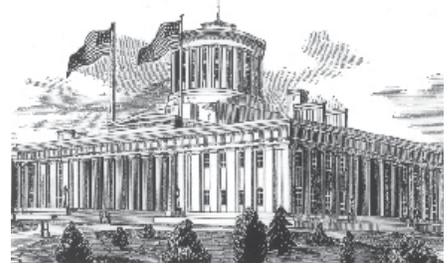

Staff Services Available to the General Assembly



Image courtesy of the Ohio Statehouse Photo Archive

“These Are My Jewels,”
Northwest Corner of the Statehouse

Staff Services Available to the General Assembly



During the course of their duties, members of the Ohio General Assembly are confronted with several tasks that require staff assistance due to the volume of work or its technical complexity. Members have both partisan and nonpartisan staff to assist them.

Partisan staff work for one of the party caucuses or for individual members. The caucuses employ lawyers, policy advisers, fiscal analysts, and other aides and assistants. Most senators have both an administrative assistant and a legislative aide. Every representative has at least one aide. Depending on a representative's committee and leadership responsibilities, he or she also may receive staff assistance from a policy aide.

Nonpartisan staff services are provided to all members. Most are provided by the Legislative Service Commission (LSC), a central staff agency serving both the House of Representatives and the Senate. As explained in previous chapters, the LSC staff perform most legal and fiscal research, bill drafting, amendment drafting, committee staffing, and commendatory letter writing tasks for the General Assembly. Other LSC staff functions include the codification of the state's administrative rules, the organization and standardization of text of the Revised Code, the training of new legislative

staff, and the publication and distribution of several legislative documents.

Three additional nonpartisan legislative agencies also assist members of the General Assembly. The Legislative Information Systems (LIS) Office manages information technology services for the legislature, the Correctional Institution Inspection Committee (CIIC) works on issues related to the state's correctional institutions and the inmates of these institutions, and the Joint Medicaid Oversight

Committee (JMOC) oversees the Medicaid program on a continuing basis.

The nonpartisan staff of these agencies report to separate staff directors. They are not LSC staff. Members requesting services of these legislative agencies should contact the appropriate staff director.

Two national organizations, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the Council of State Governments (CSG), also

offer services to both the legislature as an institution and the members elected to the legislatures in all states. NCSL membership includes only state legislative bodies, while CSG membership includes a wide range of state officials from the executive, judicial, and legislative bodies of each state. A third organization, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), publishes research information,

Some of the sources of staff services are available to legislators:

- *Legislative Service Commission*
- *Legislative Information Systems Office*
- *Correctional Institution Inspection Committee*
- *Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee*
- *National Conference of State Legislatures*
- *Council of State Governments*
- *American Legislative Exchange Council*

public policy proposals, and model legislation to support its public policy agenda.

Partisan Staff Services

Staff services provided to members are not limited to those offered by nonpartisan agencies; caucus and personal staff provide additional services to members. Caucus and personal staff include caucus aides, legislative aides, policy aides, administrative assistants, legislative fellows, and pages. Both the House and Senate have a majority party caucus and a minority party caucus. The majority party in each house normally controls how funds appropriated for the operation of the particular house are allocated among various needs, including the number of staff available to members. Standing committee responsibilities and leadership responsibilities also affect staffing decisions.

At the beginning of each biennial session, the members elected to the House and Senate meet and elect members to various caucus leadership positions. The members also elect persons who are not legislators to fill the principal staff officer positions of Senate Clerk, House Clerk, House Chief Administrative Officer, and House Sergeant-at-Arms. The Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate each appoint a Chief of Staff. In the Senate, the Sergeant-at-Arms is hired in the same manner as other Senate employees.

The actions taken and policies adopted by these caucus leaders apply to all members and staff of their respective houses. Generally, these persons, in conjunction with the members elected to leadership positions, determine how caucus staff are organized, how staff services are provided to members, and, in the case of the Sergeants-at-Arms, how order and security are maintained in the House and Senate Chambers and office areas.

Senate Staff

Chief of Staff

The Senate Chief of Staff is the top-ranking administrative officer of the Senate and the chief policy advisor to the Senate President. The Chief

of Staff reports to the Senate President and is responsible for implementing the policies of the majority party in the day-to-day operations of the Senate. All Senate employees are employed by and ultimately report to the Senate Chief of Staff.

In addition to the supervision of all Senate employees, the Chief of Staff is responsible for the implementation of administrative policies that affect members of the Senate. The Chief of Staff is responsible for the assignment of staff, staff offices in the Senate Building (adjoining the east side of the Statehouse), and parking in the Statehouse underground parking garage.

