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## Chapter 9

# Staff Services Available to the General Assembly



*Image courtesy of the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board*

“These Are My Jewels”  
Northwest Corner, Statehouse

### Overview

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

Partisan staff work for one of the party caucuses or for individual members. The caucuses employ lawyers, policy advisors, budget staff, and other aides and assistants. Most senators have two legislative aides and every representative has at least one aide. Caucus staff are also available to assist their members in both houses.

Nonpartisan staff services are provided to all members. Most are provided by the staff of the Legislative Service Commission (LSC) – a 14-person commission with members from both the House of Representatives and the Senate. LSC appoints a director and other staff to carry out a variety of nonpartisan services.

LSC staff perform most legal and fiscal research, bill drafting, amendment drafting, and committee staffing tasks for the General Assembly. Other LSC staff functions include codification of the state's administrative rules, organization and standardization of Revised Code text, training new legislative staff, writing commendation letters, and publication and distribution of several legislative documents.

Other legislative agencies also assist members of the General Assembly. Legislative Information Systems (LIS) manages information technology services for the legislature. The Correctional Institution Inspection Committee (CIIC) works on issues related to the state's correctional institutions and the inmates of these institutions. The Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee (JMOC) oversees the Medicaid program. While some of these agencies are under LSC's purview, each has its own staff director. Members requesting services of these legislative agencies should contact the appropriate staff director.

Two national organizations, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the Council of State Governments (CSG), also offer services to both the legislature as an institution and the members elected to the legislatures in all states. NCSL membership includes only state legislative bodies, while CSG membership includes a wide range of state officials from the executive, judicial, and legislative bodies of each state. Another organization, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), publishes research information, public policy proposals, and model legislation to support its public policy agenda.

## **Partisan Staff Services**

Caucus and personal staff include caucus aides, legislative aides, policy aides, LSC fellows, and pages. Both the House and the Senate have a majority party caucus and a minority party caucus. The majority party in each house normally controls how the operating funds appropriated for that house are allocated among various needs, including the number of staff available to members. Standing committee responsibilities and leadership responsibilities also affect staffing decisions.

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

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

## Senate Staff

### Chief of Staff

The Senate Chief of Staff is the top-ranking administrative officer of the Senate and the chief policy advisor to the Senate President. The Chief of Staff reports to the Senate President and is responsible for implementing the policies of the majority party in the day-to-day operations of the Senate. All Senate employees ultimately report to the Senate Chief of Staff. In addition to the supervision of all Senate employees, the Chief of Staff is responsible for the implementation of administrative policies that affect members of the Senate and for the assignment of staff.

### Minority Chief of Staff

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

### Senate Clerk

The Senate Clerk is an administrative officer and the parliamentary advisor for the Senate. The Senate Clerk and the Clerk's assistants perform a variety of duties and services related to the processing of legislation at each stage of its progress through the Senate, from introduction through delivery to the Governor for executive action. The Senate Clerk also is responsible for overseeing other staff who perform a variety of tasks for the Senate. Among those staff are the fiscal officer, chief information officer, Sergeants-at-Arms, bill room clerk, postmaster, and pages.

The Senate Clerk's staff maintain the Senate [\*Journal\*](#), the official record of the Senate. The Clerk's staff also produce the *Bulletin*, a compilation for each General Assembly of matters pending before the legislature and actions taken upon those matters, including bills, resolutions, and appointments by the Governor.

The Senate Clerk, elected by the members of the Senate, assists the Senate President during floor sessions. The Senate Clerk calls the roll, records votes, and provides advice to the President on questions of parliamentary procedure. The Clerk reads bill and resolution titles and committee reports upon each hearing of a bill or resolution on the Senate floor and reads official messages from the Senate President, the House of Representatives, and the Governor.

Specialized clerks perform a variety of functions to assist the Clerk. They include:

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

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

**Rules and Reference Clerk.** The Rules and Reference Clerk is responsible for organizing materials for, and assisting members of, the Rules and Reference Committee.

