closely with one another, sharing information and bill drafts on similar issues. Additionally, members of both chambers and their legislative research offices have access to a joint legislative reference service. Essentially a library, the three person staff provide quick research support across a wide range of issues, and are a very valuable resource, especially during the busy weeks of session. Outside organizations, both public and private, also serve as a useful source of factual background, but not policy, information.

Sharing the Wealth
Legislative staff emerged from humble origins. When legislatures were quiet affairs and were less powerful in shaping state policy, their staff were seldom more than committee clerks, typists, secretaries, and scribes. Multipurpose service agencies, which became common in many states, began to appear in the 1930s. In general, these agencies provided spot research and library functions. These “legislative councils” were often centralized, shared resources, providing support for members and committees from both chambers. These institutions exist in a number of states.
where they have evolved to meet new challenges and priorities. What is significant among them is their centralization and the elimination of duplication. Advocates of this arrangement point to their efficiency and their ability to track similar legislative issues in both chambers. In some states, this staffing pattern also has encouraged staff specialization, which is seen as an added advantage.

Kentucky

In Kentucky, all research, review, and bill drafting is done by the non-partisan staff of the Legislative Research Commission (LRC), a shared resource of both chambers. In the 20½ month interim (the General Assembly meets biennially), House and Senate committees meet jointly, and a committee staff administrator and additional staff are assigned to the joint committees. During the session, House and Senate committees meet separately. The committee staff administrator will usually assume responsibility for the committee in one chamber and assign a member of the staff to be the primary staff person for the committee in the other chamber.

This arrangement provides each chamber with the resources it requires during session, and encourages the sharing of information and eliminates duplication. This system works well partly because of the relatively small number of committees the staff must serve (14 joint in the interim, 10 Senate and 16 House in the session) as well as a parallel committee structure in the House and Senate.

One of the most often cited objections to a centralized research and bill drafting agency is that one chamber or the other (or, often, both) feel that they are being neglected to the benefit of the other. By having staff members designated to committees in chambers during session, Kentucky's LRC is able to ensure members receive adequate attention.

Members approach the designated staff person for research and bill drafting services, and have an identified contact for follow-up. The committee administrator is responsible for delegating assignments in the subject area for both chambers (even though they are the contact for only one). The committee administrator considers staff workload and expertise in delegating assignments. Thus, a senator may request a bill from the designated staff person for a certain committee, who then brings it to the committee administrator, who asks either that staff person or another to complete the request, depending on who is most able to complete the task at that time.

Because of this, it is possible that House and Senate bills will be drafted by the same person, even if that staff member is not the contact for either chamber. This having been said, the LRC maintains a "first come, first served" policy on bill drafting and research, which also contributes to the overall sense that every member is served equally, regardless of party or chamber. Identifying staff contacts for each chamber provides a "check" to assure members that they have a resource person available to them should they need one.

Maryland

The trend in Maryland is one of centralization and specialization, a trend which was reinforced during a 1977 reorganization. Previously, responsibilities for fiscal and legislative research and for bill drafting were split into separate departments, with the Department of Legislative Reference (DLR) providing research, committee and bill drafting services to both chambers, and the separate Department of Fiscal Services (DFS) overseeing legislative audits and budget analysis, fiscal notes on bills, and staffing fiscal-oriented committees.

The new structure brought these two departments, and the Office
of Legislative Data Processing, into one department, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS). The DLS has an executive director who has extensive statutory responsibility for the activities of the entire department. The DLS consists of four offices: Office of Executive Director; Office of Policy Analysis; Office of the Legislative Auditor; and Office of Information Systems. The largest unit is the Office of Policy Analysis, which is essentially the front-line, non-partisan staffing unit for the entire General Assembly, including budget analysis, bill drafting, legal analysis, research, and committee staffing.

The previous arrangement had several shortcomings, which the restructuring aimed to resolve. One of the primary difficulties was in pulling together teams to work on large projects or on issues which cut across the distinct unit lines. Under the new structure, fiscal notes, bill analysis and, eventually, bill drafting can be done more closely, with ample sharing of information. One of the primary concerns that the restructuring sought to address was the parallel lines of upper management which existed under the previous staffing arrangement, as well as to create an environment where the exchange of information and skills was facilitated.

The new structure allows for a great amount of flexibility. During session, the function areas (research, committee staffing, bill drafting, fiscal analysis, etc.) are fairly well-defined because the activities of the General Assembly make them so. In the interim staff are more focused on issue areas, developing special expertise not necessarily tied to their function. In this way, the DLS hopes to maximize staff time in the interim while providing comprehensive services in session.

