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## UNITS OF STATE GOVERNMENT



# THE LEGISLATURE

## Officers of the Senate

**President:** Chris Kapenga

**President pro tempore:** Patrick Testin

**Majority leader:** Devin LeMahieu

**Assistant majority leader:** Dan Feyen

**Majority caucus chair:** Van H. Wanggaard

**Majority caucus vice chair:** Joan Ballweg

**Minority leader:** Melissa Agard

**Assistant minority leader:** Jeff Smith

**Minority caucus chair:** Chris Larson

**Minority caucus vice chair:** Dianne H. Hesselbein

**Chief clerk:** Michael Queensland

**Sergeant at arms:** Tom Engels

## Officers of the Assembly

**Speaker:** Robin J. Vos

**Speaker pro tempore:** Kevin Petersen

**Majority leader:** Tyler August

**Assistant majority leader:** Jon Plumer

**Majority caucus chair:** Rob Summerfield

**Majority caucus vice chair:** Cindi Duchow

**Majority caucus secretary:** Nancy VanderMeer

**Majority caucus sergeant at arms:** Treig E. Pronschinske

**Minority leader:** Greta Neubauer

**Assistant minority leader:** Kalan Haywood

**Minority caucus chair:** Lisa Subeck

**Minority caucus vice chair:** Jill Billings

**Minority caucus secretary:** Kristina M. Shelton

**Minority caucus sergeant at arms:** Lee Snodgrass

**Chief clerk:** Edward A. Blazel

**Sergeant at arms:** Anne Tonnon Byers

**Contact:** 608-266-9960; 800-362-9472 (toll free)

**Website:** [www.legis.wisconsin.gov](http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov)

**Number of employees:** 200 (senate, includes the 33 senators); 315 (assembly, includes the 99 representatives)

**Total budget 2021–23:** \$177,248,900 (includes the legislative service agencies)



BRENT NICASTRO, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

## Overview

Wisconsin's legislature makes the laws of the state. The legislature also controls the state's purse strings: no money can be paid out of the treasury unless the legislature enacts a law that specifically appropriates it. At the same time, the legislature is required to raise revenues sufficient to pay for the state's expenditures, and it is required to audit the state's accounts. The legislature can remove any elective office holder in state government, including the governor, from office for wrongdoing. It can also remove a judge or supreme court justice from office for any reason that, in its judgment, warrants it. The legislature can override the governor's veto of legislation. Finally, the legislature has charge of the two avenues by which the Wisconsin Constitution can be amended: the legislature can propose amendments for the people to vote on, and it can set in motion the process for calling a constitutional convention.

The legislature has two houses: the senate and the assembly. The senate is composed of 33 senators, each elected for a four-year term from a different senate district. The assembly is composed of 99 representatives, each elected for a two-year term from a different assembly district. Each senate district comprises the combined territory of three assembly districts. Elections are held in November of each



The 2023 Wisconsin Legislature convenes on January 3, 2023. Members take their oath of office on the bible used to swear in Henry Dodge as the first governor of the Wisconsin Territory in July 1836.

even-numbered year. The terms of 17 senate seats expire in alternate even-numbered years from the terms of the other 16. If a midterm vacancy occurs in the office of senator or representative, it is filled through a special election called by the governor.

A new legislature is sworn in to office in January of each odd-numbered year, and it meets in continuous session for the full biennium until its successor is convened. The 2023 legislature is the 106th Wisconsin Legislature. It convened on January 3, 2023, and will continue until January 3, 2025.

## Apparatus for conducting business

**Rules.** The Wisconsin Constitution prescribes a number of specific procedural requirements for the legislature (for example, that each house must keep and publish a journal of its proceedings and that a roll call vote, rather than a voice vote, must be taken in certain circumstances). For the most part, however, the legislature determines for itself the manner in which it conducts its business. Each house of the legislature has adopted rules that codify its own practices, and the two houses have adopted joint rules that deal with relations between the houses and administrative proceedings common to both. Either house can change its own rules by passing a resolution, and the two houses can change the joint rules by passing a joint resolution.

**Officers.** Each house elects from among its members a presiding officer and an officer to stand in for the presiding officer as needed. The presiding officer or stand-in chairs the house's meetings and authenticates the house's acts, orders, and proceedings. In the senate, these officers are the president and president pro tempore; in the assembly, they are the speaker and speaker pro tempore.

Each house also elects two individuals who are not legislators to serve as the house's chief clerk and sergeant at arms. The chief clerk is the clerk for the house's meetings. The chief clerk also manages the house's paperwork, records, and general operations. The sergeant at arms maintains order in and about the house's meeting chamber and supervises the house's messengers.

Within each house, the members from each political party organize as a caucus and elect officers to coordinate their activity. The majority leader and assistant majority leader and the minority leader and the assistant minority leaders are their party's respective leaders.

The senate majority leader and the assembly speaker play major, and roughly parallel, roles in guiding the activities of their houses as a result of special responsibilities that the rules in their houses assign to their offices. These responsibilities include appointing the members of committees, determining what business will

Assembly Speaker Robin Vos (*top right*), serving as the assembly's presiding officer for his sixth session, addresses his fellow representatives during a floor session. Vos is the longest-serving assembly speaker in state history. Speaker Pro Tempore Kevin Petersen (*bottom left*) consults with Assembly Chief Clerk Ted Blazel (*bottom right*).





(BOTH PHOTOS) GREG ANDERSON, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

Senate President Chris Kapenga (*left*) confers with Senate Chief Clerk Michael Queensland (*right*). Senate President Pro Tempore Patrick Testin (*far right*) presides over floor session. Each house in the legislature elects presiding officers who ensure that business is conducted in accordance with the chamber's adopted rules.

be scheduled for the house's meetings, and making staffing and budget decisions for the house's operations.

**Committees.** The legislature does much of its work in committees. Legislative committees study proposed legislation to determine whether it should be given further consideration by the houses. They review the performance and expenditures of state agencies. And they conduct inquiries to inform the public and the legislature about important issues facing the state.

Each committee is assigned a general area of responsibility or a particular matter to look into and, within the scope of its assignment, can hold hearings to gather information and executive sessions (deliberative meetings) to decide what recommendations and reports it will make. Some committees can do more than make recommendations and reports. (For example, the Joint Committee on Finance can approve requests from state agencies for supplemental funding.) With rare exceptions, all committee proceedings are open to the public.

Each house has its own committees, and the two houses together have joint committees. Usually, every member of the legislature serves on at least one committee. Each house committee includes members from the two major political parties, but more of the members are from the majority party. On a joint com-

mittee, which includes members from both houses, more of the members from each house are from the majority party in that house. For some members on some committees, membership is automatic and based on another office that they hold (ex officio membership), but otherwise, committee members are appointed. The senate majority leader and the assembly speaker make the appointments in their respective houses but honor the nominations of the minority leader for the minority party appointments. They also designate the committee chairs and the joint committee cochairs, except when those positions are held ex officio.

The standing committees in each house operate through the legislature's entire biennial session. They are created under or pursuant to the rules of the house and consist exclusively of legislators from the house. Most of the standing committees have responsibility for one or more specific subject areas—for example, “transportation” or “health.” However, the Committee on Senate Organization has organizational responsibilities: it schedules and determines the agendas for the senate's meetings, and it decides matters pertaining to the senate's personnel,

Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu and Senate Minority Leader Melissa Agard, the Republican and Democratic Parties' respective leaders, chat while the senate stands “informal”—the official term for a temporary suspension of proceedings.



GREG ANDERSON, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER



JOE KOSHOLLEK, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER



GREG ANDERSON, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

In January 2023, Representative Tyler August (*left*) stepped into a new role as assembly majority leader after serving as the assembly's speaker pro tempore for five sessions. Representative Greta Neubauer (*right*) continues to serve as assembly minority leader for a second session.

expenditures, and general operations. In the assembly, these organizational responsibilities fall, respectively, to the Assembly Committee on Rules and the Committee on Assembly Organization.

In addition to the standing committees in the houses, there are 10 joint standing committees, which likewise operate through the entire biennial session. These committees are created in the statutes rather than under the legislature's rules. Three of these committees include nonlegislators in addition to the legislators from both houses.

Special committees can also be appointed in either house or by the two houses jointly. Committees of this type are created to study a problem or conduct an investigation and report their findings to the house or the legislature. Special committees cease to exist when they have completed their assignments.

**Meetings.** Early in the biennial session, the legislature adopts a joint resolution to establish its session schedule. The session schedule specifies the floorperiods for the session. A floorperiod is a day or span of days that is reserved for meetings of the full houses. Committees can meet on any day, but generally do not meet on days when one or more of the full houses are meeting. When a house meets during a floorperiod, it meets in regular session.

The legislature can also call itself into extraordinary session for any day or span of days. The call requires a majority vote of the members of the committee on organization in each house, the adoption of a joint resolution in both houses,



or a joint petition signed by a majority of the members of each house. In addition, the call must specify what business can be considered during the session. An extraordinary session can have the effect of extending a floorperiod so that it begins earlier or ends later than originally scheduled. An extraordinary session can also overlap a floorperiod, and a house can meet in extraordinary session and in regular session at different times during the same day.

