
HOUSE BILL 2827

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2020 Regular Session

By Representatives J. Johnson, Rude, Mead, and Morgan

1 AN ACT Relating to modernizing legislative operations; creating
2 new sections; making appropriations; and providing an expiration
3 date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature intends to modernize its
6 operations in a manner that removes barriers and enhances
7 accessibility, equity, inclusion, and diversity, and therefore
8 results in a more representative government and robust democracy. The
9 legislature seeks to continuously evaluate and improve the efficiency
10 and effectiveness of all legislative operations. In addition, the
11 legislature seeks to increase public participation; enact high
12 quality legislation; recruit, retain, and invest in professional
13 staff; and maintain the highest ethical standards. The legislature
14 therefore establishes a joint select committee on the modernization
15 of the Washington state legislature.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The joint select committee on the
17 modernization of the Washington state legislature is established,
18 with twelve voting members and sixteen nonvoting members as provided
19 in this subsection.

1 (a) The senate majority leader shall appoint three voting members
2 from the largest caucus of the senate, and the senate minority leader
3 shall appoint three voting members from the next largest caucus of
4 the senate. The appointed members must include:

5 (i) One member of the facilities and operations committee from
6 each caucus;

7 (ii) One member of the ways and means committee from each caucus;
8 and

9 (iii) One member of the state government, tribal relations and
10 elections committee from each caucus.

11 (b) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint
12 three voting members from the largest caucus of the house, and the
13 house minority leader shall appoint three voting members from the
14 next largest caucus of the house. The appointed members must include:

15 (i) One member of the executive rules committee from each caucus;

16 (ii) One member of the appropriations committee from each caucus;

17 and

18 (iii) One member of the state government and tribal relations
19 committee from each caucus.

20 (c) The nonvoting members of the committee are:

21 (i) The secretary of the senate;

22 (ii) The chief clerk of the house of representatives;

23 (iii) The chiefs of staff from each of the two largest caucuses
24 of the senate;

25 (iv) The chiefs of staff from each of the two largest caucuses of
26 the house of representatives;

27 (v) The staff director for senate committee services;

28 (vi) The staff director for the house office of program research;

29 (vii) Two representatives of legislative assistants from each of
30 the two largest caucuses of the senate, chosen by the committee
31 cochair and vice cochair from their respective caucuses in the
32 senate; and

33 (viii) Two representatives of legislative assistants from each of
34 the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives, chosen by
35 the committee cochair and vice cochair from their respective caucuses
36 in the house of representatives.

37 (2) (a) The two cochairs of the committee are:

38 (i) One voting member chosen by the senate majority leader from
39 his or her caucus; and

1 (ii) One voting member chosen by the speaker of the house of
2 representatives from his or her caucus.

3 (b) The two vice cochairst of the committee are:

4 (i) One voting member chosen by the senate minority leader from
5 his or her caucus; and

6 (ii) One voting member chosen by the house minority leader from
7 his or her caucus.

8 (3) The directors of legislative agencies must cooperate with and
9 provide information to the committee as the chairs may reasonably
10 request.

11 (4) The committee must investigate, study, convene work sessions,
12 seek public comment, make findings, and develop recommendations on
13 modernizing the Washington state legislature.

14 (a) The work sessions must include reports to the committee on:

15 (i) Policies and other steps taken to prevent sexual harassment
16 in the legislative environment; and

17 (ii) Policies and programs to provide opportunities for remote
18 testimony during public hearings.

19 (b) The work sessions may also include reports from staff not
20 formally represented on the committee, such as legal counsel for the
21 senate and the house of representatives, and staff in accounting,
22 cafeteria service, civic education, and security.

23 (c) The recommendations must address:

24 (i) Rules to promote a more modern and efficient Washington state
25 legislature;

26 (ii) Legislative procedures, including the schedule and calendar;

27 (iii) Policies to develop the next generation of leaders;

28 (iv) Staff recruitment, diversity, retention, compensation, and
29 benefits;

30 (v) The efficiency of administrative practices, including
31 purchasing, travel, outside services, and shared administrative
32 staff;

33 (vi) Technology and innovation; and

34 (vii) Other topics agreed upon by the cochairst and vice cochairst
35 of the committee.

36 (5) The house of representatives and the senate shall enter into
37 a confidentiality agreement with the department of enterprise
38 services to provide staff support for the committee. Pursuant to the
39 agreement, and if an appropriation is specifically provided for this
40 purpose, the department may contract with additional persons who have

1 expertise in mediation or facilitation to carry out the mandates of
2 this committee.

3 (6) Legislative members of the committee are reimbursed for
4 travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120.

5 (7) The expenses of the committee must be paid jointly by the
6 house of representatives and the senate. Committee expenditures are
7 subject to approval by the house of representatives executive rules
8 committee and the senate facilities and operations committee.

9 (8) The committee shall provide quarterly status reports,
10 including minutes of proceedings, reports of expenditures, and
11 proposed plans for committee activities, to the house of
12 representatives executive rules committee and the senate facilities
13 and operations committee by September 30, 2020, December 31, 2020,
14 and March 31, 2021. The committee shall submit a final report,
15 including the results of studies, detailed findings, best practices,
16 and any policy recommendations, to the house of representatives
17 executive rules committee and the senate facilities and operations
18 committee by June 30, 2021.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The sum of one hundred twenty-five
20 thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is
21 appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, from the
22 general fund-state to the senate for the purposes of this act.

23 (2) The sum of one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars, or as
24 much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year
25 ending June 30, 2021, from the general fund-state to the house of
26 representatives for the purposes of this act.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act expires July 1, 2021.

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