Additionally, professional staff are available for spot research requests from members. Under the reorganization, staff assigned to discrete functions (e.g. bill drafting, committee staffing) can provide other types of professional services. Also, DLS creates work groups, organized by issue area, which contain staffers from all function area who might provide input on a certain areas. This allows staff to develop topic specialties, establish lines of communication across function areas, and, as in other states with similar arrangements, reduce the General Assembly’s reliance on outside research. Because Maryland has a very small committee structure, the DLS can dedicate staff to one committee in either the House or the Senate.

Separate and Equal

As was noted earlier, most states once had joint research resources, often called legislative councils. A number of states now have most or all of their resources separated by chamber. The causes for these divisions are varied, but they often come down to essential differences in the needs of the different chambers or in the way they conduct business. An argument for dividing research and bill drafting that is often given by senators is to ensure they receive adequate service while numerically a smaller chamber. This would seem to be an obvious and realistic concern, especially in states where the numeric superiority of the House to the Senate is four to one (as is the case in Missouri and Texas, see Table 2). This is not necessarily always the case, as can be seen when both chambers cite the same concerns about access and accountability. If both the House and the Senate object that the other is receiving more or better service, perceptions of what constitutes adequate service may be more the issue than the services performed.
Furthermore, staff of joint legislative councils often find themselves in the awkward situation of, in the words of one longtime staffer, "serving two masters." In accommodating members, and particularly leadership, of two chambers with different expectations and agendas, legislative councils can find themselves having difficulty establishing priorities for staff resources and workloads.

This situation can provide momentum to an effort to decentralize staff between two chambers. The disadvantages that a decentralized staff may have in duplicating efforts is often seen as compensated for by improved service and focus on an individual chamber's priorities. Furthermore, having more than one staff person working on similar legislation can help develop new ideas and fresh approaches. Additionally, by bringing the responsibility for management of research staff into one chamber, the issue of coordination is simplified and each chamber is able to set up the agency to meet its own needs.

Missouri

Missouri has chamber-specific research staff and a bill drafting staff (the Joint Committee on Legislative Research) that is centralized. In practice, the Senate research staff does much of the bill drafting for the Senate. Missouri has one of the greatest size disparities between its chambers, with 163 members in the House and only 34 in the Senate (in the region, only Texas has a greater difference), and the Senate has long maintained an independent research and bill drafting staff. An advantage to the division of resources is it allows both chambers to develop independent legislative priorities.

For either chamber, staff are organized along similar lines. All staff are expected to perform research and serve multiple committees. In the Senate, staff will draft bills and amendments, a responsibility most House members ask the Joint Committee on Legislative Research to do. Both chambers have separate fiscal and research staffs. Fiscal notes for legislation are done by the joint Oversight Division, and there is one fiscal staff member who serves as staff to both chambers.

Staff within each chamber's research office develop strong relationships with members of their chamber, which in turn strengthens the institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>House members</th>
<th>Senators</th>
<th>Ratio House:Senate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Florida</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3:1</td>
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<td>180</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.21:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.63:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
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<td>39</td>
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<td>West Virginia</td>
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<td>2.94:1</td>
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</table>
staffs employing a number of generalists to provide tremendous flexibility with limited staff. Bucking the trend of specialization and the development of resident experts, Missouri discourages staff from developing too narrow a perspective. With a staff of relatively modest size, specialization also is seen as impractical given the broad range of issues discussed within the numerous committees in either chamber. This also allows for more efficient utilization of staff time, particularly in the interim, with staff who can be assigned to a number of issue areas instead of staff being tied to one or two specific topics.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma has the lowest ratio of representatives to senators in the SLC (101 to 48, or 2.1 to 1). Given this, it would seem surprising that the Senate and the House share almost no resources — research, analysis, and bill drafting have all been done by chamber-specific staff since 1980. Oklahoma seems to reflect the trend towards decentralization of both staff and department responsibilities that can be found in many southern legislatures.

Oklahoma's staff is not extensive, with 58 professionals in both chambers who draft all bills and resolutions, provide all fiscal review, and provide all research for the legislature. Researchers working for either chamber specialize as much as is practical, but they seldom work cooperatively with their counterparts in the opposite chamber.

The organizational structures of the Senate and House research, bill drafting, and fiscal staff are relatively similar in nature. Bill drafting, research, and fiscal analysis are separate entities with similar responsibilities. Research and legal (bill drafting) staff are primarily responsible for staffing the standing committees that handle substantive legislation. Fiscal staff are primarily responsible for reviewing of expenditure and revenue bills and staff appropriations and budget committees.