The governor can call the legislature into special session at any time. When the legislature convenes in special session, it can act only upon the matters specified in the governor's call. Special sessions can occur during floorperiods and during extraordinary sessions, and a house can meet in special session and in regular or extraordinary session at different times during the same day.

**Notices and records.** Each house issues a calendar for each of its meetings. The calendar lists the business that the house will consider at the meeting.

The legislature publishes on the Internet a schedule of committee activities that indicates the time, place, and business scheduled for each committee meeting.

Each house keeps a record of its actions known as the daily journal.

The legislature issues the *Bulletin of the Proceedings of the Wisconsin Legislature* periodically during the biennial session. Each issue contains a cumulative record of actions taken on bills, resolutions, and joint resolutions; information on administrative rule changes; and a listing of statutes affected by acts.

**Employees.** Each house employs staff for its members and staff to take care of general administrative matters. In addition, the legislature maintains five service agencies to provide it with legal advice; bill drafting services; budgetary, economic, and fiscal analysis; public policy analysis; research and information services; committee staffing; auditing services; and information technology services.

## How a bill becomes a law

A bill is a formal document that proposes to make a new law or change an existing law. For a bill to become a law, two things must happen: (1) the bill must be enacted—that is, it must be passed in identical form by both houses of the legislature and either agreed to by the governor or passed again with a two-thirds vote by both houses over the governor's veto, and (2) the enacted bill must be published.

**First reading.** A bill takes the first step toward becoming a law when a member or committee of the legislature introduces it in the house of the member or committee. This is done by filing the bill with the chief clerk. The chief clerk then assigns the bill its bill number (for example, Assembly Bill 15), and the presiding officer refers the bill to a standing committee or joint standing committee. Upon referral to committee, the bill is introduced.

A bill must be given three readings on three different days before the house can pass it. Each reading is followed by a different stage in the house's deliberation process. Introduction and referral to committee are considered a bill's first reading and are followed by committee review.

**Committee review.** When a bill is referred to a committee, it remains in the committee until the committee reports it out to the house, the bill is rereferred, or the house acts to withdraw it. The committee chair (or cochairs in a joint committee) determines whether the committee will meet to consider a bill and, if so, whether it will hold a hearing or an executive session or both. In the senate, though not in the assembly, a bill that has not received a public hearing cannot be placed on the calendar for a meeting of the full house unless the Committee on Senate Organization waives the public hearing requirement. And in both houses, a committee cannot report out a bill to the house unless it holds an executive session.

A committee holds a hearing on a bill to gather information from the public at large or from specifically invited persons. A committee holds an executive session on a bill to decide what recommendation it will make to the house. The committee can recommend passage of the bill as originally introduced, passage of the bill with amendments, passage of a substitute amendment, or rejection of the bill. Unless it recommends rejection, the committee reports out the bill, together with its recommendation, to the house. In limited circumstances (such as a tie vote), a committee can report out a bill without a recommendation.

If a bill is reported out by a committee, or if it is withdrawn from a committee by the house, it is generally sent to the house's scheduling committee—the Committee on Senate Organization or the Assembly Committee on Rules, depending on the house of origin—so that it can be scheduled for consideration at a meeting of that house. Sometimes, however, a bill is referred to another committee for that committee to review. In such cases, the bill remains in that other committee, just as it did in the previous committee, until it is reported out or withdrawn.

**Scheduling.** A bill that reaches a scheduling committee cannot advance further unless the scheduling committee schedules it for a meeting of the house or the house acts to withdraw it. The scheduling committee, however, is not required to schedule the bill for a meeting of the house. If the house withdraws a bill from the scheduling committee, the bill is automatically scheduled for a future meeting of the house. (In the senate, it is placed on the calendar for the senate's next succeeding meeting; in the assembly, it is placed on the calendar for the assembly's second succeeding meeting.) If a bill is scheduled for a meeting of the house, it can be given its second reading at that meeting.

**Second reading.** A bill's second reading is a formal announcement that the chief clerk makes just prior to the house considering the bill. Following this



GREG ANDERSON, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

(from left) Representatives Jodi Emerson, Lee Snodgrass (minority caucus sergeant at arms), Jill Billings (minority caucus vice chair), and Kristina Shelton (minority caucus secretary) socialize before the assembly is called to order during a January floor session.

announcement, the house debates and votes on amendments and substitute amendments to the bill (any that the standing committee recommended and any that are offered by members). This stage ends if the house votes affirmatively to engross the bill. Such a vote means that the house has decided on the final form that the bill will take and is ready to consider passage of the bill in that final form. According to the house rules, the house cannot proceed to consider passage until the bill has been given its third reading—and this must be done on a different day. However, and this is often the case, the house can suspend this restriction by a unanimous voice vote or a two-thirds roll call vote. If the house suspends the restriction, the house may immediately proceed to the bill's third reading. If the house does not suspend the restriction, the bill is scheduled for a future meeting of the house. (In the senate, it is placed on the calendar for the senate's next succeeding meeting; in the assembly, it is placed on the calendar for the assembly's second succeeding meeting.)

**Third reading.** A bill's third reading, like its second, is a formal announcement that the chief clerk makes just prior to the house considering the bill. Following this announcement, the house debates whether the bill, in its final form previously determined by the house, should be passed. Members can speak only for or against passage; no further amendments can be offered. When debate on the bill



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Senator LaTonya Johnson rises to speak as Senator Brad Pfaff listens in. Floor debate provides legislators with the opportunity to command all of their colleagues' attention.

ends, the members of the house vote. If the house passes the bill, it is ready to be messaged to the other house. Messaging occurs automatically following a reconsideration period specified in the rules of the house unless, within that period, the house chooses to reconsider its action in passing the bill. (In the senate, the reconsideration period extends through the senate's next meeting; in the assembly, it extends through the seventh order of business at the assembly's next meeting.) Generally, only a member who voted for passage can make a motion for reconsideration. Alternatively, the house can suspend its rules to message

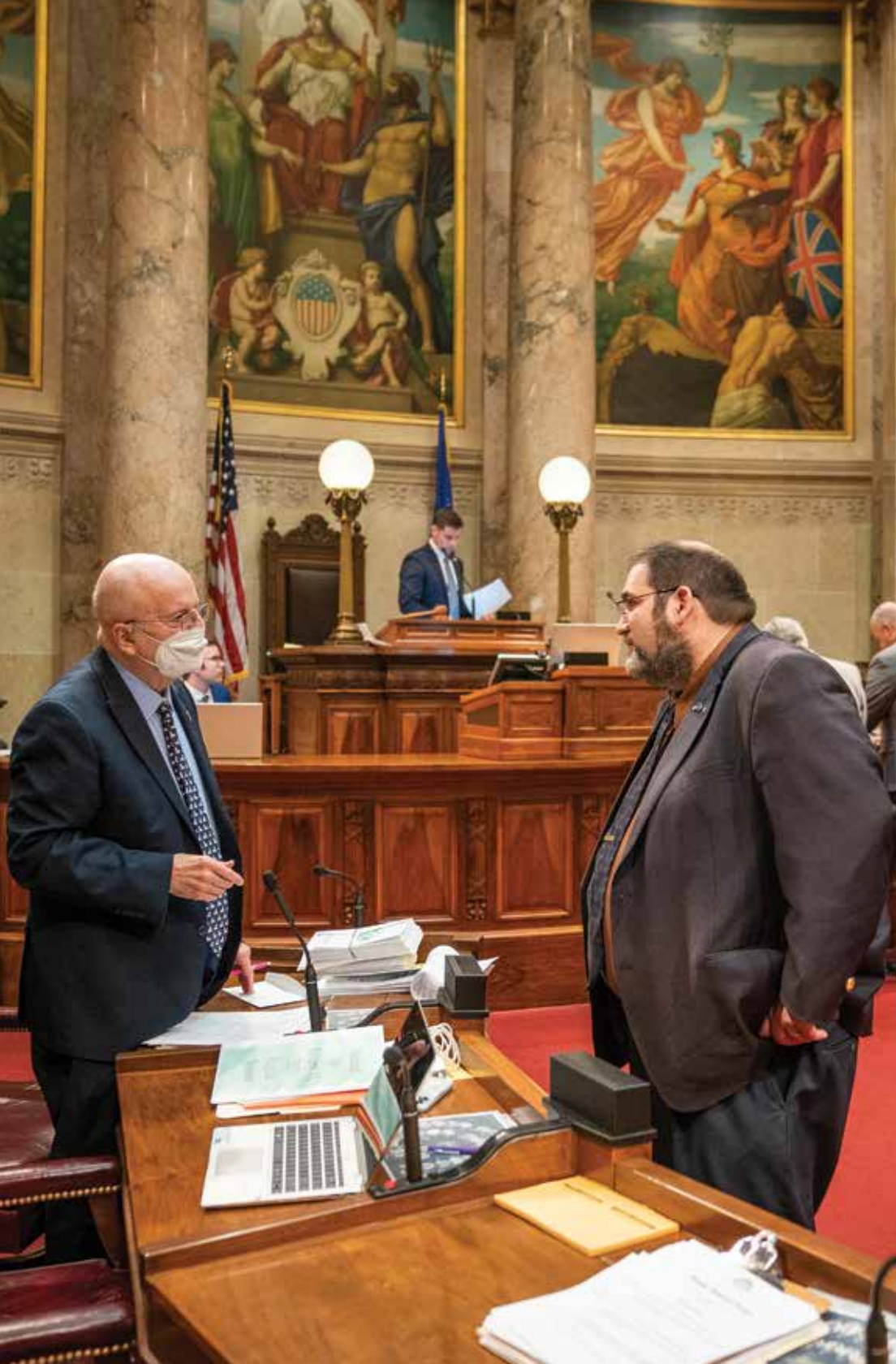
the bill immediately, by a unanimous voice vote or a two-thirds roll call vote.