Minority Chief of Staff

While the Senate Chief of Staff controls the number of staff and funds available for staff for the minority party, the actual selection, assignment, and supervision of minority party staff are normally responsibilities delegated by the Minority Leader to a Minority Chief of Staff. This person structures and coordinates the minority staff, works with the Senate Chief of Staff to ensure compliance with Senate policies and guidelines among minority staff, and serves as the minority caucus's liaison to House members and staff. The Minority Chief of Staff is also the primary policy advisor to the Minority Leader and members of the minority caucus.

Senate Clerk

The Senate Clerk is an administrative officer and the parliamentary advisor for the Senate. The Senate Clerk and the Clerk's assistants perform a variety of duties and services related to the processing of legislation at each stage of its progress through the Senate, from introduction through delivery to the Governor for executive action. The Senate Clerk's office also is responsible for the Senate's fiscal and personnel matters.

The Senate Clerk's staff maintain the *Senate Journal*, the official record of the Senate, and produce the *Bulletin*, a compilation of matters pending before the legislature and actions taken upon those matters, including bills, resolutions, and appointments by the Governor.

The Senate Clerk, elected by the members of the Senate, assists the Senate President during floor sessions. The Senate Clerk calls the roll, records

votes, and provides advice to the President on parliamentary questions. The Clerk reads bill and resolution titles and committee reports upon each hearing of a bill or resolution on the Senate floor, and also reads official messages from the Senate President, the House of Representatives, and the Governor.

Clerk's assistants perform a variety of different functions to assist in the operation of the Senate.

Journal Clerk. The Journal Clerk compiles the official daily *Journal* of all Senate actions (including reports of committees), and incorporates into the record messages received from the President of the Senate, the House of Representatives, the Governor, and certain other statewide officials and directors. The *Journal* is made available to Senate offices and to the public on the Senate and General Assembly websites following each daily session. Bound volumes of the *Journal* are published at the end of each General Assembly.

Message Clerk. The Message Clerk records the actions taken on the floor by the Senate and transmits messages to the House of Representatives to inform it of those actions. The Message Clerk also receives all proposals introduced in the Senate, delivers the bills, resolutions, and Governor's appointments to committees for consideration, keeps records of the official status of each matter pending before the Senate, and makes bills available to the Governor for executive action.

Engrossing Clerk. The Engrossing Clerk engrosses, or makes changes in, the bills as they are introduced, amended by committees, and amended on the floor of the Senate, and incorporates changes made by conference committees. The Engrossing Clerk also maintains records of the Governor's appointments to boards and commissions that are subject to the advice and consent of the Senate and prepares the daily *Calendar* for floor sessions.

Enrolling Clerk. The Enrolling Clerk is responsible for enrolling bills (putting them into final form) for signature by the Speaker of the

House and the President of the Senate before they are forwarded to the Governor. The Enrolling Clerk also prepares a weekly schedule of committee meetings and prepares the *Bulletin* for the General Assembly, which is printed periodically during the session and incorporated into the bound volume of the *Senate Journal* at the end of the session.

Fiscal Officer. The Fiscal Officer, aided by the Assistant Fiscal Officer, oversees the human resources functions of the Senate as well as the financial management of Senate accounts. The Fiscal Officer's responsibilities include payroll processing, benefits administration, reimbursements, and budgeting for supplies.

House Staff

Chief of Staff

The Chief of Staff of the House of Representatives is the chief advisor to the Speaker and other House majority members. The Chief of Staff addresses broad policy and management issues with the help of the majority caucus staff, the House Chief Administrative Officer, and the House Clerk. The Chief of Staff serves as the majority caucus's primary staff liaison with the Senate, the executive and judicial branches of government, other statewide office holders, and advocacy organizations.

Chief Administrative Officer

The Chief Administrative Officer of the House is elected by the members of the House of Representatives. Subject to the Speaker's general authority over House employees, the Chief Administrative Officer supervises all House employees except those under the direct supervision of the House Clerk. With the help of various specialized assistants, the House Chief Administrative Officer also performs many nonlegislative administrative duties for the House of Representatives. These include: performing payroll, benefits, personnel, and fiscal functions; coordinating telecommunication and computer services; purchasing furniture, equipment, and supplies; maintaining an inventory of all furniture and equipment; maintaining and repairing House

property; maintaining the parking facilities under control of the House; and assigning House office space in the Riffe Center.

Minority Chief of Staff

Traditionally, the minority party of the House of Representatives designates a Minority Chief of Staff who reports to the Minority Leader. The authority, responsibilities, and duties of this position vary from session to session and are influenced by policies of the Speaker and the Minority Leader. Typically, the Minority Chief of Staff is the chief management officer of the minority caucus, oversees the caucus policy, communications, legal, and administrative staff, and represents the interests and positions of the Minority Leader and minority caucus.