Although, on the surface, the structure for the two chambers appears to be parallel, in fact there are differences in staffing which reflect functional differences. A potential strength or advantage of having split resources is the ability to accommodate these differences. An example of these differences can be found in the bill drafting staff. In the Senate, bill drafters are almost exclusively attorneys. In the House, most bill drafting is done by non-lawyer committee staff which is then passed on to attorneys for quality control.

Another difference between the chambers is in how the staff are organized. In the House, much of the organizational work for committees is conducted by staff within the chairman's office. This minimizes the burden on committee staff and allows professional staff to serve more committees. In the Senate, committee staff do much of this organizing, which makes for a more direct relationship between committee staff and the committee as well as removing partisan staff from the committee structure. These two approaches reflect the different personalities of the chambers, preferences which have developed over time to suit the members of the House or the Senate.

Tennessee

Tennessee has a relatively small staff, with a fair degree of decentralization. Both chambers are served by the 16 professionals in the Office of Legal Services who provide most of the bill drafting, research required to do such bill drafting, and analysis on some, but not all, bills for the entire General Assembly. The Office of Fiscal Review prepares the fiscal notes on each bill and the fiscal note often includes a brief, one- or two-line summary of the bill. During session, this staff is augmented by six temporary hires. Committees in both chambers have research analysts who
serve in positions which may, in some states, be called committee directors.

In the Senate, research analysts schedule committee work, in most cases prepare the analysis of bills which will be heard at each meeting and collect other supportive data the members need to consider the bill, including the fiscal note. These analysts work in the office of the chairman of that committee and often have staff responsibilities that extend beyond the committee's work.

In the House, research staff are more centrally organized, are answerable to both the committee chair and the speaker's office and are housed as a unit. Research staff provide a combination of research and analytical support to the committee, but do not schedule the committee's activities to the level done in the Senate.

Another element in Tennessee's ability to process such a tremendous volume of legislation (Tennessee ranks third behind Texas and Louisiana in total bills and resolutions introduced) relative to its staff size is the General Assembly's relationship with several key agencies. These include the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR), an independent government agency which functions as a think tank, and the independent State Comptrollers Office, which provides staff to the House and Senate Finance, Ways and Means Committee. The General Assembly calls on TACIR to do special studies (past issues have included annexation, school funding, and tax structure) and individual legislators may call on TACIR for spot research.

While the various legislative service offices communicate with one another regularly, staff admit that there is some duplication of activity. Bills on particular issues may be drafted by the same individual in the Office of Legislative Services, but then will be followed in the respective chambers by different staff members, who are asked to provide analysis and further research on what may be very similar bills. This "redundancy" is often seen as more of a strength than a weakness, providing alternative perspectives on complex issues and encouraging innovative and thorough treatment of legislation within both chambers.

**Teamwork**

One of the most often cited pressures legislative staff face is ever increasing issue complexity. While many states continue to value a staff of generalists who can address a wide range of issues, there is a growing trend to compartmentalize staff into issue areas. The advantages of issue specialization include a more complete understanding of issues, an internal "expert" for legislators to draw upon, and the development of institutional memory. Several legislative staff members maintain that with many issues now facing legislatures, it becomes difficult to wade through the information available without a thorough understanding of an issue. By having resident experts in substantive issues before the chamber, legislators also are seen as being more independent of information from lobbyists and special interest groups. With so many legislators concerned about the image of the legislature being overrun by lobbyists, the bulwark of independent staff experts is quite valuable.

**Louisiana**

In 1981, the Louisiana Legislative Council, a joint resource serving both chambers, was split into House Legislative Services (HLS) and Senate Research Office (SRO), which provide all legal, fiscal and research support to their respective chambers. Differences of opinion on staff reorganization (whether to reorganize or not and how...
to reorganize) particularly on the issue of committee staff, led to the division of the resource between the two chambers.

Interestingly, the impetus for this apparent decentralization came, on the House side, from a wish to centralize legislative staff. The previous Legislative Council was organized into three function areas — legal research, governmental research, and committee staff — which often had overlapping responsibilities.

The House reorganized staff on a subject matter basis to address the issues of duplication of staff function, the development of subject matter expertise, and the full utilization of staff year-round. The newly established HLS provides basically all research, drafting, and committee staffing services for the House members and for committees. The HLS is organized into five subject matter divisions, with a legislative research library and administrative services. Bill drafting and research requests from both committees and members are directed to the subject matter division with that responsibility, and to the staff member most familiar with it in that section. That person is usually a staff member of the committee that will hear the bill. At least one research analyst or attorney is assigned to each committee as a primary assignment, although not all staff are assigned to committees.