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

**Enrolling Clerk.** The Enrolling Clerk is responsible for enrolling bills (putting them into final form) for signature by the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate before they are forwarded to the Governor. The Enrolling Clerk also prepares a weekly schedule of committee meetings and prepares the *Bulletin* for the General Assembly, which is printed periodically during the session and incorporated into the bound volume of the Senate *Journal* at the end of the session.

## **House Staff**

### **Chief of Staff**

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

### **Chief Administrative Officer**

Subject to the Speaker and Chief of Staff’s general authority over House employees, the Chief Administrative Officer supervises all House employees except employees under the direct supervision of the House Clerk. With the help of various specialized assistants, the House Chief Administrative Officer also performs many non-legislative administrative duties for the House of Representatives. These include: performing payroll, benefits, personnel, and fiscal functions; coordinating telecommunication and computer services; purchasing furniture, equipment, and supplies; maintaining an inventory of all furniture and equipment; maintaining and repairing House property; maintaining the parking facilities under control of the House; and assigning House office space in the Riffe Center.

### **Minority Chief of Staff**

Traditionally, the minority party of the House of Representatives designates a Minority Chief of Staff who reports to the Minority Leader. The authority, responsibilities, and duties of

this position vary from session to session and are influenced by policies of the Speaker and the Minority Leader. Typically, the Minority Chief of Staff is the chief management officer of the minority caucus who oversees the policy, communications, legal, and administrative staff, and represents the interests and positions of the Minority Leader and minority caucus.

### **House Clerk**

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

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

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

Various specialized clerks assist the Clerk. They are:

**Assistant Clerk.** The Assistant Clerk serves as the Clerk in the Clerk's absence, assists the Clerk in addressing questions related to parliamentary procedure and House Rules, and performs the duties of the Enrolling and Message Clerk.

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

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

**Committee Clerk.** The Committee Clerk trains and assists House employees responsible for staffing committees, answers questions related to committee procedure, and works directly with committee staff to ensure that the proper information is contained in committee reports and committee records.

Additionally, the Committee Clerk is responsible for organizing materials for, and assisting members of, the House Rules and Reference Committee, which generally refers legislation to House standing committees and sets the agenda for voting sessions.

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

members, and processes and prepares final copies of all honorary House resolutions and House concurrent resolutions on parchment paper for presentation by members.

Additionally, the Reading/Recording/Assistant Committee Clerk serves as an assistant committee clerk and helps with committee staff training, answers questions related to committee procedure, and works directly with committee staff to ensure that the proper information is contained in committee records.

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

**Engrossing Clerk.** The Engrossing Clerk is responsible for engrossing all bills and resolutions under consideration by the House of Representatives. The engrossed version of a bill or resolution incorporates all amendments adopted in committee or on the House floor. Additionally, the Engrossing Clerk prepares the final versions of committee reports for the official committee records. The Engrossing Clerk also prepares the House *Calendar*, which is issued each legislative session day and lists all legislation that is on that day's agenda for third consideration by the House of Representatives.

**Public Information Clerk.** The Public Information Clerk greets visitors at the office's front desk, answers general inquiries, assists with various administrative tasks, and helps coordinate special functions hosted in the House Chamber, such as student model legislatures. The Public Information Clerk is also responsible for scheduling committee rooms and compiling and distributing a list of the committee hearings scheduled for each week. The Public Information Clerk additionally assists with compiling information responsive to public records requests as they pertain to voting, attendance, and committee records.

## **Nonpartisan Staff Services**

### **Legislative Service Commission**

LSC is a statutory agency created in 1953 to provide drafting and research services to members of the General Assembly. The Commission consists of 14 members. These members include the President of the Senate, six additional members of the Senate appointed by the President, the Speaker of the House, and six additional members of the House appointed by the Speaker. Minority party representation on the Commission is ensured by a statutory prohibition against more than four of the six appointed members of each house being of the same political party. In an even-numbered General Assembly, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House serve as the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, respectively. In an odd-numbered General Assembly, the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate serve as the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, respectively.