Clerk of the House of Representatives

The Clerk of the House is an administrative officer of the House of Representatives. The duties of the Clerk are set by statute, rule, or joint rule or by the Speaker of the House.

The Clerk also performs a wide range of administrative and technical services critical to the legislative process. These responsibilities include: (1) the preparation of various legislative documents, including the House *Journal* and the *Calendar*, which specifies the order of pending business; (2) the printing or reproduction of bills, acts, or other documents; and (3) the care and preservation of each bill introduced in the House or received from the Senate.

The Clerk of the House is elected by the members of the House of Representatives and has an active role during legislative sessions. The Clerk, who stands in front of the Speaker's podium, calls the roll, records votes, serves as parliamentarian, and may, in the absence of a designated presiding officer, call the House to order.

Various specialized clerks assist the Clerk. Their duties are:

Engrossing Clerk. The Engrossing Clerk is responsible for engrossing all bills and resolutions under consideration by the House of Representatives. The engrossed version of a bill or resolution incorporates all amendments adopted in committee

or on the House floor. The Engrossing Clerk prepares the House *Calendar*, which is issued each legislative session day and lists all legislation that is on that day's agenda for third consideration by the House of Representatives. The Engrossing Clerk also processes and prepares final copies of all honorary House resolutions and House concurrent resolutions on parchment paper for presentation by members.

Journal Clerk. The Journal Clerk is responsible for the preparation of material needed for the publication of the House *Journal*. The House *Journal* is printed and posted on the House and General Assembly websites following each House session. As the official record of the proceedings of the House of Representatives, the *Journal* includes action taken on all bills, joint resolutions, concurrent and simple resolutions, committee reports, announcements, messages from the Speaker, and messages from the Senate. The Journal Clerk maintains a list of House members appointed to special committees, boards, or commissions and coordinates these appointments with the offices of the Speaker and the Minority Leader. The Journal Clerk also schedules individuals invited to offer invocations for session.

Reading Clerk. The Reading Clerk reads the titles of bills, resolutions, and committee reports as they come up for consideration during a House floor session and reads all official messages received from the Speaker, the Senate, or the Governor. The Reading Clerk also prepares the electronic voting system for each session day and maintains the electronic voting and session attendance records of House members.

Special Assistant to the Clerk/Committee Clerk. The Special Assistant to the Clerk provides administrative assistance to the Clerk and serves as the Committee Clerk, Enrolling Clerk, and Message Clerk.

As Committee Clerk, the assistant trains and assists House employees responsible for staffing committees and is responsible for organizing materials for, and assisting members of, the Rules and Reference Committee. Other duties of the

Committee Clerk include scheduling committee rooms and compiling the list of scheduled committee hearings.

As Enrolling Clerk, the assistant is responsible for the preparation of legislation in enrolled (final printed) form for presentation to the Governor for consideration. This entails proofreading enrolled and engrossed bills to make sure all amendments to the legislation have been properly posted.

As Message Clerk, the assistant prepares the messages to the Senate that inform the Senate of all official actions taken by the House of Representatives. The Message Clerk delivers copies of all engrossed bills, resolutions, and Senate bills passed by the House to the Senate Message Clerk.

Nonpartisan Staff Services

Legislative Service Commission

The Legislative Service Commission is a statutory agency created in 1953 to provide drafting and research services to members of the General Assembly. The Commission consists of 14 members. These members include the President of the Senate, six additional members of the Senate appointed by the President, the Speaker of the House, and six additional members of the House appointed by the Speaker. Minority party representation on the Commission is ensured by a statutory prohibition against more than four of the six appointed members of each house being of the same political party. The Commission selects a chairperson and a vice-chairperson who serve for a two-year period coinciding with a session of the General Assembly. Customarily, the position of chairperson alternates between the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate.

Among other duties, the Commission is responsible for providing bill drafting, research, fiscal, and other technical services to all members of the General Assembly. To accomplish this goal, the Commission is required to hire an LSC Director who, in turn, hires other staff as necessary to provide the services required by the Commission.



Over the years since its creation, the Legislative Service Commission has delegated many responsibilities to the Commission staff. LSC staff provide such key services as drafting and analyzing bills and amendments, staffing committees, providing fiscal statements and other budget information, conducting research, codifying administrative rules, code revision, writing resolutions and letters of commendation, and program evaluation.



In the 130th General Assembly, the LSC staff drafted over 4,800 bills; completed about 2,200 analyses and about 2,000 fiscal notes and local impact statements for bills; responded to about 5,200 research requests from members; and drafted over 12,000 amendments.