While much can be made of the specialization the Louisiana HLS encourages, it is the level of teamwork and cooperation by members of divisions and across divisions that insiders cite as its strength. Louisiana has a long history of providing full staff services to every member, and the only way to make such a system work is to share information and assistance, even across specialty lines, in peak work periods. Many see this interdependence on other staff as fostering a team spirit throughout the agency.

Also contributing to the strength of the staff as an institution has been the development of staff expertise. Under the Legislative Council, staff were often selected by committee chairman and would then change committees when that chairman changed. By connecting staff to a committee rather than a chairman, the HLS staff are seen as less politicized and more expert in their field. Another important factor in the quality of staff work is the review process built into the organizational scheme. Division directors review staff work and administrative services provides a fiscal technical review. Also, staff are assigned on a rotating basis to review bills for errors after they have been reported by committees.

The Senate operates with slightly less centralization. This isn't all that surprising given the relative difference in size between the two chambers. The SRO which serves a much smaller chamber, can afford to have less well-defined divisions of labor.

The bulk of Senate staff is research services and committee staff whose responsibilities are almost exclusive to that committee or subject area. Committee staff are selected with considerable input from and have their offices adjoining the committee chair. It is not uncommon for the staff to change when committee leadership changes hands, but these changes are not frequent. The Senate has a group of senior attorneys who provide general supervisory support to several committees. All staff draft bills, which are reviewed by a senior attorney. This process provides high quality legislation for the Senate and maximizes staff time by having staff with expertise with an issue draft and track legislation in their specialty from beginning to end. Staff are further encouraged to develop secondary specializations which adds to the depth of the SRO.
In summary

State legislatures are creations of their history. The evolution of committees and staff to fit the needs of the legislature has been slow but steady and has reflected situations peculiar to each state, and often each chamber. At the turn of the century, the conditions under which legislators worked were very different from those found today. The challenges today's legislator faces are a world apart from the issues legislators faced a generation ago. But if the legislature faces different challenges over time, the challenges across state lines are often identical. It is in this light that this report is presented.

Term limits, which are threatening to change the landscape of state legislatures in unpredictable ways, have grabbed the attention of many state legislators. Many of the changes in legislative structure and staffing that are responses to term limits can be seen in the broader context of strengthening the institution of the legislature.

In the future, issues are likely to become only more complex. As even more authority devolves from the federal government to the states, an increase in state level oversight and management is inevitable. Specialists from either inside or outside the legislative process will become more highly valued. Whether the response to this trend is to develop internal experts on certain issues within legislative staff, or to develop generalists who are proficient at reviewing and digesting the analysis of others often depends on the nature, needs, and desires of the legislators served.

Overall, legislatures seem to be proceeding toward increased power-sharing across party lines and away from leadership to the rank and file members. Within the legislative staff, size will likely increase little in the near future, but specialization, both in subject matter and activity, will likely gain some momentum.
An overview of SLC states

Alabama

House
• 21 standing committees (+ 8 local legislative committees)
• Subcommittees allowed, but no formal subcommittees exist
• Standing committees do not meet in interim
• Interim/study committees meet only in interim
• Members appointed by speaker
• Chairs appointed by speaker
• Average size of committee: 15 (Ways & Means has 17, and Local Legislative Committees have as few as 5 and as many as 19)

Senate
• 21 standing committees
• 53 subcommittees, but number can vary
• Standing committees do not meet in interim
• Interim/study/select committees meet typically in interim
• Committee members appointed by president
• Chairs appointed by president
• Average size of committee members: approximately 9

Joint Committees
• 4 or 5 joint standing committees
• Interim/study/select committees usually meet jointly, but they do not exist during session

Staffing Pattern
• Centralized resources in the Legislative Reference Service (LRS)
• Separate fiscal staff
• Joint committees staffed by LRS
• Combined research and bill drafting
• Number of research staff: 12 attorneys in 3 teams
• Number of fiscal staff: 11 analysts in 7 areas
• Research/legal staff do not have committee responsibilities; clerks are provided to committees, but their responsibilities are clerical and administrative
• District/caucus staff not paid by legislature
Arkansas

House
• 10 standing committees
• Subcommittees exist, 3 per committee
• Standing committees do not meet in interim but are mimicked by interim committees usually composed of the same people and with the same issue jurisdiction
• Interim committees usually meet only in interim as a practical matter; 7 select committees (5 joint and 2 chamber specific)
• Members selected by 4 regional caucuses
• Chairs and vice chairs appointed by speaker
• Average size of committee: 20