Among other duties, the Commission is responsible for providing bill drafting, research, fiscal, and other technical services to all members of the General Assembly. To accomplish this goal, the Commission is required to hire a staff Director who has responsibility for the hiring and assignment of staff, as well as all other aspects of staff management. The LSC Director determines the number and type of staff necessary to perform the various services required by the Commission. Each LSC staff person is assigned to a particular work group within LSC that specializes in specific subject areas or responsibilities. Each group is headed by a senior staff person. The Office of Research and Drafting (ORD) is staffed by attorneys and research analysts. The Legislative Budget Office (LBO) is staffed by budget analysts and economists. ORD and LBO groups are led by division chiefs.

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Over the years since its creation, LSC has delegated many responsibilities to the Commission staff. LSC staff provide numerous services to the General Assembly, including drafting and analyzing bills and amendments, staffing committees, preparing budget information and fiscal analyses of legislation, conducting research, codifying administrative rules, and writing resolutions and letters of commendation.

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## **LSC Staff Services**

### **Research and Bill Draft Requests**

LSC staff perform research and draft any legislation, including amendments, requested by any member of the General Assembly. To initiate a bill draft or research request, a member may either contact any LSC staff person or contact the Assignment Clerk at [RequestLSC@lsc.ohio.gov](mailto:RequestLSC@lsc.ohio.gov). For more details about LSC's bill drafting process, see [The LSC Bill Drafting Process](#).

### **Committee Staffing**

The LSC Director assigns at least one member of the ORD staff and one member of the LBO staff to assist each standing committee of the House and Senate. Each LSC staff person assigned to a committee is available to assist the chairperson and any member on matters relating to any bill pending before the committee. Staff assistance may involve explaining legislation, drafting amendments, preparing substitute bills, preparing fiscal notes and local impact statements, and performing various research tasks for the committee.

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

### **Bill Analysis**

As detailed in [Chapter 5](#), ORD staff analyze each bill scheduled for a first hearing by a standing committee. This analysis is then revised when the legislation is (1) reported by the committee for a vote in the first house, (2) passed by the first house, and (3) reported by a

standing committee in the second house. ORD staff also prepare a final analysis of each bill that has been passed by both the House and Senate.

### **Synopsis of Committee Amendments**

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

### **Fiscal Services**

LBO staff prepare fiscal analyses of bills that the General Assembly is considering. For each bill considered, an LBO staff member writes a fiscal note and local impact statement to inform members of the estimated amount by which a bill would increase or decrease revenues or expenditures of the state or its political subdivisions. LBO staff also conduct research to answer legislative inquiries on fiscal issues of importance in state and local government. For more detail, see [Chapter 5](#).

LBO staff also draft appropriation provisions of bills and amendments and prepare budget support documents for the major biennial appropriations bills. Budget support documents are described in [Chapter 8](#). Additionally, LBO staff forecast and monitor state revenues and expenditures.

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

### **Short-Term Research**

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

### **Long-Term Research**

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



## **Occupational Licensing Board Review**

LSC is required to assist the General Assembly in its review of occupational licensing in the state. Each biennium, LSC staff must compile a report on the licensed occupations up for review during the following biennium. In addition, staff must report on any bills that propose to change or enact occupational licensing regulations. For more detail about the process for occupational licensing review, see [Chapter 7](#).

## **Administrative Rules Codification**

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

LSC also publishes the [Register of Ohio](#) and administers a system for agencies statewide to file administrative rules electronically. For more information about the *Register*, see [Chapter 10](#). The *Register* makes available to the public, in electronic format, rules and rule-related documents filed by state agencies and can be found at: [registerofohio.state.oh.us](http://registerofohio.state.oh.us).