Bill Drafting

The LSC staff research and draft any legislation, including amendments, requested by any member of the General Assembly. To initiate a bill draft or research request, a member may either contact an LSC staff person or contact the LSC Director's secretary/assignment clerk at (614) 466-1678 or Linda.Gorry@lsc.ohio.gov. Requests also may be made to the LSC Director.

Committee Staffing

The LSC Director assigns at least one member of the research staff and one member of the fiscal staff to assist each standing committee and subcommittee of the House and Senate. While the committee chairperson in effect determines much of a staff person's work through requests for substitute bill drafts, amendments, or research, the chairperson should not regard the staff person as working exclusively for him or her. Each LSC staff person assigned to a committee also is available to assist any member on matters relating to any bill pending before the committee. Staff assistance may involve explaining legislation, drafting amendments,

preparing substitute bills, preparing fiscal notes and local impact statements, and performing various research tasks for the committee.

In addition, the LSC Director assigns staff to provide committee staffing services to many of the select and joint committees that may be appointed during the course of a session of the General Assembly. In many cases, Commission policy requires the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Commission to approve the staffing of these special committees.

Bill Analysis

As detailed in Chapter 5, the LSC staff analyze each bill scheduled for a first hearing by a standing committee. This analysis is then revised when the legislation is reported by the committee for a vote in the first house, when it is passed by the first house, and when it is reported by a standing committee in the second house. LSC staff also prepare a final analysis of each bill that has been passed by both the House and Senate.

Synopsis of Committee Amendments

The LSC staff prepare a special synopsis for a bill that is returned to the House or Senate for concurrence after the bill has been amended by the other house. The synopsis explains the amendments adopted in the committee of the other house. Chapter 5 discusses the synopsis in more detail.

Fiscal Services

LSC fiscal staff prepare fiscal analyses of bills that the General Assembly is considering. They write a fiscal note and local impact statement to inform members of the estimated amount by which a bill would increase or decrease revenues or expenditures of the state or its political subdivisions. They conduct research to answer legislative inquiries on fiscal issues of importance in state and local government. For more detail, see Chapter 5.

LSC fiscal staff also draft appropriation provisions of bills and amendments and prepare budget briefing documents for the major biennial appropriations bills. Budget briefing documents are described in Chapter 8. Additionally, they forecast and monitor state revenues and expenditures.

Fiscal staff review requests coming before the Controlling Board and provide informational assistance to Controlling Board members and legislative staff as requested. They also prepare various annual and biennial reports to fulfill statutory requirements or present fiscal information of use to the General Assembly.

Short-Term Research

The LSC staff provide answers to many questions posed by members that arise from a member's performance of legislative duties. Although the LSC staff do not respond directly to constituent letters or phone inquiries, the staff will provide background information with which a member or a member's staff can respond to constituents or others requesting information from a member. Commission policy generally is to attempt to deal with public inquiries through a member's office.

Long-Term Research

In addition to responding to the routine short-term research requests received from members, the LSC staff occasionally engage in more specialized long-term research projects. Since these projects require a great deal of staff time and effort, this type of research must be approved by the Commission before being undertaken by the LSC staff. At times, the Commission appoints a special committee of legislators to undertake such a long-term research project with staff assistance. On other occasions, the staff are responsible for conducting the research and reporting staff findings directly back to the Commission.

Administrative Rules Codification

The LSC staff are responsible for codification of the administrative rules adopted by state agencies pursuant to Chapters 111. and 119. of the Revised Code. This involves receiving the rules adopted by the state agencies and reviewing them for conformance with drafting standards. It also involves the codification of these rules in a usable and standardized form and making them available to the public either directly or via commercial publication.

The LSC staff also publish the *Register of Ohio* on the Internet and administer a system for agencies statewide to file administrative rules electronically. For more information about the *Register*, see Chapter 11. The *Register* makes available to the public, in electronic format, rules and rule-related documents filed by state agencies. The *Register* is located at www.registerofohio.state.oh.us.

Legal Review and Technical Services (Code Revision)

The LSC legal review and technical services division (LRTS) is responsible for reviewing bill and amendment drafts for substantive accuracy and completeness and for conformity to technical drafting rules. LRTS also advises drafters on substantive and technical drafting issues. Additionally, LRTS reviews acts for proper codification and advises legal publishers with regard to the harmonization of multiple acts that amend the same laws.

Resolutions and Letters of Commendation

Frequently, members will request that LSC draft special House or Senate documents to honor individual constituents or groups on milestone occasions or for extraordinary accomplishments, such as heroic deeds, athletic achievements, and retirements. Members sometimes present these documents personally and, for certain occasions, do so during a legislative session.