Senate
• 9 standing committees
• Subcommittees allowed, number varies
• Standing committees do not meet in interim but are mimicked by interim committees usually composed of the same people and with the same issue jurisdiction
• Interim/select committees usually meet only in interim as a practical matter
• 10 select committees (6 joint and 4 chamber specific)
• Members select which committees they wish to serve on in order of seniority. Senators may only serve on 2 committees and can chair only 1 committee
• Chairs selected by seniority
• Average size of committee: 8

Joint Committees
• 8 joint standing committees
• 16 joint interim committees

Staffing Pattern
• Centralized resources in the Bureau of Legislative Reference (BLR)
• Fiscal is one of four specialties within the BLR (others are legal, committee staff, and personnel)
• Joint committees staffed by BLR
• Separate research and bill drafting/legal (except judiciary committee, staffed by legal staff)
• Number of research staff: 10
• Number of legal staff: 9, including director
• Number of fiscal staff: about 6
• Research/legal staff have committee responsibilities
• Each staff member serves about 3 committees (serve corresponding committees in Senate and House as well as all subcommittees)
• District/caucus staff not paid by legislature, although legislators can use their legislative allowance for this purpose
Florida

House
- 35 standing committees
- Subcommittees not allowed
- Standing committees meet in interim
- Interim committees meet only in interim
- Members appointed by speaker
- Chairs appointed by speaker
- Average size of committee: 7-10

Senate
- 16 standing committees
- Subcommittees allowed, but typically found only in Ways & Means
- Standing committees meet in interim on scheduled committee weeks August through beginning of session
- Select committees meet in interim
- Members appointed by president
- Chairs appointed by president
- Average size of committee: 12-14

Joint Committees
- 6 joint standing committees
- Joint interim/study/select committees

Staffing Pattern
- Chamber-specific research staff
- Separate fiscal staff
- Joint committees have their own staff
- Separate research and bill drafting
- Number of research staff professionals: H: 67; S: 46
- Number of legal staff professionals: H: 11; S: 12
- Number of fiscal staff: H: 14; S: 23
- Research staff in both chambers have committee responsibilities
- Each staff member serves 1 committee
- District staff paid by legislature
Georgia

House
- 31 standing committees
- Subcommittees allowed and common during session (formed by speaker)
- Standing committees may meet in interim
- Interim/study/select committees meet only in interim
- Members appointed by speaker
- Chairs appointed by speaker
- Average size of committee: 10 (5 big committees — Appropriations, Ways & Means, Banks and Banking, Industry, and Rules — have more members)

Senate
- 25 standing committees
- Subcommittees allowed by direction of chair and only during session
- Standing committees do not usually meet in interim
- Interim/study committees meet only in interim
- Members appointed by lieutenant governor
- Chairs appointed by lieutenant governor
- Average size of committee: 9-12

Joint Committees
- No joint standing committees
- Joint interim/study/select committees

Staffing Pattern
- Chamber-specific research staff (three joint offices: legal, budget, fiscal)
- Separate centralized fiscal staff serves for chambers
- Joint committees staffed by staff from the joint committee chairman’s chamber
- Separate research and bill drafting
- Number of research staff: H: 8 + director; S: approximately 10
- Number of legal staff: 14 (shared between House and Senate)
- Number of fiscal staff: joint 13 (shared between House and Senate)
- Research staff have committee responsibilities; legal staff have limited committee responsibilities
- Number of committees served by each staff member: H: 3; S: 2-3
- District/ caucus staff not paid by legislature
Kentucky

House
- 16 standing committees
- Subcommittees in Appropriations and Revenue in session
- Standing committees meet in interim jointly with Senate
- Interim/study/select committees meet only in interim
- Members appointed by Committee on Committees
- Chairs appointed by Committee on Committees
- Average size of committee: approximately 18-20

Senate
- 10 standing committees
- No subcommittees in session, only in interim
- Standing committees meet in interim jointly with the House
- Interim/study/select committees meet only in interim
- Members appointed by Committee on Committees
- Chairs appointed by Committee on Committees
- Average size of committee: approximately 10-12

Joint Committees
- 14 joint standing committees during interim

Staffing Pattern
- Centralized resources with chamber-specific research staff during session
  centralized in the Legislative Research Commission (LRC)
- Separate fiscal staff
- Joint committees staffed by LRC staff
- Combined research and bill drafting
- Number of research staff: 117
- Number of legal staff: N/A
- Number of fiscal staff: 13
- Research/legal staff have committee responsibilities
- Each staff member serves 1 committee; some serve 2
- District/caucus staff not paid by legislature
Louisiana