## **Legislation Review and Processing**

The LSC Legislation Review and Processing Division (LRP) is responsible for reviewing bill and amendment drafts for substantive accuracy and completeness and for conformity to technical drafting rules. LRP staff also advise drafters on substantive and technical drafting issues. Additionally, they review acts for proper codification and advise legal publishers with regard to the harmonization of multiple acts that amend the same laws.

## **Resolutions and Letters of Commendation**

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

The staff of the LSC Resolutions Drafting group draft letters of commendation or condolence for House members, President's letters for Senate members, and honorary simple and concurrent resolutions for both the House and Senate. Given adequate information, staff will personalize these documents to fit particular situations. Requests for these documents may be sent to [RequestLSC@lsc.ohio.gov](mailto:RequestLSC@lsc.ohio.gov).

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

Whether the document is prepared as a letter or resolution is a matter of not only member preference but also House or Senate policy or rule. The House and Senate leadership adopt guidelines governing the topics for and the procedures under which members may issue

such documents. Typically, letters of commendation or condolence and President's letters are used to recognize individuals, groups, or events of local or district-wide importance, and honorary simple resolutions are reserved for matters of greater significance or statewide impact. Honorary concurrent resolutions are reserved for only those matters that are of significance to both houses. The Resolution Drafting staff drafted approximately 39,000 letters and 1,000 resolutions during the 135<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

### **Legislative Information Office**

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

### **Library Services**

The LSC library is available to all members and legislative staff. The library, located on the ninth floor of the Riffe Center, has a specialized collection of materials and resources to meet the needs of the General Assembly. Staffed by professional librarians, the library offers a wide variety of support services to members. Librarians assist members and staff in using the library collection. They also prepare bibliographies, respond to reference questions, locate and provide copies of periodical and newspaper articles, and arrange to borrow materials from other libraries.

The library collection includes historical legislative documents; the United States Code Annotated, the Code of Federal Regulations, the Ohio Revised Code, Ohio Attorney General opinions and other legal publications; books; periodicals; newspapers; and publications from organizations such as CSG and the Education Commission of the States. The library also maintains many reports issued by legislative committees, other state agencies, the federal government, and private organizations that focus on public affairs.

### **Legislative Fellowship Program**

LSC conducts the [LSC Legislative Fellowship Program](#) which employs about 24 college graduates each year in full-time, 13-month paid positions with full benefits. The objective of this longstanding program is to provide additional staff assistance to members of the General Assembly and attract exceptional college graduates to public service in a legislative environment. The program is administered by LSC staff, in conjunction with the House, the Senate, and Ohio Government Telecommunications (OGT)/The Ohio Channel. The majority of the fellows are assigned to work with members of the General Assembly. Detailed program information is available at the Legislative Fellows tab on the LSC website: [lsc.ohio.gov](http://lsc.ohio.gov).

### **Legislative Training**

LSC staff provide training in the legislative process to all members elected to the General Assembly as well as to legislative aides as they are hired throughout a session. LSC's New Member

Orientation Program provides training for members and is normally conducted in late November of even-numbered years. Training for new legislative aides is offered through online training courses developed in-house by LSC staff and through in-person orientation sessions held monthly. Detailed information about these programs is available through the Training link on the LSC website: [lsc.ohio.gov](http://lsc.ohio.gov).

### **Administrative Support Services**

LSC provides many centralized support services to special legislative committees and projects. The LSC fiscal and personnel offices process and pay the invoices and salaries associated with the operations of Legislative Information Systems (LIS), the Correctional Institution Inspection Committee (CIIC), and certain joint committees. The LSC Director also administers contracts that are entered into occasionally in association with special legislative projects undertaken by the General Assembly in conjunction with universities, state agencies, or private institutions or consultants.

### **Publications**

LSC issues several publications for use by members. In addition to the session-related documents described in [Chapter 5](#), LSC produces, among others, the following publications, available at the Publications link on the LSC website: [lsc.ohio.gov](http://lsc.ohio.gov).