**Action in the second house.** When the bill is received in the other house, it goes through substantially the same process as in the first house. If the second house ultimately passes the bill, which it can do with or without additional amendments, it messages the bill back to the house of origin.

**Subsequent action in the houses.** If the second house adopted additional amendments, the house of origin must determine whether it agrees to those amendments. If the house of origin rejects or amends the amendments, it can message the bill back to the second house. The houses can message the bill back and forth repeatedly until it has been passed in identical form by both houses. Alternatively, the houses can create a conference committee to develop a compromise version of the bill. If the conference committee proposes a compromise version, the houses can vote on it but cannot adopt additional amendments. The compromise version is considered in the second house first; if it passes in the second house, it is messaged to the house of origin.

**Action by the governor.** If a bill is passed in identical form by both houses, it

Senators Robert Wirch (*left*) and André Jacque (*right*) converse below two paintings by the artist Kenyon Cox (1856–1919). These and other works of art contribute to the grandeur of the senate chamber.





(ALL PHOTOS THIS PAGE) JOE KOSHOLLEK, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

The assembly chamber welcomed 24 new members in January 2023. Representative Ellen Schutt (*top left*) and Representative Alex Joers (*top right*), both former legislative aides, sign the assembly's official register on inauguration day. Following her maiden speech, Representative Lori Palmeri (*above*) receives congratulations from fellow newcomer Representative Amanda Nedweski. For legislators in both houses, speaking on the floor for the first time is an important rite of passage.

is sent to the governor. The governor has six days (excluding Sundays) in which to take action on a bill after receiving it. If the governor takes no action, the bill is enacted on the seventh day. If the governor signs the bill, the bill is enacted on the day it is signed. If the governor vetoes the bill, it goes back to the house of origin. If the governor signs the bill but vetoes part of it—which is permitted for appropriation bills—the signed part is enacted on the day it is signed, and the vetoed part goes back to the house of origin.

**Publication and effective date.** A bill or part of a bill that has been enacted is called an act. An act becomes a law when it is published in the manner prescribed by the legislature. The legislature has provided for the Legislative Reference Bureau to publish each act on the Internet the day after its date of enactment. An act goes into effect on the day after the Legislative Reference Bureau publishes the act, unless the act specifies that it goes into effect on a different date.

**Veto override.** A bill or part of a bill that the governor has vetoed can become a law if the legislature passes it again over the governor's veto. The procedure is different from when the bill was passed the first time. The only question considered is passage, and this question can be taken up immediately; the three-readings process is not repeated, and amendments cannot be offered. In addition, passage requires a two-thirds vote in each house, rather than a simple majority vote. Any action on a veto begins in the house of origin. If a vote is taken in the house of origin and two-thirds of the members present and voting agree to pass the vetoed bill or vetoed part of a bill, the bill or part is messaged to the other house. If a vote is taken in the second house and two-thirds of the members present and voting agree to pass the bill or part, the bill or part is enacted on the day the vote is taken. The enacted bill or part is then published and becomes a law in the same way as other acts. If either house fails to take a vote or to muster a two-thirds vote to override the veto, the bill or part advances no further, and the governor's veto stands.

## Senate standing committees

**Administrative Rules** Nass, *chair*; Stroebel, *vice chair*; Bradley; Roys, *ranking minority member*; Larson

**Agriculture and Tourism** Ballweg, *chair*; Tomczyk, *vice chair*; Marklein; Testin; Quinn; Pfaff, *ranking minority member*; Smith; Spreitzer

**Economic Development and Technical Colleges** Feyen, *chair*; Stafsholt, *vice chair*; Cowles; Knodl; Pfaff, *ranking minority member*; Taylor

**Education** Jagler, *chair*; Quinn, *vice chair*; Nass; Stroebel; Cabral-Guevara; Larson, *ranking minority member*; L. Johnson



GREG ANDERSON, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

During a January floor session, Senator Jeff Smith (assistant minority leader) converses with his freshman colleagues, Senators Jesse James and Cory Tomczyk.

**Finance** Marklein, *chair*; Stroebel, *vice chair*; Felzkowski; Ballweg; Testin; Wimberger; L. Johnson, *ranking minority member*; Roys

**Financial Institutions and Sporting Heritage** Stafsholt, *chair*; Felzkowski, *vice chair*; Tomczyk; Spreitzer, *ranking minority member*; Hesselbein

**Government Operations** Stroebel, *chair*; Bradley, *vice chair*; Feyen; Roys, *ranking minority member*; Hesselbein

**Health** Cabral-Guevara, *chair*; Testin, *vice chair*; Felzkowski; Jacque; Hesselbein, *ranking minority member*; Carpenter

**Housing, Rural Issues and Forestry** Quinn, *chair*; Jagler, *vice chair*; Stafsholt; Wirch, *ranking minority member*; Spreitzer

**Insurance and Small Business** Felzkowski, *chair*; Hutton, *vice chair*; Jagler; Taylor, *ranking minority member*; Pfaff

**Judiciary and Public Safety** Wanggaard, *chair*; Jacque, *vice chair*; Wimberger; Knodl; James; Taylor, *ranking minority member*; Roys

**Labor, Regulatory Reform, Veterans and Military Affairs** Testin, *chair*; Nass, *vice chair*; Wanggaard; Wirch, *ranking minority member*; Carpenter

**Licensing, Constitution and Federalism** Jacque, *chair*; Bradley, *vice chair*; Knodl; Carpenter, *ranking minority member*; Wirch

**Mental Health, Substance Abuse Prevention, Children and Families** James, *chair*; Cabral-Guevara, *vice chair*; Ballweg; L. Johnson, *ranking minority member*; Hesselbein



**Natural Resources and Energy** Cowles, *chair*; Wimberger, *vice chair*; Tomczyk; Wirth, *ranking minority member*; Hesselbein

**Senate Organization** LeMahieu, *chair*; Kapenga, *vice chair*; Feyen; Agard, *ranking minority member*; Smith

**Shared Revenue, Elections and Consumer Protection** Knodl, *chair*; Feyen, *vice chair*; Quinn; Spreitzer, *ranking minority member*; Smith

**Transportation and Local Government** Tomczyk, *chair*; Cowles, *vice chair*; Hutton; Carpenter, *ranking minority member*; Pfaff

**Universities and Revenue** Hutton, *chair*; James, *vice chair*; Nass; Ballweg; Cabral-Guevara; Larson, *ranking minority member*; Roys; Smith

**Utilities and Technology** Bradley, *chair*; Wanggaard, *vice chair*; Quinn; Smith, *ranking minority member*; Pfaff

## Assembly standing committees

**Administrative Rules, Review of** Neylon, *chair*; Petersen, *vice chair*; Spiros; Conley, *ranking minority member*; Baldeh

**Agriculture** Tranel, *chair*; Oldenburg, *vice chair*; Hurd; Kitchens; Moses; Mursau; Novak; Schutt; Schmidt; VanderMeer; Considine, *ranking minority member*; Shankland; Myers; Jacobson; C. Anderson

**Assembly Organization** Vos, *chair*; August, *vice chair*; Plumer; Petersen; Summerfield; Neubauer, *ranking minority member*; Haywood; Subeck

**Audit** Wittke, *chair*; Macco, *vice chair*; Born; Hong, *ranking minority member*; Clancy

**Campaigns and Elections** Krug, *chair*; Maxey, *vice chair*; Murphy; Rozar; Tittl; Tusler; Snodgrass, *ranking minority member*; Subeck; C. Anderson

**Children and Families** Snyder, *chair*; Goeben, *vice chair*; Bodden; Dittrich; Gundrum; Penterman; Pronschinske; Wichgers; Billings, *ranking minority member*; Vining; Snodgrass; Madison

**Colleges and Universities** Murphy, *chair*; Nedweski, *vice chair*; Moses; Wittke; Krug; Goeben; Schutt; S. Johnson; Michalski; O'Connor; Emerson, *ranking minority member*; Stubbs; Joers; Shankland; J. Anderson

**Consumer Protection** Callahan, *chair*; S. Johnson, *vice chair*; Behnke; Pronschinske; Rettinger; Schmidt; Ortiz-Velez, *ranking minority member*; Cabrera; Jacobson

**Corrections** Schraa, *chair*; Bodden, *vice chair*; Brandtjen; Brooks; Callahan; Hurd; Maxey; O'Connor; Sapik; Tittl; Stubbs, *ranking minority member*; Goyke; Cabrera; Clancy; Madison

**Criminal Justice and Public Safety** Spiros, *chair*; Schutt, *vice chair*; Duchow; Novak; Green; Donovan; Schraa; Steffen; Wichgers; Sortwell; Drake, *ranking minority member*; McGuire; Emerson; Stubbs; Madison