House
- 17 standing committees
- Subcommittees allowed by rules, number varies
- Standing committees meet in interim
- Interim/study/select committees are discouraged and to the extent they are used they meet only in interim
- Members appointed by speaker
- Chairs appointed by speaker
- Average size of committee: maximum is 18

Senate
- 17 standing committees
- Subcommittees allowed, number varies
- Standing committees meet in interim
- Interim/study/select committees meet typically in interim
- Members appointed by president
- Chairs appointed by president
- Average size of committee: 7, Finance and Revenue & Fiscal Affairs have more

Joint Committees
- 4 joint standing committees
- Joint standing committees meet in interim

Staffing Pattern
- Chamber-specific research staff and shared Legislative Fiscal Office (LFO)
- Separate fiscal staff
- Joint committees staffed by House or Senate fiscal specialists (alternate 2-year periods) with administrative support from LFO
- Combined research and bill drafting in both chambers
- Number of research/legal staff: H: 47 (including House fiscal staff) S: 28 (including Senate fiscal staff)
- Number of fiscal staff (LFO): 16
- Research/drafting staff have committee responsibilities in both chambers
- Each staff member serves 1 committee
- Caucus staff paid by legislature; about 1 per caucus
Maryland

House
• 7 standing committees, including Executive and Rules Committee
• 28 subcommittees in 6 committees
• Standing committees meet in interim
• Interim/study committees typically meet only in interim
• Members appointed by speaker, minority party can determine where minority members serve
• Chairs appointed by speaker
• Average size of committee: 23

Senate
• 6 standing committees
• 10 subcommittees in 4 standing committees
• Standing committees meet in interim
• Interim/study committees usually meet only in interim
• Members appointed by president
• Chairs appointed by president
• Average size of committee: approximately 11

Joint Committees
• 15 joint standing committees + 4 special joint committees
• Joint interim/study committees allowed

Staffing Pattern
• Centralized resources in the Department of Legislative Services (DLS)
• Fiscal specialists are under the DLS in the Office of Policy Analysis (OPA)
• Joint committees staffed by OPA specialists with a variety of backgrounds, including fiscal, legal and policy
• Combined research and bill drafting/legal are separate, but attorneys may provide research support
• Number of research staff: approximately 77 including legal and fiscal
• Professional staff of OPA have committee responsibilities
• Each staff member serves 1 committee
• District/delegation staff paid by legislature (usually clerical)
Mississippi

House
• 28 standing committees
• Subcommittees allowed, number varies
• Standing committees very rarely meet in interim
• Interim/study/select/special committees typically meet in interim
• Members appointed by speaker (with consideration of member preference, and for certain committees with consideration of member seniority)
• Chairs and vice chairs appointed by speaker
• Average size of committee: approximately 20

Senate
• 29 standing committees
• Subcommittees allowed, number varies
• Standing committees meet in interim with permission
• Interim/study/select committees meet only in interim
• Members appointed by lieutenant governor
• Chairs appointed by lieutenant governor
• Average size of committee: 15-17

Joint Committees
• 2 joint standing committees (PEER and Budget)
• Joint statutory committees on specific issues (e.g. apportionment)

Staffing Pattern
• Centralized fiscal office with chamber-specific research and legal/bill drafting staff
• Separate fiscal staff serves both House and Senate
• Joint committees staffed by their own staff, including attorneys and budget staff
• Combined research and bill drafting
• Number of research staff: the joint Legislative Reference Bureau has 1 attorney and 2 paralegals who can do research, but functions mostly as a research library
• Number of legal staff: H: 9; S: 5
• Number of fiscal staff: 7 analysts
• Legal staff have committee responsibilities in both chambers
• Number of committees served by each staff member: H: 3-4; S: up to 7
• District staff not paid by legislature
Missouri

House
• 44 standing committees
• Subcommittees allowed, number varies
• Standing committees typically do not meet in interim
• Interim/study/select committees meet only in interim
• Members appointed by speaker; minority party recommends roster and speaker approves
• Chairs appointed by speaker
• Average size of committee: approximately 19

Senate
• 22 standing committees
• Subcommittees allowed, number varies
• Standing committees typically do not meet in interim
• Interim/study/select committees meet only in interim
• Members appointed by president pro tempore, minority members selected by minority caucus
• Chairs appointed by president pro tempore
• Average size of committee: 5-7

Joint Committees
• No joint standing committees
• Joint interim/study/select committees allowed by joint resolution