The LSC staff draft letters of commendation or condolence for House members, President's letters for Senate members, and honorary simple and concurrent resolutions for both the House and Senate. Given adequate information, the staff will personalize these documents to fit particular situations. LSC accepts requests for these documents either in writing using a resolution drafting request form or via the Internet through the LSC website.

The format of these documents is uniform. The paper on which letters of commendation or condolence and President's letters are printed is provided directly to LSC by the House of Representatives and the Senate. After adoption by the House or Senate, or both, honorary simple and concurrent resolutions are printed by the appropriate House or Senate Clerk.

The use of the letter or resolution format is a matter of not only member preference but also House or Senate policy or rule. The House and Senate leadership adopt guidelines governing the topics for and the procedures under which members may issue such documents. Typically, letters of commendation or condolence and President's letters are used to recognize individuals, groups, or events of local or district-wide importance, and honorary simple resolutions are reserved for matters of greater significance or statewide impact. Honorary concurrent resolutions are reserved for only those matters that are of significance to both houses. The staff drafted more than 51,000 letters and about 975 resolutions during the 130th General Assembly.

Legislative Information Office (LIO)

LSC staff assigned to the Legislative Information Office answer questions or take messages for legislators from constituents who call on two general legislative information telephone lines. Callers typically seek information about bill status, committee schedules, members' telephone numbers and addresses, and use of the legislative website. If constituents want to request assistance from their legislators or express opinions, or if they request information beyond what the LIO can provide, the staff forward messages to the appropriate legislators' offices by email. The toll-free legislative information number for calls within Ohio is 1-800-282-0253, and the local number is 614-466-8842.

Program Evaluation

The LSC staff provide assistance to legislative program evaluation committees. These committees are occasionally appointed by the Commission to evaluate legislatively mandated programs to determine if the programs are meeting legislative goals in an effective and efficient manner.

Library Services

The LSC library is available to all members and legislative staff. The library, located on the ninth floor of the Riffe Center, has a specialized collection of materials and resources to meet the needs of the General Assembly. Staffed by professional librarians, the library offers a wide variety of support

services to members. Librarians assist members and staff in using the library collection. They also prepare bibliographies, respond to reference questions, locate and provide copies of periodical and newspaper articles, and arrange to borrow materials from other libraries. The library collection includes books, periodicals, historical legislative documents, legal publications, newspapers, and an extensive vertical file including news articles and miscellaneous information categorized by subject. The library also maintains many reports issued by legislative committees, other state agencies, the federal government, and private organizations that focus on public affairs.

Legislative Fellowship Program

LSC conducts the Ohio Legislative Fellowship Program which employs about 24 college graduates each year in full-time, 13-month positions. The objective of this longstanding and nationally recognized program is to provide additional staff assistance to members of the General Assembly and attract exceptional college graduates to public service in a legislative environment. The administration of the program by the nonpartisan LSC staff ensures that selection is based on an individual's qualifications rather than on partisan affiliations or activities. Program information is available on the LSC website at: www.lsc.ohio.gov/fellowship.

Legislative Training

The LSC staff provide training in the legislative process to all members elected to the General Assembly as well as to legislative staff as they are hired throughout a session. LSC's New Member Orientation Program provides training for members and is normally conducted in late November or early December of even-numbered years. Training for new legislative staff is offered through online training courses developed in-house by LSC staff.

LSC Statehouse Office

On legislative session days and days when committees are meeting, the LSC staff operate an office in the Statehouse where legislators, legislative staff, and the public may obtain copies of bills, analyses, fiscal notes, and similar legislative documents. The office is located at the north side of the ground level of the Statehouse next to the Education Center.

Many persons serving in legislative and executive staff positions in Ohio and the federal government, many lobbyists, and several elected officials in Ohio, including the current governor, started their careers as LSC legislative fellows.

Administrative Support Services

The LSC staff provide many centralized support services to special legislative committees and projects. The LSC fiscal and personnel office processes and pays the salaries and invoices associated with the daily operation of the Legislative Information Systems Office, the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission, and the Correctional Institution Inspection Committee. The LSC Director also administers and enforces contracts that are entered into occasionally in association with special legislative projects undertaken by the General Assembly in conjunction with universities, state agencies, or private institutions or consultants. In addition, the LSC Director has responsibility for adopting and implementing a salary schedule that is applicable to all LSC, LIS, and CIIC staff.