**Education** Kitchens, *chair*; Dittrich, *vice chair*; Binsfeld; Duchow; Mursau; Nedweski; Penterman; Rozar; Wichgers; Wittke; Shelton, *ranking minority member*; Considine; Myers; Andraca; Hong

**Employment Relations** Vos, *chair*; August; Born; Neubauer, *ranking minority member*

**Energy and Utilities** Steffen, *chair*; Summerfield, *vice chair*; Donovan; Hurd; Neylon; Oldenburg; Petersen; Petryk; Sortwell; Tittl; Tranel; Subeck, *ranking minority member*; Drake; Andraca; Moore Omokunde; Haywood

**Environment** Oldenburg, *chair*; Kitchens, *vice chair*; Novak; Behnke; Bodden; Schmidt; Shankland, *ranking minority member*; J. Anderson; Palmeri

**Family Law** Rozar, *chair*; Binsfeld, *vice chair*; Hurd; O'Connor; Nedweski; Snyder; Cabrera, *ranking minority member*; Conley; Vining

**Finance** Born, *chair*; Katsma, *vice chair*; Zimmerman; Rodriguez; Kurtz; Dallman; Goyke, *ranking minority member*; McGuire

**Financial Institutions** Duchow, *chair*; O'Connor, *vice chair*; Allen; Katsma; Murphy; Petryk; Rettinger; Doyle, *ranking minority member*; J. Anderson; Jacobson

**Forestry, Parks and Outdoor Recreation** Mursau, *chair*; Callahan, *vice chair*; Bodden; Edming; Green; Moses; Pronschinske; Swearingen; Tittl; Tusler; Andraca, *ranking minority member*; Bare; Joers; Palmeri; Snodgrass

**Government Accountability and Oversight** Steffen, *chair*; Melotik, *vice chair*; Brandtjen; Michalski; Snyder; Myers, *ranking minority member*; Clancy

**Health, Aging and Long-Term Care** Moses, *chair*; Rozar, *vice chair*; Brooks; Dittrich; Gundrum; Magnafici; Murphy; Sapik; Schutt; Summerfield; VanderMeer; Subeck, *ranking minority member*; Riemer; J. Anderson; Vining; Drake

**Housing and Real Estate** Brooks, *chair*; Penterman, *vice chair*; Allen; Armstrong; Goeben; Krug; Murphy; Pronschinske; Schraa; Summerfield; Haywood, *ranking minority member*; Emerson; Ortiz-Velez; Bare; Clancy

**Insurance** Dittrich, *chair*; Callahan, *vice chair*; Petryk; Schraa; Tranel; Duchow; Tusler; Rettinger; Doyle, *ranking minority member*; Riemer; Subeck; Bare

**Jobs, Economy and Small Business Development** Gundrum, *chair*; Armstrong, *vice chair*; Binsfeld; Macco; Neylon; O'Connor; Rozar; Melotik; Ohnstad, *ranking minority member*; Shelton; Snodgrass; Vining

**Judiciary** Tusler, *chair*; Rettinger, *vice chair*; Bodden; Gustafson; Sortwell; J. Anderson, *ranking minority member*; Ortiz-Velez

**Labor and Integrated Employment** Penterman, *chair*; Sapik, *vice chair*; Callahan; Edming; Gustafson; Petryk; Sinicki, *ranking minority member*; Ohnstad, Hong

**Local Government** Novak, *chair*; Donovan, *vice chair*; Gundrum; Maxey; Krug; Michalski; Pronschinske; S. Johnson; Baldeh, *ranking minority member*; Conley; C. Anderson; Ratcliff

**Mental Health and Substance Abuse Prevention** Tittl, *chair*; Dittrich, *vice chair*; Behnke;



Representative David Armstrong (*left*) chairs a hearing of the Assembly Committee on Rural Development, and Representative Melissa Ratcliff (*right*) addresses her colleagues during a committee meeting. The bulk of the legislature's work occurs in committee, where legislators have an opportunity to discuss proposed bills with the public and each other.

Gundrum; Magnafici; Plumer; VanderMeer; Wichgers; Vining, *ranking minority member*; Considine; Moore Omokunde; Palmeri

**Regulatory Licensing Reform** Sortwell, *chair*; Gustafson, *vice chair*; Allen; Goeben; Macco; Melotik; Moore Omokunde, *ranking minority member*; Sinicki; Palmeri

**Rules** August, *chair*; Vos, *vice chair*; Petersen; Plumer; Summerfield; Born; Tittl; Dittrich; Schraa; Neubauer, *ranking minority member*; Haywood; Subeck; Billings; Bare; Joers

**Rural Development** Armstrong, *chair*; Schmidt, *vice chair*; Edming; Green; Hurd; Moses; Novak; VanderMeer; Emerson, *ranking minority member*; Considine; Ratcliff; C. Anderson

**Sporting Heritage** Pronschinske, *chair*; Tittl, *vice chair*; Bodden; Brooks; Callahan; Green; Mursau; Sortwell; Shelton, *ranking minority member*; Shankland; McGuire; Conley

**State Affairs** Swearingen, *chair*; Green, *vice chair*; Summerfield; Schraa; Brooks; Spiros; Moses; Callahan; Gustafson; Sinicki, *ranking minority member*; Ohnstad; Cabrera; Baldeh; Hong

**Tourism** Magnafici, *chair*; Swearingen, *vice chair*; Kitchens; Krug; Mursau; Plumer; Summerfield; VanderMeer; Billings, *ranking minority member*; Stubbs; Myers; Joers

**Transportation** VanderMeer, *chair*; Hurd, *vice chair*; Plumer; Spiros; Edming; S. Johnson; Schmidt; Maxey; Schutt; Considine, *ranking minority member*; Haywood; Ortiz-Velez; Moore Omokunde; Drake

**Veterans and Military Affairs** Edming, *chair*; VanderMeer, *vice chair*; Allen; Michalski; Penterman; Petryk; Snyder; Sortwell; Summerfield; Tittl; Riemer, *ranking minority member*; Sinicki; Andraca; Ortiz-Velez; Ratcliff



GREG ANDERSON, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

Representative Christine Sinicki—the longest serving member of the assembly, having served since 1999—engages in floor debate.

**Ways and Means** Macco, *chair*; Brooks, *vice chair*; Snyder; Dittrich; Armstrong; Callahan; Binsfeld; Gustafson; Conley, *ranking minority member*; Ohnstad; Riemer; Baldeh

**Workforce Development and Economic Opportunities** Petryk, *chair*; Michalski, *vice chair*; Gundrum; Snyder; Armstrong; Rozar; Nedweski; O'Connor; Rettinger; Sapik; Shankland, *ranking minority member*; Sinicki; Shelton; Jacobson; Madison

## Joint legislative committees and commissions

Joint committees and commissions are created by statute and include members from both houses. Three joint committees include members who are not legislators. Commissions include gubernatorial appointees and, in two cases, the governor.

### Commission on Uniform State Laws

**Members:** Representative Tusler, *chair*; Aaron Gary (designated by Legislative Reference Bureau director), *secretary*; Senators Wimberger, Roys; Representative McGuire;

Margit Kelley (designated by Legislative Council Staff director); former state senator Fred Risser, David Zvenvach (public members appointed by governor); former state representative David Cullen, former state senator Joanne B. Huelsman, Justice David T. Prosser Jr. (ULC life members appointed by commission)

**Contact:** lrb.legal@legis.wisconsin.gov; 608-504-5801; 1 East Main Street, Suite 200, Madison, WI 53701-2037

The Commission on Uniform State Laws examines subjects on which interstate uniformity is desirable, cooperates with the national Uniform Law Commission, and advises the legislature on uniform laws and model laws. The commission consists of four current or former legislators, two public members, and two members representing legislative service agencies. The commission may also appoint as members individuals who have attained the status of Life Members of the national Uniform Law Commission.

### Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules

**Senators:** Nass, *cochair*; Stroebel, Bradley; Roys, *ranking minority member*; Larson

**Representatives:** Neylon, *cochair*; Petersen; Spiros; Conley, *ranking minority member*; Baldeh

The Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules must review proposed rules and may object to the promulgation of rules as part of the legislative oversight of the rule-making process. It also may suspend rules that have been promulgated; suspend or extend the effective period of emergency rules; and order an agency to put policies in rule form. Following standing committee review, a proposed rule must be referred to the joint committee. The joint committee must meet to review proposed rules that receive standing committee objections, and may meet to review any rule received without objection. The joint committee generally has 30 days to review the rule, but that period may be extended in certain cases. The joint committee may concur or nonconcur in the standing committee's action or may on its own accord object to a proposed rule or portion of a rule. If it objects

Senator Julian Bradley shares a laugh with colleagues during a break on the senate floor. Bradley, first elected in 2020, is the first Black Republican to serve in the Wisconsin State Senate.



GREG ANDERSON, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

or concurs in a standing committee's objection, it must introduce bills concurrently in both houses to prevent promulgation of the rule. If either bill is enacted, the agency may not adopt the rule unless specifically authorized to do so by a subsequent legislative enactment. The joint committee may also request that an agency modify a proposed rule. The joint committee may suspend a rule that was previously promulgated after holding a public hearing. Within 30 days following the suspension, the joint committee must introduce bills concurrently in both houses to repeal the suspended rule. If either bill is enacted, the rule is repealed and the agency may not promulgate it again unless authorized by a subsequent legislative action. If both bills fail to pass, the rule remains in effect. The joint committee receives notice of any action in a circuit court for declaratory judgments about the validity of a rule and may intervene in the action with the consent of the Joint Committee on Legislative Organization. The joint committee is composed of five senators and five representatives, and the membership from each house must include representatives of both the majority and minority parties.

