

REVENUE: No revenue impact
FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued
SUBSEQUENT REFERRAL TO: Ways and Means

Action:

Vote:

Yeas:

Nays:

Exc.:

Prepared By: Erin Seiler, Administrator

Meeting Dates: 2/16

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Establishes the Joint Legislative Policy and Research Committee (JLPRC). Outlines committee membership including Senate President and Speaker of the House, and allows appointment of alternates. Directs that committee members be appointed within 30 days after date of convening each odd-numbered session. Directs committee to employ Legislative Policy and Research director and fix director's annual salary. Outlines director's responsibilities including: 1) prepare or assist in preparing legislative research and facilitate development of policy when requested to do so by member or legislative committee; 2) provide advice and assistance to committees; 3) supervise support of clerical and administrative services to session and interim committee including ensuring adequacy of staff; and, 4) provide research facilities and services to members and committees. Permits director to employ professional staff and other employees. Establishes that expiration of members' term on JLPRC does not affect employment of individuals previously approved by committee. Allows director to employ and fix compensation of staff between start of odd-numbered year session until such time when newly appointed committee may provide otherwise. Establishes that President and Speaker may jointly appoint new director if vacancy occurs. Transfers some duties of Legislative Administration Committee (LAC) to JLPRC. Requires JLPRC or director to adhere to laws applicable to other legislative branch agencies including public records and statement of economic interest filings. Transfers financial estimate committee and explanatory statement committee duties from LAC to JLPRC. Transfers current committee and task force staffing from LAC to JLPRC. Declares an emergency; effective upon passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

-1 amendment: Makes specific sections of the bill operative on July 1, 2017.

-3 amendment: Specifies composition of Joint Legislative Policy and Research Committee to be equal number of majority and minority party members including the Speaker and President. Establishes that the committee is appointed by Speaker and President and that a new committee is appointed within 30 days after each odd-numbered year session is convened.

BACKGROUND: In 2014-15, a bipartisan group of legislators representing the House and Senate participated in several work group meetings with the assistance of an outside consultants. The work group examined and discussed models for improving the legislature's policy capacity. Interviews with members and round table discussions with staff also took place. The results, discussion and several models for consideration were outlined in a report, "Options for a Legislative Research and Policy Office."