Publications

LSC issues several publications for use by members. In addition to the session-related documents described in Chapter 5, LSC produces the following publications:

Budget Footnotes. Every month except August, LSC publishes a newsletter, *Budget Footnotes*, which tracks the economy and General Revenue Fund receipts and expenditures and provides information on budget topics of interest to the General Assembly. It is available on the LSC website at the "Publications" link.

Ohio Facts. LSC produces a biennial publication, *Ohio Facts*, that provides a broad overview of public finance in Ohio and addresses many frequently asked questions. LSC sends a copy of *Ohio Facts* to each member of the General Assembly and posts it on the LSC website.

School Funding by District Website. Ohio law requires LSC and LIS to maintain a website to present historical school district revenue, spending, and enrollment data in graphic format. The website, which is updated annually, can be accessed at www.legislature.ohio.gov at the “Education Topics” link.

Other Publications. The LSC staff occasionally undertake a special publication project. For example, LSC publishes this *Guidebook* for use by members and other persons interested in learning more about the legislative process and the Ohio General Assembly. LSC also publishes *Members Only* informational briefs, which are brief summaries of various issues that LSC determines may be of general interest to members. The *Members Only* brief, “Operation of Bicycles on Roads and Highways,” is an example. Copies of these special publications are available on the LSC website.

Restrictions on LSC Staff Services and Activities

Since the services provided by the LSC staff are extended to all members of the General Assembly on a nonpartisan basis, the staff may not provide certain types of staff services that might be perceived as political in nature. For the same reason, LSC staff may not engage in activities that would raise questions as to their ability to remain neutral and objective on issues, both inside and outside the office.

Examples of such prohibited activities include:

- Writing speeches, press releases, or newspaper columns for members;
- Soliciting cosponsors for legislation;
- Preparing committee testimony;
- Actively participating in political campaigns;
- Attending fund-raising events for candidates or issues;
- Circulating petitions for candidates or issues;

- Distributing campaign literature;
- Writing articles or letters for publication regarding any candidate or issue;
- Engaging in or performing any activities that could be perceived as partisan or cast doubt on their ability to function in a nonpartisan and objective manner.

Because of the nonpartisan restrictions placed on LSC staff, the 14 legislative members of the Commission have delegated staffing decisions to the LSC Director and have taken a hands-off approach to the day-to-day management of the staff. The LSC Director has responsibility for the hiring and assignment of staff, as well as all other aspects of staff management such as evaluation of work, promotion, discipline, and dismissal of staff. The LSC Director determines the number and type of staff necessary to perform the various services required by the Commission and is responsible for the preparation of LSC’s biennial budget for consideration by the Commission.

Confidentiality of Information

Requests for bills, amendments, research, and other staff services made to LSC are confidential under section 101.30 of the Revised Code. The LSC staff may not inform a member of the General Assembly of work being performed for any other member. Frequently, an LSC staff person must contact a state agency or association for information needed to complete an assignment for a member. In these situations, the staff person will not reveal to whom the information will be provided or why the information is being requested.

When a member of the General Assembly files a bill or resolution for introduction, that legislative document ceases to be confidential and becomes a public record. Likewise, when a member presents an amendment or substitute bill or resolution to a committee or at a floor session, or when a member otherwise releases to the public any other confidential legislative document, it becomes a public record. When the law or rules of the General Assembly require LSC staff to prepare an analysis, synopsis, fiscal note, or local impact statement for the benefit of members, the document becomes public upon presentation to the members.

Requesting a Bill Draft

The LSC staff have the subject matter knowledge, research skills, and technical bill drafting skills needed to translate members' ideas for legislation into bills for introduction. However, the LSC staff may draft bills only upon the request of a member or a member's aide acting on behalf of (and with the knowledge of) the member. An LSC-drafted bill should include only those provisions that are necessary to comply with the member's request and to conform with proper bill drafting requirements.

Occasionally, a legislator may request the LSC staff to draft a bill according to instructions received from another person or an interest group. In these instances, the staff will draft the bill in accordance with those instructions, but the completed draft will be sent to the legislator. While legislators should carefully review all bill drafts prior to introduction, this is especially true of drafts prepared pursuant to instructions received from a third party.

Any LSC staff person may accept bill drafting requests, but all requests are forwarded to the Director for assignment to one of several groups. A legislator may contact the Director or the Director's secretary/assignment clerk by email, written memo, or telephone to request a draft. Each LSC staff person is assigned to a particular work group within LSC that specializes in specific issues and subject areas. Each group is headed by a senior staff person (group leader). After considering staff workloads and the complexity of the assignment, the group leader will assign a legislator's request to an appropriate staff person within the group.