**Budget Footnotes.** Every month except August, LBO publishes a newsletter, [Budget Footnotes](#), which tracks the status of General Revenue Fund receipts and expenditures and provides information on budget topics of interest to the General Assembly.

**Members Briefs.** LSC regularly publishes and updates informational briefs that summarize various issues that may be of interest to members. A few examples of [Members Brief](#) topics include grandparent visitation rights, immunization laws, and Ohio’s open meetings law.

**Infographics.** LBO staff periodically prepare [infographics](#) to explain complex topics through charts and diagrams. Topics for infographics include the General Revenue Fund budget, public school spending, Medicaid expenditures, income and sales taxes, and others.

**Ohio Facts.** LBO staff also periodically produce [Ohio Facts](#) to provide, in charts, tables, and bullets, a broad overview of public finance in Ohio and address many frequently asked questions.

### **Restrictions on Services and Activities**

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

Examples of such prohibited activities include:

- Writing speeches, press releases, or newspaper columns for members;
- Soliciting cosponsors for legislation;
- Preparing committee testimony in favor of or against a bill;

- Participating in political campaigns;
- Attending fund-raising events for candidates or issues;
- Circulating petitions for candidates or issues;
- Distributing campaign literature; and
- Writing articles or letters for publication regarding any candidate or issue.

### **Confidentiality of Information**

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

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

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Bills, amendments, and research documents prepared by LSC on member request, and the work products for them, are confidential unless they are made public by members.

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### **The LSC Bill Drafting Process**

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

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

## **Requesting a Bill Draft**

Any legislator, legislative aide, or caucus staff person may request a bill draft from LSC, and any LSC staff person may accept these requests. A legislator also may make a request to the Assignment Clerk at [RequestLSC@lsc.ohio.gov](mailto:RequestLSC@lsc.ohio.gov). Once received, all requests are forwarded to one of several staff work groups for assignment.

## **Assignment to Drafter**

After considering staff workloads and the complexity of the assignment, the division chief for the bill's subject matter will assign the request to an appropriate staff person within the group.

## **Communication During the Drafting Process**

LSC staff receive bill drafting requests in various forms. Some are quite explicit; others merely describe a problem the legislator wants to resolve or an objective the legislator wants to achieve. In either case, there often is a need for further communication between the legislator and staff. A staff person who is unsure about what a member wants a bill to contain or the manner in which an objective should be achieved is expected to contact the member for clarification and direction. Occasionally, a staff person may become aware of a potential problem or may discover some information the member might not have known at the time the member requested the bill. In these instances, the staff person will contact the member, relay the information, and determine if the member wants to modify the request. After the member informs the staff person on how to proceed, the bill will be drafted in accordance with the member's instructions.

## **Assignment Timing**

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

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

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LSC staff prepared over 4,800 drafts of bills and resolutions and responded to approximately 4,900 research requests for the 135<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. Each session, staff also are responsible for staffing committees and preparing committee-related documents. For the 135<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, LSC staff drafted over 14,500 amendments; 270 synopses; 1,800 fiscal notes, which included over 1,000 local impact determinations; 2,000 analyses; and hundreds of budget-related documents.

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## **Review Process**

Every bill drafted by LSC receives a three-part review before being forwarded to the legislator who requested it. Once drafted, a bill is forwarded to a supervisor or division chief who reviews the draft to determine whether it includes all relevant sections of law and clearly accomplishes what was requested. After this initial review of the bill's content, the LRP division reviews the draft. An attorney on the LRP staff performs the second review to identify possible legal problems, and if any problems are identified, it is the responsibility of the drafter to alert the member requesting the draft. Finally, an LRP technical reviewer performs a third review. The purposes of this technical review are to make sure that (1) the formal parts of the bill (title, enacting clause, and repeal clause) are structured properly and list all necessary Revised Code sections, (2) the correct and most current Revised Code sections are included in the body of the bill, and (3) any Revised Code cross references and division identifications within the text of the draft are accurate. This formal review helps LSC to fulfill its obligation to maintain the laws in an orderly and uniform manner.