## Joint Committee on Employment Relations

**Senators:** Kapenga, *cochair*; LeMahieu, Marklein; Agard, *ranking minority member*

**Representatives:** Vos, *cochair*; August, Born; Neubauer, *ranking minority member*

The Joint Committee on Employment Relations approves all changes to the collective bargaining agreements that cover state employees represented by unions and the compensation plans for nonrepresented state employees. These plans

Representative Rob Summerfield (majority caucus chair) listens as colleagues debate an amendment to the Wisconsin Constitution during a January floor session.



JOE KOSHOLLEK, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

and agreements include pay adjustments; fringe benefits; performance awards; pay equity adjustments; and other items related to wages, hours, and conditions of employment. The committee also approves the assignment of certain unclassified positions to the executive salary group ranges. The Division of Personnel Management in the Department of Administration submits the compensation plans for nonrepresented employees to the committee. One plan covers all nonrep-

resented classified employees and certain officials outside the classified service, including legislators, supreme court justices, court of appeals judges, circuit court judges, constitutional officers, district attorneys, heads of executive agencies, division administrators, and others designated by law. The faculty and academic staff of the University of Wisconsin System are covered by a separate compensation plan, which is based on recommendations made by the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents. After public hearings on the nonrepresented employee plans, the committee may modify the plans, but the committee's modifications may be disapproved by the governor. The committee may set aside the governor's disapproval by a vote of six members. In the case of unionized employees, the Division of Personnel Management or, for University of Wisconsin bargaining units, the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin–Madison submits to the committee tentative agreements negotiated between it and certified labor organizations. If the committee disapproves an agreement, it is returned to the bargaining parties for renegotiation. When the committee approves an agreement for unionized employees it introduces those portions requiring legislative approval in bill form and recommends passage without change. If the legislature fails to pass the bill, the agreement is returned to the bargaining parties for renegotiation. The committee is composed of eight members: the presiding officers of each house; the majority and minority leaders of each house; and the cochair of the Joint Committee on Finance. It is assisted in its work by the Legislative Council Staff and the Legislative Fiscal Bureau.



GREG ANDERSON, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

Senator Mary Felzkowski, seen here addressing colleagues on the senate floor, is a member of the powerful Joint Committee on Finance, which reviews bills related to state spending.

## Joint Committee on Finance

**Senators:** Marklein, *cochair*; Stroebel, *vice chair*; Felzkowski, Ballweg, Testin, Wimberger; L. Johnson, *ranking minority member*; Roys

**Representatives:** Born, *cochair*; Katsma, *vice chair*; Zimmerman, Rodriguez, Kurtz, Dallman; Goyke, *ranking minority member*; McGuire



GREG ANDERSON, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

Assistant Senate Majority Leader Dan Feyen (*left*) and Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu (*right*) determine the direction of their caucus, including assigning committee seats and making staffing decisions.

The Joint Committee on Finance examines legislation that deals with state income and spending. The committee also gives final approval to a wide variety of state payments and assessments. Any bill introduced in the legislature that appropriates money, provides for revenue, or relates to taxation must be referred to the committee. The committee introduces the biennial budget as recommended by the governor. After holding a series of public hearings and executive sessions, it submits its own version of the budget as a substitute amendment to the governor's budget bill for consideration by the legislature. At regularly scheduled quarterly meetings, the committee considers agency requests to adjust their budgets. It may approve a request for emergency funds if it finds that the legislature has authorized the activities for which the appropriation is sought. It may also transfer funds between existing appropriations and change the number of positions authorized to an agency in the budget process. When required, the committee introduces legislation to pay claims against the state, resolve shortages in funds, and restore capital reserve funds of the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority to the required level. As an emergency measure, it may reduce certain state agency appropriations when there is a decrease in state revenues. The committee is composed of the eight senators on the Senate Finance Committee and the eight representatives on the Assembly



Finance Committee. It includes members of the majority and minority parties in each house. The cochair is appointed in the same manner as are the chairs of standing committees in their respective houses.

### Joint Committee on Information Policy and Technology

**Senators:** Bradley, *cochair*; Testin, Quinn; Larson, *ranking minority member*; Spreitzer

**Representatives:** Zimmerman, *cochair*; Schutt, Melotik; Baldeh, *ranking minority member*; Ratcliff

The Joint Committee on Information Policy and Technology reviews information management practices and technology systems of state and local units of government to ensure economic and efficient service, maintain data security and integrity, and protect the privacy of individuals who are subjects of the databases. It studies the effects of proposals by the state to expand existing information technology or implement new technologies. With the concurrence of the Joint Committee on Finance, it may direct the Department of Administration to report on any information technology system project

Representative Cindi Duchow (majority caucus vice chair), now in her fifth term in the assembly, speaks during a floor session in January 2023. Assembly rules permit the soda that appears on Duchow's desk; the senate only recently revised its rules to permit the consumption of beverages in the chamber.

that could cost \$1 million or more in the current or succeeding biennium. The committee may direct the Department of Administration to prepare reports or conduct studies and may make recommendations to the governor, the legislature, state agencies, or local governments on the basis of this information. The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents is required to submit a report to the committee semiannually, detailing each information technology project in the University of Wisconsin System costing more than \$1 million or deemed "high-risk" by the board. The committee may make recommendations on the identified projects to the governor and the legislature. The committee is composed of three majority and two minority party members from each house of the legislature.



GREG ANDERSON, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER



GREG ANDERSON, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

Senator Robert Cowles—the most senior Wisconsin legislator, having served since 1987—talks shop with Senator Joan Ballweg (majority caucus vice chair) while the senate stands informal.

## Joint Committee on Legislative Organization

**Senators:** Kapenga (senate president), *cochair*; LeMahieu (majority leader), Feyen (assistant majority leader); Agard (minority leader), Smith (assistant minority leader)

**Representatives:** Vos (assembly speaker), *cochair*; August (majority leader), Plumer (assistant majority leader); Neubauer (minority leader), Haywood (assistant minority leader)

The Joint Committee on Legislative Organization is the policy-making body for the Legislative Audit Bureau, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, the Legislative Reference Bureau, and the Legislative Technology Services Bureau. In this capacity, it assigns tasks to each bureau, approves bureau budgets, and sets the salary of bureau heads. The committee selects the four bureau heads, but it acts on the recommendation of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee when appointing the state auditor. The committee also selects the director of the Legislative Council Staff. The committee may inquire into misconduct by members and employees of the legislature. It oversees a variety of operations, including the work schedule for the legislative session, computer use, space allocation for legislative offices and legislative service agencies, parking on the State Capitol Park grounds, and sale and distribution of legislative documents. The committee recommends which newspaper should serve as the official state newspaper for publication of state legal notices. It advises the Elections Commission and the Ethics Commission on their operations and, upon

recommendation of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, may investigate any problems the Legislative Audit Bureau finds during its audits. The committee may employ outside consultants to study ways to improve legislative staff services and organization. The 10-member committee consists of the presiding officers and party leadership of both houses. The committee has established the Subcommittee on Legislative Services to advise it on matters pertaining to the legislative institution, including the review of computer technology purchases. The Legislative Council Staff provides staff assistance to the committee.

## Joint Legislative Audit Committee

**Senators:** Wimberger, *cochair*; Marklein (cochair, Joint Committee on Finance), James; Hesselbein, *ranking minority member*; Carpenter

**Representatives:** Wittke, *cochair*; Macco, Born (cochair, Joint Committee on Finance); Hong, *ranking minority member*; Clancy

The Joint Legislative Audit Committee advises the Legislative Audit Bureau, subject to general supervision of the Joint Committee on Legislative Organization. The committee is composed of the cochairs of the Joint Committee on Finance, plus two majority and two minority party members from each house of the legislature. The committee evaluates candidates for the office of state auditor and makes recommendations to the Joint Committee on Legislative Organization, which selects

Senator Dianne Hesselbein (minority caucus vice chair), pictured addressing her colleagues in January 2023, is serving her first term in the senate. Like many of her colleagues, Hesselbein served in the assembly for several sessions before seeking election to the upper house.



GREG ANDERSON, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

the auditor. The committee may direct the state auditor to undertake specific audits and review requests for special audits from individual legislators or standing committees, but no legislator or standing committee may interfere with the auditor in the conduct of an audit. The committee reviews each report of the Legislative Audit Bureau and then confers with the state auditor, other legislative committees, and the audited agencies on the report's findings. It may propose corrective action and direct that follow-up reports be submitted to it. The committee may hold hearings on audit reports, request the Joint Committee on Legislative



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Senator Mark Spreitzer presents an argument on the senate floor. In addition to the party caucuses, legislators are members of other caucuses; Spreitzer is a member of both the Sportsmen's Caucus and the LGBTQ+ Caucus.