LSC staff receive bill drafting requests in various forms. Some are quite explicit; others merely describe a problem the legislator wants to resolve or an objective the legislator wants to achieve. Frequently, there is a need for further communication between the legislator and the staff. A staff person who is unsure about what a member wants a bill to contain or the manner in which

an objective should be achieved is expected to contact the member for clarification and direction. Occasionally, a staff person may become aware of a potential problem or may discover some information the member might not have known at the time the member requested the bill. In these instances, the staff person will contact the member, relay the information, and determine if the member wants to modify the bill draft request. After the member informs the staff person how to proceed, the bill will be drafted in accordance with the member's instructions.

Timing. LSC staff are instructed to attempt to complete routine bill drafts within two weeks after the requests are received. However, that goal is not always realistic. The complexity of a bill, office workload, unusually heavy workloads of individual staff, committee work, changing legislative priorities, and similar factors all affect LSC's ability to meet deadlines.

Generally, bills are drafted in the order in which they are received by the staff person assigned to draft them. Occasionally, however, a legislator may need a bill drafted by a specific date. Members may discuss such a request with any staff person, who then will forward the request to the LSC Director. Only the Director may make a commitment to complete a bill draft by a specific date because several persons must be notified and involved in meeting priority requests. For example, the drafter, reviewer, legal and technical reviewers, and typists, all must often reschedule their work in order to meet a single priority request. Therefore, requests for early completion of work should be reserved for unusual situations.

Review process. Every bill drafted by LSC receives a three-part review before being forwarded to the legislator who requested it. Once drafted, a bill is forwarded to an LSC group leader who reviews the draft to determine whether it includes

Members' requests to LSC for bills, amendments, and research are confidential.

LSC staff draft bills only upon the request of a member or a member's aide acting on behalf of a member. Members may direct bill draft requests to the LSC staff, the Director, or the Director's secretary/assignment clerk.

all relevant sections of law and clearly accomplishes what was requested. After this initial review of the bill's content, the draft receives a review as to form by the LSC legal review and technical services (LRTS) division. The purposes of this second review are to make sure that the formal parts of the bill (title, enacting clause, and repeal

clause) are structured properly and list all necessary Revised Code sections; that the correct and most current Revised Code sections are included in the body of the bill; and that any Revised Code cross references and division identifications within the text of the draft are accurate. This formal review helps LSC to fulfill its obligation to maintain the laws in an orderly and uniform manner. Finally, an attorney on the LRTS staff performs a third review to identify possible legal problems. If any problems are identified, it is the responsibility of the drafter to alert the member requesting the draft.

After all reviews are complete, LSC processes the draft and forwards it to the appropriate legislator. Bills drafted for the General Assembly (except for budget bills) are composed using an electronic drafting system known as the State of Ohio Legislative Application Repository (SOLAR). Drafts completed in SOLAR are assigned a unique bar code and delivered to the members electronically. If the legislator wants to make changes to the draft, the drafting and review process is repeated. A bill draft that is satisfactory to the legislator may be filed for introduction with the appropriate House or Senate Clerk's office. At that point, the Clerk assigns a bill number that will remain with and identify the bill throughout the two-year legislative session.

Questions and revisions. After receiving and reading a bill draft, a member may have questions about its content or operation. Initial questions should be directed to the staff person who drafted the bill since that person is most familiar with it. A completed bill draft is emailed to a member with a

LSC staff prepared about 4,800 bill drafts and responded to approximately 5,200 research requests for the 130th General Assembly. Each session staff workload also includes staffing committees and drafting about 18,000 other documents – amendments, synopses, fiscal notes and local impact statements, and bill analyses.

brief message identifying the staff persons who drafted and reviewed it. Sometimes the bill draft is accompanied by a cover letter from the drafter, attached to the delivery email. If there is no such message or letter, a member can determine who drafted the bill by contacting the LSC Director's secretary/assignment clerk. After discussing the bill with

the drafter, a member may request changes and the bill will be redrafted accordingly.

When a bill is submitted to the appropriate Clerk for introduction, the Clerk scans the bar code on the bottom of the bill's pages. This scan enables the Clerk to electronically access the version of the bill stored in LSC's confidential files within the SOLAR drafting system. Therefore, no change, however insignificant, should be made in a bill without processing it through LSC. If a change is not entered into SOLAR by LSC, the change will not appear in subsequent versions of the bill as the bill moves through the legislative process.

Services From National Organizations

National Conference of State Legislatures

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), founded in 1975, is an organization that serves legislators and their staffs from the states and other U.S. jurisdictions. It is funded mainly through membership dues from the states and other U.S. jurisdictions and is governed by a 63-member Executive Committee.

