

The background is a light blue gradient with several realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across it. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

# LEGISLATIVE STRUCTURES IN THE WEST ALASKA

PAM VARNI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY

ALASKA LEGISLATURE

The background is a light blue gradient. There are several realistic water droplets of various sizes in the corners: top-left, top-right, and bottom-right. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a 3D appearance.

# LEGISLATIVE STAFFING LEVELS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

# Types of Legislatures

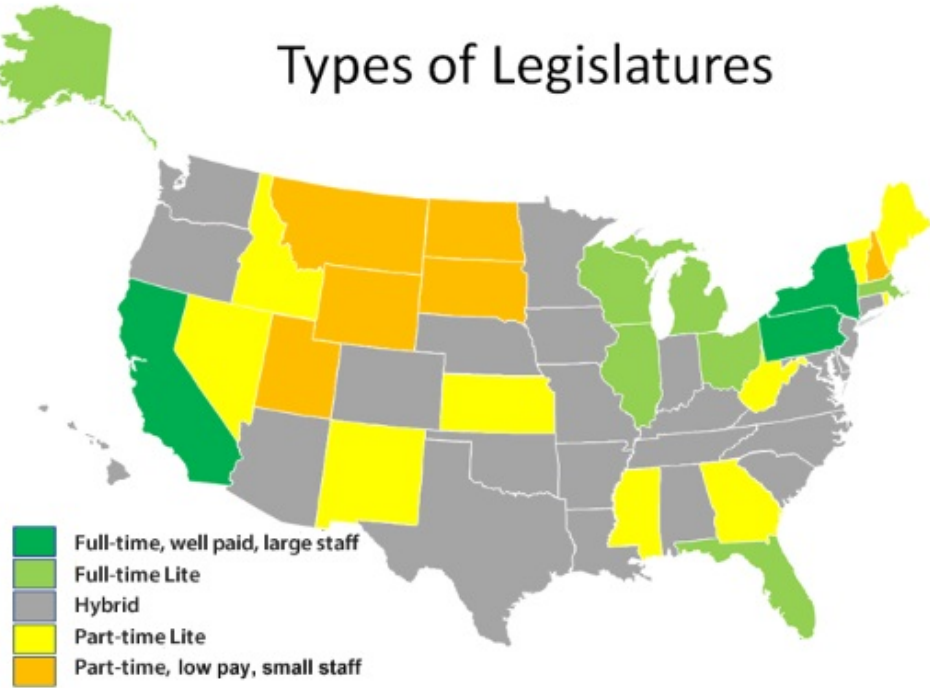


Table 1. Green, Gray and Gold Legislatures

Green	Green Lite	Gray		Gold Lite	Gold
California	Alaska	Alabama	Missouri	Georgia	Montana
New York	Florida	Arizona	Nebraska	Idaho	New Hampshire
Pennsylvania	Illinois	Arkansas	North Carolina	Kansas	North Dakota
	Massachusetts	Colorado	Oklahoma	Maine	South Dakota
	Michigan	Connecticut	Oregon	Mississippi	Utah
	Ohio	Delaware	South Carolina	Nevada	Wyoming
	Wisconsin	Hawaii	Tennessee	New Mexico	
		Indiana	Texas	Rhode Island	
		Iowa	Virginia	Vermont	
		Kentucky	Washington	West Virginia	
		Louisiana			
		Maryland			
		Minnesota			
		New Jersey			

## 13 WESTERN STATES

- GREEN – CALIFORNIA
- GREEN LITE – ALASKA
- GRAY – ARIZONA, COLORADO, HAWAII, OREGON, WASHINGTON
- GOLD LITE – IDAHO, NEVADA, NEW MEXICO
- GOLD – MONTANA, UTAH, WYOMING