Organization to investigate any matter within the scope of the audit, and request investigation of any matter relative to the fiscal and performance responsibilities of a state agency. If an audit report cites financial deficiencies, the head of the agency must report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee on remedial actions taken. Should the agency head fail to report, the committee may refer the matter to the Joint Committee on Legislative Organization and the appropriate standing committees. When the committee determines that legislative action is needed, it may refer the necessary information to the legislature or a standing committee. It can also request information from a committee on action taken or seek advice of a standing committee on program portions of an audit. The committee may introduce legislation to address issues covered in audit reports.

## Joint Legislative Council

**Senators:** Kapenga (senate president) *cochair*; LeMahieu (majority leader), Marklein (cochair, Joint Committee on Finance), Testin (president pro tempore), Felzkowski, Jagler, Quinn; Agard (minority leader), *ranking minority member*; Smith; L. Johnson (ranking minority member, Joint Committee on Finance); Spreitzer

**Representatives:** VanderMeer, *cochair*; Vos (assembly speaker), Petersen, August (majority leader), Born (cochair, Joint Committee on Finance), Duchow, Plumer (assistant majority leader); Neubauer (minority leader), *ranking minority member*;



(BOTH PHOTOS) JOE KOSHOLLEK, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

Senator Howard Marklein and Representative Evan Goyke confer during a meeting of the Joint Legislative Council, which hears reports from the legislature's various study committees.

Haywood (assistant minority leader), Goyke (ranking minority member, Joint Committee on Finance), Billings

**Legislative Council Staff:** Anne Sappenfield, Rachel Letzing, Kelly Mautz

**Contact:** [leg.council@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:leg.council@legis.wisconsin.gov); 608-266-1304; 1 East Main Street, Suite 401, Madison, WI 53703-3382

**Website:** <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/lc>

**Publications:** *General Report of the Joint Legislative Council to the Legislature*; *State Agency Staff with Responsibilities to the Legislature*; *Directory of Joint Legislative Council Committees*; *Comparative Retirement Study*; *A Citizen's Guide to Participation in the Wisconsin State Legislature*; rules clearinghouse reports; staff briefs; memoranda on substantive issues considered by council committees; information memoranda and issue briefs; amendment and act memoranda.

**Number of employees:** 34.17

**Total budget 2021–23:** \$8,455,200

The Joint Legislative Council creates special committees made up of legislators and members of the public to study various state and local government problems. Study topics are selected from requests presented to the council by law, joint resolution, and individual legislators. After research, expert testimony, and public hearings, the study committees draft proposals and submit them to the council, which must approve those drafts it wants introduced in the legislature as council bills. The council is assisted in its work by the Legislative Council Staff. The staff provides legal and research assistance to all of the legislature's substantive standing committees and joint statutory committees (except the Joint Committee

on Finance) and assists individual legislators on request. The staff operates the rules clearinghouse to review proposed administrative rules and assists standing committees in their oversight of rulemaking. The staff also assists the legislature in identifying and responding to issues relating to the Wisconsin Retirement System. By law, the Legislative Council Staff must be strictly nonpartisan and must observe the confidential nature of the research and drafting requests it receives. The law requires that state agencies and local governments cooperate fully with the council staff to fulfill its statutory duties. The Joint Committee on Legislative Organization appoints the director of the Legislative Council Staff from outside the classified service, and the director appoints the other staff members from outside the classified service. The council consists of 22 legislators. The majority of them serve *ex officio*, and the remainder are appointed in the same manner as are members of standing committees. The president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly serve as cochairs, but each may designate another member to serve as cochair and each may decline to serve on the council. The council operates two permanent statutory committees and various special committees appointed to study selected subjects.

#### PERMANENT COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL REPORTING IN 2022

**Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations** Representative Mursau, *chair*; Senator Bewley, *vice chair*; Senator Jacque; Representatives Bowen, Edming, Rozar, Tittel, Vining; Dee Ann Allen (Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians), Joey Awonohopay (Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin), Ned Daniels Jr. (Forest County Potawatomi Community), Michael J. Decorah (St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin), Lorraine Gouge (Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Governing Board), Conroy Greendeer Jr. (Ho-Chunk Nation), Shannon Holsey (Stockbridge-Munsee Community), Lisa Liggins (Oneida Nation), Carmen McGeshick (Sokaogon Chippewa Community), Christopher D. Boyd (Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians)

**State-Tribal Relations Technical Advisory Committee** Tom Bellavia (Department of Justice), Cyless Peterson (Department of Transportation), David O'Connor (Department of Public Instruction), Kris M. Goodwill (Department of Natural Resources), Danielle Williams (Department of Workforce Development), Holly Wilmer (Department of Revenue), Gail Nahwahquaw (Department of Health Services), Stephanie Lozano (Department of Children and Families)

The Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations is appointed by the Joint Legislative Council each biennium to study issues related to American Indians and the Indian tribes and bands in this state and develop specific recommendations and legislative proposals relating to such issues. Legislative membership includes not fewer than six nor more than 12 members, with at least one member of the majority and the minority party from each house. The council appoints no fewer than six and no more than 11 members from names submitted by federally recog-



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Representative Jeffrey Mursau (*middle*), who chairs the Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations, meets with Shannon Holsley (*left*), President of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians, and Robert VanZile, Jr. (*right*), Chairman of the Sokaogan Chippewa Community, who delivered the 2023 State of the Tribes address.

nized Wisconsin Indian tribes or bands or the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council. The council may not appoint more than one member recommended by any one tribe or band or the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council. The Technical Advisory Committee, consisting of representatives of eight major executive agencies, assists the Special Committee on State-Tribal Relations.

**Law Revision Committee** Senators Wimberger, *cochair*; Wanggaard, Smith, Roys; Representatives August, *cochair*; Petersen, Hebl, Riemer

The Law Revision Committee is appointed each biennium by the Joint Legislative Council. The membership of the committee is not specified, but it must include majority and minority party representation from each house. The committee reviews minor, remedial changes to the statutes as proposed by state agencies and reviews opinions of the attorney general and court decisions declaring a Wisconsin statute unconstitutional, ambiguous, or otherwise in need of revision. It considers proposals by the Legislative Reference Bureau to correct statutory language and session laws that conflict or need revision, and it may submit recommendations for major law revision projects to the Joint Legislative Council. It also serves as the repository for interstate compacts and agreements and makes recommendations to the legislature regarding revision of such agreements.

**SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL REPORTING IN 2022****Legislative Council Study Committee on Increasing Offender Employment**

**Opportunities** Senator Felzkowski, *chair*; Representative Schraa, *vice chair*; Senator Taylor; Representatives Goyke, Petryk, Stubbs; Jan Allman, Sadique Isahaku, Eli Rivera, Elizabeth Roddy, Reijo Wahlin

This study committee is directed to review existing impediments to employment and job training for individuals who are incarcerated or recently released and to recommend legislation following its review. The committee will explore ways to expand connections between private employers and potential employees who are incarcerated in state institutions or on extended supervision, explore vocational earned release programs for possible implementation, consider release location flexibility based on employment opportunities, and evaluate other methods for improving job prospects for the offender population.

**Legislative Council Study Committee on Occupational Licenses** Senator Stafsholt, *chair*; Representative Sortwell, *vice chair*; Senator Ringhand; Representative Moore Omokunde; Monica Johnson, Stanley Johnson, Jessica Ollenburg, Albert Walker, Ann Zenk

This study committee is directed to review the current occupational licensing system administered by the Department of Safety and Professional Services. The committee will review prior recommendations made by the department regarding any current laws requiring occupational credentials that may be eliminated without clearly harming or endangering the health, safety, or welfare of the public. The committee will also review whether it is necessary to implement systems of review both to determine the necessity of legislative proposals for new occupational credentials and to periodically review the appropriateness of maintaining current occupational credential requirements. Finally, the committee will review options to expand access to individuals from other states to receive a reciprocal credential to practice in Wisconsin. Following these reviews, the committee will recommend legislation on current credentials that may be eliminated, on systems for review of new and existing occupational credentials, and on the issuance of reciprocal credentials.

**Legislative Council Study Committee on Shared School District Services**

Representative Brooks, *chair*; Senator Feyen, *vice chair*; Senator Bewley; Representative Considine; Lance Bagstad, Jeffrey Dellutri, Bobbie Guyette, Ted Neitzke, Ben Niehaus, Tara Villalobos

This study committee is directed to review current barriers to shared administrative or other services between school districts and to explore statutory changes or creation of incentives to encourage efficiencies. The committee will consider methods for sharing or consolidating services such as district-level administra-





Representative Nancy VanderMeer (majority caucus secretary) speaks on the assembly floor during a debate about a proposed constitutional amendment relating to pretrial release and bail.

tion and personnel, purchasing, technology and data processing, transportation, food service, and building maintenance and make recommendations for legislation. As part of its work, the committee will study school district structures employed in other states, particularly county-wide school district models.

**Legislative Council Study Committee on the Commercial Building Permitting Process**

Senator Stroebel, *chair*; Representative Summerfield, *vice chair*; Representatives Baldeh, Conley; Robert Brandherm, Melissa Destree, Frank Gorham, Doug Hoerth, Steve Klessig, Mark Piotrowicz, Robert Procter, Cory Scheidler, Peter Tomasi

This study committee is directed to review the current commercial building permitting process. The review will focus on the commercial plan review process within the Department of Safety and Professional Services and municipalities, timelines for environmental permitting, and the role of the Commercial Building Code Council. As part of its review, the study committee will also evaluate approaches in other states and identify innovative and exemplary policies that could serve as a model for Wisconsin. Following this review, the committee will recommend legislation to improve the commercial building permitting process.