NCSL's basic objectives are to improve the quality and effectiveness of state legislatures and legislative staff; to promote policy innovation and communication among state legislatures; and to ensure that state legislatures have a strong, cohesive voice in the federal system. NCSL maintains offices in Denver and Washington, D.C.

In addition to holding an annual legislative summit, at which legislators and staff from various states meet to discuss common problems and define goals and positions on issues facing the states, NCSL provides several ongoing services. It holds a national forum and conducts seminars and webinars on various issues. NCSL also monitors the various actions states take in dealing with certain issues and acts as a central clearinghouse for such information. It provides access to a searchable 50-state legislation database and issues several publications, including the monthly magazine *State Legislatures*, to all legislators and staff. Most information published by NCSL is available in the LSC library.

The Ohio General Assembly pays its membership dues to belong to NCSL through an appropriation to LSC. Ohio's membership automatically extends NCSL membership to all members and staff of the House and Senate. More information about NCSL and its services is available on its website, www.ncsl.org.

Council of State Governments

The Council of State Governments (CSG) is another national organization to which Ohio belongs. While NCSL represents only legislative bodies, CSG represents a wide range of state officials and is dedicated to addressing the needs of all three branches of state government—executive, legislative, and judicial.

CSG is a nonprofit, regionally based national organization that collects and distributes information, promotes interstate cooperation, and works to improve state administration and management. Its purposes are to build leadership skills, advocate multi-state problem solving and partnerships, prepare states for the future, and promote the sovereignty and role of states in the federal system. The organization's national office is in Lexington, Kentucky. CSG also has a federal affairs office in Washington, D.C. and four regional offices (in New York City, Atlanta, Sacramento, and Chicago) that support regional associations of states. Ohio is in the Midwestern Legislative Conference, which includes 11 state legislatures and legislatures of several affiliate-member Canadian provinces.

A Governing Board and Executive Committee oversee the business affairs and policy and program development of CSG. Together, the Governing Board and Executive Committee are the main decision-making body to which all other CSG committees, task forces, regions, affiliates, and staff report. The Governing Board includes the governor and two legislators from each of the 50 states and five territories. Traditionally, the president of CSG is a governor and the chairperson is a state legislator.

The Council publishes the bi-monthly periodical *Capitol Ideas*; the reference publication, *Book of the States*; the compilation, *Suggested State Legislation*; and a variety of other reference works, state directories, periodicals, research reports, and newsletters. Copies of many of the publications are available in the LSC library and on the CSG website, www.csg.org.

The Council receives financial support from each state as well as revenues from other sources such as grants and sales of publications. The Ohio General Assembly pays state membership dues through an appropriation to LSC. Ohio's membership entitles all legislators to individual CSG membership.

American Legislative Exchange Council

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) is a public affairs and research organization that serves a membership composed of state legislators, business organizations, and foundations. ALEC members share a commitment to ideas based upon competition in the marketplace, free enterprise, limited government, federalism, and individual liberties. Through its task forces on various public policy issues, state legislators and private sector individuals work together to produce issue reports and model legislation. The organization also conducts conferences and workshops on public policy issues.

ALEC is headed by a National Board of Directors, consisting of state legislators, and includes a Private Enterprise Advisory Council, composed of persons from the private sector. Additionally, at least one legislator in each state

holds a position as state chairperson. These boards meet regularly to manage ALEC's business.

ALEC publishes a monthly newsletter, *Inside ALEC*; occasional research papers under the title *The State Factor*; and *ALEC Policy Forum*, a collection of research and policy articles reprinted from the monthly newsletter. Model legislation, developed by the members and approved by a task force, is also published on its website, www.alec.org, but generally is accessible only to members. Some publications from ALEC are available in the LSC library.

The organization holds two major meetings each year, the annual meeting in the summer and the States and Nation Policy Summit in November or December. ALEC task forces also meet at other times. ALEC's office is in Washington, D.C.

The Ohio General Assembly pays membership dues to ALEC through an appropriation to LSC. However, Ohio's membership does not extend to individual legislators. Legislators who wish to join ALEC as individuals must pay their own membership dues.

Other Organizations

Ohio has participated in other national organizations that provide legislative services. Two focus on leadership: the State Legislative Leaders Foundation, an organization that provides state legislative leaders with information on public policy issues and aspects of leadership through meetings, educational programs, and publications; and the Senate Presidents' Forum, an organization that hosts policy roundtables and other events for state Senate presidents. The third association, the National Conference of Insurance Legislators, consists of state legislators whose main area of public policy concern is insurance legislation and regulation. More information about the State Legislative Leaders Foundation and the National Conference of Insurance Legislators can be found at their websites: www.sllf.org and www.ncoil.org.