# ALASKA – GREEN LITE

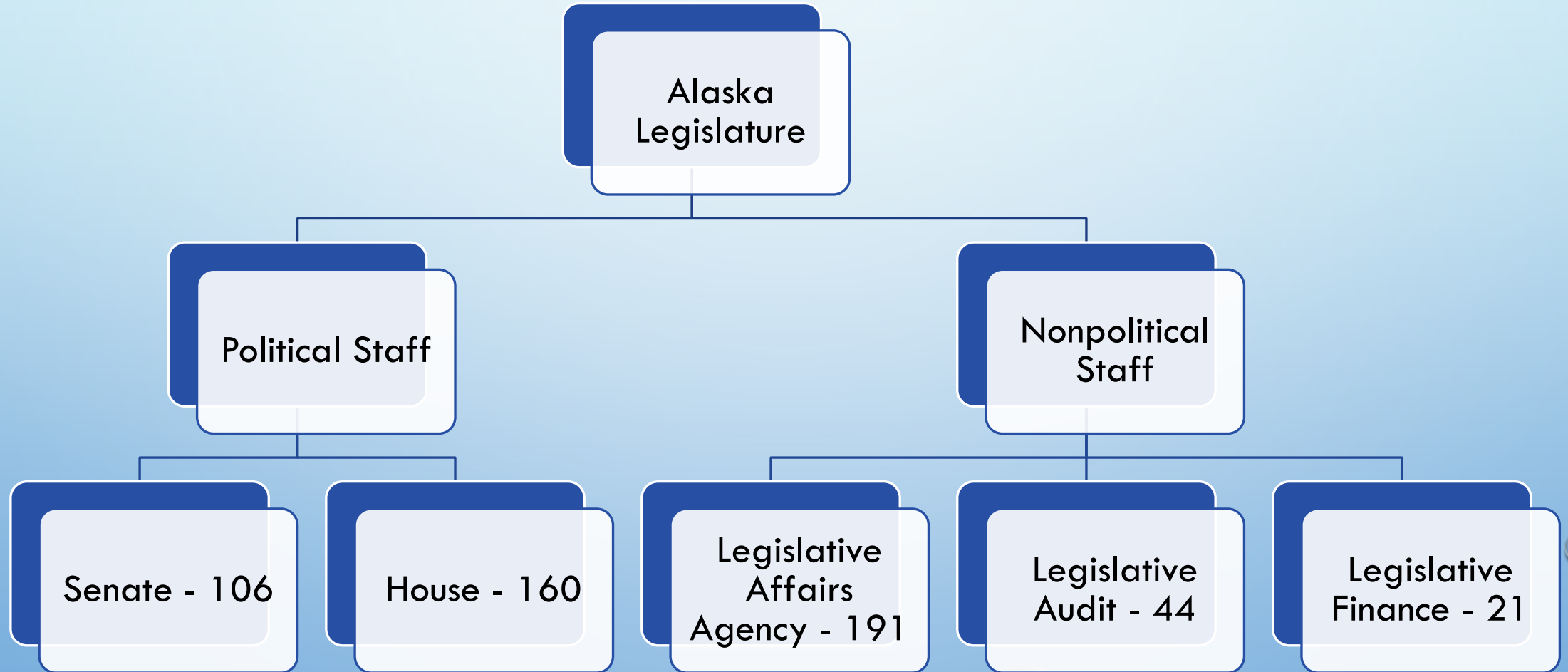
## **GREEN LEGISLATURES (FULL-TIME, WELL-PAID, LARGE STAFF)**

- GREEN LEGISLATURES REQUIRE THE MOST TIME OF LEGISLATORS (**CALIFORNIA, PENNSYLVANIA AND NEW YORK**). USUALLY 80% OR MORE ARE A FULL-TIME JOB; LARGE STAFFS; LEGISLATORS GENERALLY PAID ENOUGH TO MAKE A LIVING WITHOUT REQUIRING OUTSIDE INCOME; LARGEST POPULATION STATES.

## **GREEN-LITE LEGISLATURES**

- MAY HAVE SHORTER SESSIONS, LESS POPULATED, DISTRICT SIZES SMALLER BUT LARGE STAFF SIZE (**ALASKA, FLORIDA, ILLINOIS, MASSACHUSETTS, MICHIGAN, OHIO, & WISCONSIN**).