**Legislative Council Study Committee on Uniform Death Reporting Standards** Senator Ballweg, *chair*; Representative James, *vice chair*; Senator L. Johnson; Representative Doyle; Lynda Biedrzycki, Tim Candahl, Sara Kohlbeck, Brian Michel, Teresa Paulus, Kerry Riemer, Tara Steinger

This study committee is directed to review the current protocols for investigating causes of death and reporting death and the uniformity of those protocols. The review will focus on options to implement more comprehensive uniform death reporting standards across Wisconsin, including the advantages and barriers to implementation of such standards. Following review, the committee will develop



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Representatives Dave Considine (*left*) and Clinton Anderson (*right*) stretch their legs during a break in assembly floor action. They serve together on the Assembly Committees on Agriculture and Rural Development.

legislation to provide minimum requirements for death investigations and reporting, particularly deaths involving homicide, suicide, child or infant death, domestic violence, maternal mortality, and substance use.

**Legislative Council Study Committee on Wisconsin National Guard Sexual Misconduct Procedures** Representative Kurtz, *chair*; Senator Wimberger, *vice chair*; Senator Agard; Representative Riemer; Amy Arenz, Autumn Carroll, Jacob Curtis, Adam Gerol, Gabriela Guzman, Melissa Inlow, Jade La Sage

This study committee is directed to study the Wisconsin National Guard's procedures for investigating and addressing sexual misconduct. The committee will review the findings and recommendations contained in previously completed investigations into the Wisconsin National Guard's procedures, with a particular focus on the National Guard Bureau Office of Complex Investigation's assessment of the Wisconsin National Guard's sexual assault and harassment reporting procedures, investigation protocols, and accountability measures. The committee is directed to recommend legislation that enhances oversight of the Wisconsin National Guard as it relates to sexual misconduct, ensures state law complies with relevant federal requirements, and amends the Wisconsin Code of Military Justice where necessary.

## Joint Review Committee on Criminal Penalties

**Senators:** Hutton, *cochair*; Taylor, *ranking minority member*

**Representatives:** Goyke, *ranking minority member*; 1 vacancy

**Other members:** Josh Kaul (attorney general); Kevin A. Carr (secretary of corrections); Kelli S. Thompson (state public defender); 2 vacancies (members appointed by the supreme court); Bradley Gehring, Maury Straub (public members appointed by the governor)

The Joint Review Committee on Criminal Penalties reviews any bill that creates a new crime or revises a penalty for an existing crime when requested to do so by the chair of a standing committee in the house of origin to which the bill was referred. The presiding officer in the house of origin may also request a report from the joint committee if the bill is not referred to a standing committee. Reports of the joint committee on bills submitted for its review concern the costs or savings to public agencies; the consistency of proposed penalties with existing penalties; whether alternative language is needed to conform the proposed penalties to existing penalties; and whether any acts prohibited by the bill are already prohibited under existing law. Once a report is requested for a bill, a standing committee may not vote on the bill and the house of origin may not pass the bill before the joint committee submits its report or before the 30th day after the request is made, whichever is earlier. The joint committee includes one majority and one minority party member from each house of the legislature; the members from the majority party serve as cochairs. The attorney general, secretary of corrections, and state public defender serve *ex officio*. The supreme court appoints one reserve judge residing somewhere within judicial administrative districts 1 to 5 and another residing within districts 7 to 10. The governor appoints two public members—an individual with law enforcement experience and an elected county official.

## Joint Survey Committee on Retirement Systems

**Senators:** Feyen, *cochair*; Cowles; Agard, *ranking minority member*

**Representatives:** August, *cochair*; Swearingen; Neubauer

**Other members:** Charlotte Gibson (assistant attorney general appointed by attorney general), John Voelker (secretary of employee trust funds), Nathan Houdek (insurance commissioner), Michele Stanton (public member appointed by governor)

The Joint Survey Committee on Retirement Systems makes recommendations on legislation that affects retirement and pension plans for public officers and employees, and its recommendations must be attached as an appendix to each retirement bill. Neither house of the legislature may consider such a bill until the committee submits a written report that describes the proposal's purpose, probable costs, actuarial effect, and desirability as a matter of public policy. The 10-member committee includes two majority party members and one minority

party member from each house of the legislature. An experienced actuary from the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance may be designated to serve in the commissioner’s place on the committee. The public member cannot be a participant in any public retirement system in the state and is expected to “represent the interests of the taxpayers.” Appointed members serve four-year terms unless they lose the status upon which the appointment was based. The committee is assisted by the Legislative Council Staff in the performance of its duties, but may contract for actuarial assistance outside the classified service.

## Joint Survey Committee on Tax Exemptions

**Senators:** Testin, *cochair*; Marklein; Taylor

**Representatives:** August, *cochair*; Swearingen; Goyke

**Other members:** Peter Barca (secretary of revenue), Brian Keenan (Department of Justice representative appointed by attorney general), Elizabeth Kessler (public member appointed by governor)

The Joint Survey Committee on Tax Exemptions considers all legislation related to the exemption of persons or property from state or local taxes. It is assisted by the Legislative Council Staff. Any legislative proposal that provides a tax exemption must be referred to the committee immediately upon introduction. Neither house of the legislature may consider the proposal until the committee has issued its report, attached as an appendix to the bill, describing the proposal’s legality, desirability as public policy, and fiscal effect. In the course of its review, the committee is authorized to conduct investigations, hold hearings, and subpoena witnesses. For an executive budget bill that provides a tax exemption, the committee must prepare its report within 60 days. The committee includes two majority party members and one minority party member from each house of the legislature. The public member must be familiar with the tax problems of local government. Members’ terms expire on January 15 of odd-numbered years.

## State of Wisconsin Building Commission

**Governor:** Tony Evers, *chair*

**Senators:** Wirch, Jacque, Ballweg

**Representatives:** Swearingen, *vice chair*; Billings, Wittke

**Other members:** Barb Worcester (citizen member appointed by governor)

**Nonvoting advisory members from Department of Administration:** Naomi De Mers (administrator, Division of Facilities Development), *commission secretary*; R. J. Binau, Aaron Heintz, Kevin Trinastic, Jillian Vessely

**Contact:** 608-266-1855; 101 East Wilson Street, Seventh Floor, Madison, WI 53703; PO Box 7866, Madison, WI 53707-7866

The State of Wisconsin Building Commission coordinates the state building



Representative Sylvia Ortiz-Velez listens attentively during floor debate. Although they usually no longer go late into the night, floor sessions last long enough to test legislators' stamina.

program, which includes the construction of new buildings; the remodeling, renovation, and maintenance of existing facilities; and the acquisition of lands and capital equipment. The commission determines the projects to be incorporated into the building program and biennially makes recommendations concerning the building program to the legislature, including the amount to be appropriated in the biennial budget. The commission oversees all state construction, except highway development. In addition, the commission may authorize expenditures from the State Building Trust Fund for construction, remodeling, maintenance, and planning of future development. The commission has supervision over all matters relating to the contracting of state debt. All transactions for the sale of instruments that result in a state debt liability must be approved by official resolution of the commission. The eight-member commission includes three senators and three representatives. Both the majority and minority parties in each house must be represented, and one legislator from each house must also be a member of the State Supported Programs Study and Advisory Committee. The governor serves as chair. One citizen member serves at the pleasure of the governor. The Department of Administration provides staffing for the commission, and several department employees serve as nonvoting, advisory members.

## Transportation Projects Commission

**Governor:** Tony Evers, *chair*

**Senators:** Cowles, Marklein; Carpenter, Pfaff



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Representative Jerry O'Connor (*left*), elected in 2022, speaks with Representative David Murphy (*right*), who has been a member of the assembly since 2013. Both hail from the Fox Valley area.

**Representatives:** Krug, Spiros, Spreitzer; Riemer, Plumer

**Other members:** Mark Servi, Allison Bussler, Timothy Hanna (citizen members appointed by governor)

**Nonvoting member:** Craig Thompson (transportation secretary-designee)

**Commission secretary:** Craig Thompson

**Contact:** bshp.dtim@dot.wi.gov; 608-267-9617; Bureau of State Highway Programs, 4822 Madison Yards Way, Sixth Floor South, Madison, WI 53705

The Transportation Projects Commission includes three majority party and two minority party members from each house of

the legislature. The commission reviews Department of Transportation recommendations for major highway projects. The department must report its recommendations to the commission by September 15 of each even-numbered year, and the commission, in turn, reports its recommendations to the governor or governor-elect, the legislature, and the Joint Committee on Finance before December 15 of each even-numbered year. The department must also provide the commission with a status report on major transportation projects every six months. The commission also approves the preparation of environmental impact or assessment statements for potential major highway projects.