Staffing Pattern
• Chamber-specific research staff
• Separate fiscal staff
• Joint committees staffed by House and Senate research staff.
• Combined research and bill drafting; Senate research provides much of the bill drafting for the Senate
• Number of research staff: H: 16; S: 10
• Number of legal staff: 5 (mostly serve the House; Senate research drafts most Senate bills)
• Number of fiscal staff: H: 5 (+1 joint); S: 6 (+1 joint); legislative oversight prepares fiscal note, staff: 16
• Research/legal staff have committee responsibilities in both chambers
• Each staff member serves 2-3 committees
• District/caucus staff not paid by legislature
North Carolina

House
- 24 standing committees
- 20 subcommittees
- Standing committees do not meet in interim
- Interim/study/select committees meet only in interim
- Members appointed by speaker (but reflects party distribution)
- Chairs appointed by speaker
- Average size of committee: 19-22

Senate
- 13 standing committees
- 6 subcommittees in Appropriations
- Standing committees do not meet in interim
- Interim/study/select committees meet only in interim
- Members appointed by president pro tempore
- Chairs appointed by president pro tempore
- Average size of committee: 15-17

Joint Committees
- No joint standing committees
- Joint interim/study/select committees are allowed

Staffing Pattern
- Centralized resources
- Separate fiscal staff
- Joint committees staffed by centralized legislative staff
- Separate research and bill drafting
- Number of research staff: 25
- Number of legal staff: 12
- Number of fiscal staff: 24
- Research/legal staff have committee responsibilities
- Each staff member serves 1-5 committees
- District/caucus staff not paid by legislature
Oklahoma

House
- 28 standing committees
- 11 Subcommittees in Appropriations and Education
- Standing committees meet in interim
- Interim/study committees meet in interim
- Members appointed by speaker
- Chairs appointed by speaker
- Average size of committee: approximately 15-18

Senate
- 20 standing committees
- Subcommittees allowed, but generally only in Appropriations
- Standing committees seldom meet in interim
- Interim/study/select committees meet only in interim
- Members appointed by president pro tempore
- Chairs appointed by president pro tempore
- Average size of committee: 10-14

Joint Committees
- No joint standing committees
- No joint interim/study/select committees

Staffing Pattern
- Chamber-specific research staff
- Separate fiscal staff
- Joint committees staffed by both chambers
- Combined research and bill drafting: H: no; S: yes
- Number of research staff: H: 9; S: 15
- Number of legal staff: H: 8; S: 5 attorneys who review, but generally do not draft, bills
- Number of fiscal staff: H: 11; S: 8
- Research staff have committee responsibilities; legal staff are available on request
- Number of committees served by each staff member: H: 2-3; S: 1-3
- District/ caucus staff not paid by legislature
South Carolina

House
- 11 standing committees
- Standing subcommittees with specific jurisdictions
- Standing committees meet in interim
- Study/select committees may be created and may meet in session and interim
- Members appointed by speaker
- Chairs appointed by speaker
- Average size of committee: approximately 18

Senate
- 16 standing committees
- Subcommittees allowed, but not common
- Standing committees can meet in interim; subcommittees typically meet in interim
- Interim/study/select committees meet only in interim
- Members appointed by seniority without regard to party affiliation
- Chairs elected by Senate
- Average size of committee: approximately 12

Joint Committees
- Joint statutory standing committees
- Joint interim/study/select committees can be appointed

Staffing Pattern
- Limited centralized resources (bill drafting by Legislative Council) with mostly chamber-specific research staff
- Fiscal notes done by independent agencies
- Joint committees staffed by chairman's staff or both committees' staff, possible assistance from chamber research offices
- Separate research and bill drafting; Senate Research Office drafts approximately 35% of Senate bills
- Number of research staff: H: 5, including director; S: 8 + director & assistant director; committee staff do research as well (H: 18; S: 16)
- Number of legal staff: the Legislative Council has 8 bill drafting staff, 1 attorney and 4 other research staff (1 attorney and 4 non-attorneys to do research preparatory to bill drafting)
- Number of fiscal staff: N/A
- Research staff do not have committee responsibilities; committees have independent staff which serve only 1 committee
- District/caucus staff not paid by legislature
Tennessee

House
- 13 standing committees
- 27 subcommittees
- Standing committees typically do not meet in interim
- Interim/study/select committees meet in interim
- Members appointed by speaker
- Chairs appointed by speaker
- Average size of committee: 15-17

Senate
- 9 standing committees
- Subcommittees allowed but seldom meet
- Standing committees do not meet in interim, except Government Operations
- Interim/study/select committees meet in interim, and there are numerous study committees
- Members appointed by speaker*
- Chairs appointed by speaker
- Average size of committee: 9

Joint Committees
- 7 joint standing committees
- Joint interim/study/select committees allowed

