

---

# Wisconsin Legislative Council

Anne Sappenfield  
Director



## **PUBLIC MEMBER SERVICE ON STUDY COMMITTEES**

### **What is the Wisconsin Joint Legislative Council?**

The Wisconsin Joint Legislative Council is a 22-member legislative committee established by state law. All of the legislative leadership, as well as additional legislators, are members of the Joint Legislative Council. The president of the Senate and the speaker of the Assembly, or their appointees, serve as its co-chairs. The Joint Legislative Council is served by the Legislative Council staff, a nonpartisan legislative agency that provides legal services and policy research for legislators and the committees of the Legislature.\*

### **What are Legislative Council Study Committees?**

In the spring of each even-numbered year, the Joint Legislative Council selects a number of subjects for study from suggestions submitted by members of the Legislature. Often these topics are issues that are difficult to resolve in the regular course of legislative business or that legislators feel require further consideration prior to the introduction of legislation. Each subject is appointed a study committee comprised of legislative and public members with expertise or interest in the issue. The study committees are chaired by legislators. Each committee is charged by the Joint Legislative Council to study its issue and recommend legislative solutions as needed.

### **What is the Role of a Public Member on a Study Committee?**

If you are selected to serve on a study committee as a public member, it is because you represent an interest in the topic of the study committee. An effective public member will prepare for each study committee meeting by reading any memos prepared for or documents provided to the study committee members. You will generally receive these materials one week before each meeting.

Study committees generally meet from three to six times during the interim (the summer and fall of the even-numbered year). Committee meetings are in-person meetings and are typically held in Madison. The meetings usually begin mid-morning and continue into the late afternoon.

Each study committee is staffed by attorneys or analysts and an administrative assistant from the Legislative Council staff. They are resources for public members who have any questions about the committee's work or how to effectively participate in the committee.

### **Why Serve as a Public Member of a Legislative Council Study Committee?**

The study committees provide a unique opportunity for the public to become directly involved in the formulation of public policy. Public members not only participate in meetings and provide their perspective on the issues; they also vote on the proposals intended to resolve these issues. Although public members are not paid for their participation on the study committees, they are entitled to receive

---

\* s. 13.81, Stats.

reimbursement for certain travel expenses, including mileage, parking, meals, and overnight stays, if necessary.

## **How Does One Become a Public Member of a Legislative Council Study Committee?**

A list of study committees is available on the Legislative Council staff [website](#). Anyone who would like to participate as a public member of one of these committees, may fill out the [online nomination form](#). If you are unable to complete the form or have questions about it, please email [legislative.council@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:legislative.council@legis.wisconsin.gov).