## Legislative service agencies

### Legislative Audit Bureau

**State auditor:** Joe Chrisman

**Deputy state auditor for financial audit:** Carolyn Stittleburg

**Deputy state auditor for performance evaluation:** Dean Swenson

**Financial audit directors:** Sherry Haakenson, Erin Scharlau

**Assistant financial audit directors:** Brian Geib, Lisa Kasel

**Contact:** asklab@legis.wisconsin.gov; 608-266-2818; 877-FRAUD-17 (fraud, waste, and

mismanagement toll-free hotline); 22 East Mifflin Street, Suite 500, Madison, WI 53703-2512

**Website:** <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lab>

**Publications:** Audit reports of individual state agencies and programs; biennial reports.

**Number of employees:** 86.80

**Total budget 2021–23:** \$18,811,900

The Legislative Audit Bureau is responsible for conducting financial and program audits to assist the legislature in its oversight function. The bureau performs financial audits to determine whether agencies have conducted and reported their financial transactions legally and properly. It undertakes program audits to analyze whether agencies have managed their programs efficiently and effectively and have carried out the policies prescribed by law. The bureau's authority extends to executive, legislative, and judicial agencies; authorities created by the legislature; special districts; and certain service providers that receive state funds. The bureau may audit any county, city, village, town, or school district at the request of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee. The bureau provides an annual audit opinion on the state's comprehensive financial statements by the Department of Administration and prepares audits and reports on the financial transactions and records of state agencies at the state auditor's discretion or at the direction of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee. The bureau maintains a toll-free number to receive reports of fraud, waste, and mismanagement in state government. Typically, the bureau's program audits are conducted at the request of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, initiated by the state auditor, or required by legislation. The reports are reviewed by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, which may hold hearings on them and may introduce legislation in response to audit recommendations. The director of the bureau is the state auditor, who is appointed by the Joint Committee on Legislative Organization upon the recommendation of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee. Both the state auditor and the bureau's staff are appointed from outside the classified service and are strictly nonpartisan.

#### STATUTORY ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Municipal Best Practices Reviews Advisory Council** Steve O'Malley; vacancy (representing the Wisconsin Counties Association); Mark Rohloff (representing the League of Wisconsin Municipalities); Richard Nawrocki (representing the Wisconsin Towns Association).

The Municipal Best Practices Reviews Advisory Council advises the state auditor on the selection of county and municipal service delivery practices to be reviewed by the state auditor. The state auditor conducts periodic reviews of procedures and practices used by local governments in the delivery of governmental services; identifies variations in costs and effectiveness of such services between counties

and municipalities; and recommends practices to save money or provide more effective service delivery. Council members are chosen and appointed by the state auditor from candidates submitted by the organizations represented.

## Legislative Council Staff

**Director:** Anne Sappenfield

**Deputy directors:** Rachel Letzing, Dan Schmidt

**Rules clearinghouse director:** Scott Grosz

**Rules clearinghouse assistant director:** Margit Kelley

**Contact:** [leg.council@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:leg.council@legis.wisconsin.gov); 608-266-1304; 1 East Main Street, Suite 401, Madison, WI 53703-3382

**Website:** <http://lc.legis.wisconsin.gov>

See the entry for the Joint Legislative Council, beginning on page 150.

## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

**Director:** Robert Wm. Lang

**Assistant director:** David Loppnow

**Program supervisors:** Jere Bauer, Paul Ferguson, Charles Morgan, Sean Moran, Christa Pugh, Al Runde

**Supervising analysts:** Jon Dyck, Rachel Janke

**Administrative assistant:** Becky Hannah

**Contact:** [fiscal.bureau@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:fiscal.bureau@legis.wisconsin.gov); 608-266-3847; 1 East Main Street, Suite 301, Madison, WI 53703

**Website:** <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lfb>

**Publications:** Biennial budget and budget adjustment summaries; summaries of state agency budget requests; cumulative and comparative summaries of the governor's proposals, Joint Committee on Finance provisions and legislative amendments, and separate summaries of legislative amendments when necessary; summary of governor's partial vetoes. Informational reports on various state programs, budget issue papers, and revenue estimates. (Reports and papers available on the Internet and upon request.)

**Number of employees:** 35.00

**Total budget 2021–23:** \$8,490,400

The Legislative Fiscal Bureau develops fiscal information for the legislature, and its services must be impartial and nonpartisan. One of the bureau's principal duties is to staff the Joint Committee on Finance and assist its members. As part of this responsibility, the bureau studies the state budget and its long-range implications, reviews state revenues and expenditures, suggests alternatives to the committee and the legislature, and prepares a report detailing earmarks in the budget bill. In addition, the bureau provides information on all other bills before the committee and analyzes agency requests for new positions and appropriation supplements outside of the budget process. The bureau provides fiscal information to any legis-





GREG ANDERSON, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

At an event celebrating the start of Black History Month, (from left) Representatives Darrin Madison, Dora Drake, and Kalan Haywood (assistant minority leader) are joined in the capitol rotunda by Senator Lena Taylor.

lative committee or legislator upon request. On its own initiative, or at legislative direction, the bureau may conduct studies of any financial issue affecting the state. To aid the bureau in performing its duties, the director or designated employees are granted access to all state departments and to any records maintained by the agencies relating to their expenditures, revenues, operations, and structure. The Joint Committee on Legislative Organization is the policy-making body for the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, and it selects the bureau's director. The director is assisted by program supervisors responsible for broadly defined subject areas of government budgeting and fiscal operations. The director and all bureau staff are chosen outside the classified service.

## Legislative Reference Bureau

**Director and general counsel:** Richard A. Champagne

**Deputy director:** Cathlene M. Hanaman

**Chief counsel:** Joe Kreye

**Assistant chief counsel:** Michael Gallagher, Fern Knepp

**Managing legislative analysts:** Madeline Kasper, Jillian Slaughter

**Administrative services manager:** Wendy L. Jackson

**Contact:** 608-504-5801 (legal); 608-504-5802 (research and analysis); 1 East Main Street, Suite 200, Madison; PO Box 2037, Madison, WI 53701-2037

**Website:** <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lrb>



JOE KOSHOLLEK, LEGISLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHER

(from left) Bob Lang, Anne Sappenfield, and Rick Champagne respectively lead the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Bureau, three of five service agencies that provide nonpartisan information and assistance to the legislature.

**Publications:** Wisconsin Statutes; Laws of Wisconsin; Wisconsin Administrative Code and Register; *Wisconsin Blue Book*; informational, legal, and research reports.

**Number of employees:** 60.00

**Total budget 2021–23:** \$12,701,800

The Legislative Reference Bureau provides nonpartisan, confidential bill drafting and other legal services to the Wisconsin Legislature. The bureau employs a staff of attorneys and editors who serve the legislature and its members and who draft and prepare all legislation, including the executive budget bill, for introduction in the legislature. Bureau attorneys also draft legislation at the request of state agencies. The bureau publishes all laws enacted during each biennial legislative session and incorporates the laws into the Wisconsin Statutes. The bureau prints the Wisconsin Statutes every two years and continuously updates the Wisconsin Statutes on the Wisconsin Legislature website. The bureau also publishes and updates the Wisconsin Administrative Code and the Wisconsin Administrative Register on the Wisconsin Legislature website. The Legislative Reference Bureau employs research analysts who provide research and analysis services to the legislature. Bureau analysts and librarians also provide information services to the legislature and the public. The bureau publishes the *Wisconsin Blue Book* and informational, legal, and research reports. The bureau responds to inquiries from legislators, legislative staff, and the public on current law and pending legislation and the operations of the legislature and state government. The bureau operates

a legislative library that contains an extensive collection of materials pertaining to Wisconsin government and politics. The bureau compiles and publishes the Assembly Rules, Senate Rules, and Joint Rules. The bureau maintains for public inspection the drafting records of all legislation introduced in the Wisconsin Legislature, beginning with the 1927 session. The Joint Committee on Legislative Organization is the policy-making body for the Legislative Reference Bureau, and it selects the bureau director. The director employs all bureau staff. The director and the bureau staff serve outside the classified service.

## Legislative Technology Services Bureau

**Director:** Jeff Ylvisaker

**Deputy director:** Nate Rohan

**Administration manager:** Christopher Sewell

**Enterprise operations manager:** Matt Harned

**Geographic information systems manager:** Ryan Squires

**Software development manager:** Doug DeMuth

**Technical services manager:** Cade Gentry

**Contact:** 608-264-8582; 17 West Main Street, Suite 200, Madison, WI 53703

**Website:** <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/ltsb>

**Number of employees:** 43,00

**Total budget 2021–23:** \$9,983,600

The Legislative Technology Services Bureau provides confidential, nonpartisan information technology services and support to the Wisconsin Legislature. The bureau creates, maintains, and enhances specialized software used for bill drafting, floor session activity, and committee activity, managing constituent interactions, producing the Wisconsin Statutes and the Wisconsin Administrative Code, and publishing the *Wisconsin Blue Book*. It supports the publication of legislative documents including bills and amendments, house journals, daily calendars, and the Bulletin of the Proceedings. The bureau also maintains network infrastructure, data center operations, electronic communications, desktops, laptops, printers, and other technology devices. It keeps an inventory of computer hardware and software assets and manages technology replacement schedules. It supports the redistricting project following each decennial U.S. Census and provides mapping services throughout the decade. The bureau also supports the legislature during floor sessions, delivers audio and video services, manages the technology for the Wisconsin Legislature's websites, and offers training services for legislators and staff in the use of information technology. The bureau's director is appointed by the Joint Committee on Legislative Organization and has overall management responsibilities for the bureau. The director appoints bureau staff; both the director and the staff serve outside the classified service. **BB**