Staffing Pattern
- Centralized resources in the Office of Legal Services (OLS); Committees have research analysts as well
- Separate fiscal staff
- Joint committees generally staffed by analysts and attorneys from the respective committees in either chamber, at the discretion of the chair or chairs
- Combined research and bill drafting
- Number of research staff: H: 10; S: 9
- Number of legal staff: 16 in OLS
- Number of fiscal staff: 8
- Each committee has a research analyst assigned to the committee; attorney’s attend committee meetings and draft any bill amendments for the committee
- Centralized staff (OLS) do not have committee responsibilities
- District/caucus staff not paid by legislature

*Tennessee has a Speaker of the Senate
Texas

House
• 36 standing committees
• Subcommittees allowed, number varies
• Standing committees meet in interim
• Interim/select committees typically meet in interim
• Members appointed by speaker
• Chairs appointed by speaker
• Average size of committee: 9-12

Senate
• 12 standing committees
• Subcommittees allowed, number varies
• Standing committees can meet in interim by charge
• Interim committees meet only in interim
• Members appointed by president
• Chairs appointed by president
• Average size of committee: approximately 10

Joint Committees
• No joint standing committees
• Joint interim/study/select committees rare, but allowed

Staffing Pattern
• Centralized/shared bill drafting and fiscal resources and committee-specific research staff (Texas Legislative Council)
• Separate fiscal staff works for both House and Senate
• Separate research and bill drafting/legal staff, although some bill drafting is done by research staff
• Number of research staff professionals: H: 8 interim, 14 session; S: 17 interim, approximately 24; perform research for members and committees
• Number of legal staff professionals: 40
• Number of fiscal staff: 75, including 35 budget analysts
• Members of both centralized research and legal staffs are on call, but committees usually are assigned independent staff
• Committees have independent staff which serve only 1 committee
• District staff paid by legislature
Virginia

House
• 20 standing committees
• 65 subcommittees, but number can vary
• Standing committees meet in interim on call
• Interim/study/select committees typically meet only in interim
• Members appointed by speaker
• Co-chairs appointed by speaker for standing committees with the exception of Rules, which is chaired by the speaker
• Average size of committee: 22

Senate
• 11 standing committees, including Rules
• Subcommittees allowed
• Standing committees meet in interim, if necessary
• Interim/study/select committees meet typically in interim
• Members nominated by caucus and elected by the Senate
• Chairs appointed in terms with written agreement
• Average size of committee: 15

Joint Committees
• Joint Rules Committee (7 members from each chamber)
• Joint interim/study/select committees; most interim committees are joint

Staffing Pattern
• Centralized research and bill drafting staff in the Department of Legislative Services (DLS)
• Separate fiscal staff
• Joint committees staffed by House or Senate Clerk’s staff and the DLS
• Combined research and bill drafting
• Number of research and legal staff: 31
• Number of fiscal staff: H: 7; S: 8
• Research/legal staff have committee responsibilities
• Each staff member serves 2-4 committees
• Administrative assistant allowance paid by respective chamber
West Virginia

House
- 14 standing committees
- Subcommittees allowed, number varies
- Standing committees meet in interim, usually as subcommittees
- Interim studies usually conducted by subcommittees in interim
- Members appointed by speaker
- Chairs appointed by speaker
- Average size of committee: approximately 25

Senate
- 17 standing committees
- Subcommittees allowed, number varies
- Standing committees meet in interim, usually as subcommittees
- Interim studies usually conducted by subcommittees in interim
- Members appointed by president
- Chairs appointed by president
- Average size of committee: approximately 12

Joint Committees
- 5 joint standing committees
- Joint interim/study committees allowed, often large committees meet jointly in interim subcommittees

Staffing Pattern
- Centralized bill drafting resources and chamber-specific research staff
- Fiscal notes prepared by agencies; budget committee staff from joint budget staff
- Joint committees staffed by both joint committee and House/Senate staff
- Separate research and bill drafting
- Number of research staff: H: 15 permanent + 13 session; S: 5 permanent + 25 session
- Number of legal staff: 8 permanent + 30 session staff
- Research staff have committee responsibilities
- Each staff member serves 1-3 committees
- District/ caucus staff not paid by legislature
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>House Bills</th>
<th>House Resolutions</th>
<th>Senate Bills</th>
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HR=House Simple Resolution  
HCR=House Concurrent Resolution  
HJR=House Joint Resolution  
H Mem R=House Memorial Resolution  
SR=Senate Simple Resolution  
SCR=Senate Concurrent Resolution  
SJR=Senate Joint Resolution  
S Mem R=Senate Memorial Resolution
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References


Current rules for the House and Senate for the 16 SLC states.