## **Draft Sent to Legislator**

After all reviews are complete, LSC processes the draft and forwards it to the appropriate legislator. Bills drafted for the General Assembly are composed using an electronic drafting system known as the State of Ohio Legislative Application Repository (SOLAR). Drafts completed in SOLAR are assigned a unique bar code and delivered to the members electronically. If the legislator wants to make changes to the draft, the drafting and review process is repeated.

## **Questions and Revisions**

After receiving and reading a bill draft, a member may have questions about its content or operation. Initial questions should be directed to the staff person who drafted the bill since that person is most familiar with it. After discussing the bill with the drafter, a member may request changes and the bill will be redrafted accordingly.

A completed bill draft is emailed to a member with a brief message identifying the staff persons who drafted and reviewed it. Sometimes the bill draft is accompanied by a cover letter from the drafter, attached to the delivery email. If there is no such message or letter, a member can determine who drafted the bill by contacting the Assignment Clerk at [RequestLSC@lsc.ohio.gov](mailto:RequestLSC@lsc.ohio.gov).

## **Filing a Bill for Introduction**

A bill draft that is satisfactory to the legislator may be filed for introduction with the appropriate House or Senate Clerk's office. At that point, the Clerk assigns a bill number that will remain with and identify the bill throughout the two-year legislative session. When a bill is submitted to the appropriate Clerk for introduction, the Clerk scans the bar code on the bottom of the bill's first page. This scan enables the Clerk to electronically access the version of the bill stored in LSC's confidential files within the SOLAR drafting system.



## Services from National Organizations

### National Conference of State Legislatures

NCSL, founded in 1975, is an organization that serves legislators and their staffs from the states and other United States jurisdictions. It is funded mainly through membership dues and is governed by a 63-member Executive Committee.

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

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

The Ohio General Assembly pays its membership dues to belong to NCSL through an appropriation to LSC. Ohio's membership automatically extends NCSL membership to all legislators and legislative staff. More information about NCSL and its services is available on its website: [ncsl.org](http://ncsl.org).

### Council of State Governments

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

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

A Governing Board, an Executive Committee, and a Leadership Council oversee the business affairs and policy and program development of CSG. Together, the Executive Committee and Leadership Council are the main decision-making bodies to which all other national CSG committees, task forces, affiliates, and staff report. The Executive Committee includes governors, other executive and judicial branch officials, legislators, and legislative staff from across the country. The Leadership Council, a smaller entity composed of CSG's top national and regional leaders, is empowered to act

on behalf of the Executive Committee during the interim between Executive Committee meetings. Traditionally, the president of CSG is a governor and the chairperson is a state legislator.

The Council publishes the bi-monthly periodical, *Capitol Ideas*; the reference publication, *Book of the States*; the compilation, *Shared State Legislation*; the monthly newsletter, *Stateline Midwest*; and a variety of other reference works, state directories, periodicals, research reports, and newsletters. Copies of the publications are available on the CSG website: [csg.org](http://csg.org).

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

### **American Legislative Exchange Council**

A public affairs and research organization that serves a membership composed of state legislators, business organizations, and foundations, ALEC provides a forum for its members to discuss and exchange ideas based on the principles of limited government, free markets, and federalism. Through its task forces on various public policy issues, state legislators and private sector individuals work together to produce issue reports and model legislation. The organization also conducts conferences and workshops on public policy issues.

ALEC is headed by a National Board of Directors, consisting of state legislators, and includes a Private Enterprise Advisory Council, composed of persons from the private sector. Additionally, at least one legislator in each state holds a position as state chairperson. These boards meet regularly to manage ALEC's business.

ALEC publishes occasional research papers under the title *The State Factor*. Model legislation, developed by the members and approved by a task force, is also published on its website: [alec.org](http://alec.org), but generally is accessible only to ALEC members.

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

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

### **Other Organizations**

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