# ALASKA STAFFING STRUCTURE



# POLITICAL VS NONPOLITICAL STAFFING

- USE A SIMPLE DEFINITION SUCH AS:
  - PARTISAN STAFF WORKS DIRECTLY FOR A LEGISLATOR OR COMMITTEE
  - NONPARTISAN STAFF WORKS FOR SUPPORT AGENCIES
- MAKE CLEAR POLICIES REGARDING DIFFERENCES IN EMPLOYMENT
  - WHAT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES NONPARTISAN STAFF CANNOT PARTICIPATE IN
  - WHAT ACTIONS NEED TO BE DONE BY PARTISAN STAFF

# PARTISAN STAFF

- HIRED TO FURTHER THE LEGISLATOR'S POLITICAL AGENDA
- DIFFERENT HIRING AUTHORITIES BETWEEN SESSION AND INTERIM
  - LEGISLATORS HAVE SEASONAL POSITIONS FOR INTERIM AND SESSION, NO YEAR ROUND POSITIONS
    - SESSION HIRES APPROVED BY RULES CHAIRS
    - INTERIM HIRES APPROVED BY PRESIDING OFFICERS
- PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES ARE SET OUT IN ETHICS STATUTES AND COVER THINGS LIKE:
  - CAMPAIGNING
  - RECEIPT OF GIFTS
  - CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
  - ETC.

# PARTISAN STAFF STANDARD STAFF ALLOCATION

## SENATE

### MAJORITY SESSION AND INTERIM:

- THREE STAFF MEMBERS

### SENATE MINORITY SESSION AND INTERIM:

- TWO STAFF MEMBERS
- NOTE: SENATE MINORITY FINANCE RECEIVES SAME ALLOCATION AS MAJORITY

SENATORS MAINTAIN THE SAME STAFF LEVELS  
BETWEEN INTERIM AND SESSION

## HOUSE

### MAJORITY SESSION

- THREE STAFF MEMBERS

### MAJORITY INTERIM

- TWO STAFF MEMBERS

### MINORITY SESSION

- TWO STAFF MEMBERS

### MINORITY INTERIM

- ONE STAFF MEMBER

HOUSE MEMBERS DROP ONE STAFF FOR INTERIM



# PARTISAN STAFF STANDARD STAFF ALLOCATION

## SENATE STAFFING NUMBERS:

- 20 SENATORS
- 106 SESSION POSITIONS
- 81 INTERIM POSITIONS

## HOUSE STAFFING NUMBERS:

- 40 REPRESENTATIVES
- 160 SESSION POSITIONS
- 102 INTERIM POSITIONS

TOTAL PARTISAN STAFF INCLUDING ELECTED OFFICIALS  
SESSION 326  
INTERIM 243

# PARTISAN STAFF

SPECIALIZED EMPLOYMENT POLICY TO ADDRESS UNIQUE ROLE OF POLITICAL STAFF:

- LONGEVITY SYSTEM FOR PAY INCREASES
- JOB TITLES AND CLASSIFICATIONS
- STARTING COMPENSATION (SECRETARY \$47,500, RESEARCHER \$54,600, ADMIN ASSISTANT \$62,800, LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT \$71,700, PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANT \$81,834); HIGHEST PAID PARTISAN STAFF HAVE YEARS OF LONGEVITY - \$129,500.
- PARTISAN STAFF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK

# PARTISAN STAFF

## SPECIALIZED ROLES FOR PARTISAN STAFF

- SESSION (STATEWIDE FOCUS)
  - MONITOR AND TRACK BILLS AND MEETINGS
  - TRACKING COMMITTEE PROCESSES
  - WORK WITH LEGAL ON DRAFTING BILLS AND AMENDMENTS
  - CONSTITUENT RELATIONS
- INTERIM (LOCAL ISSUE FOCUS)
  - TRACK MEETINGS SUCH AS INTERIM COMMITTEE MEETINGS, ASSEMBLY MEETINGS, CHAMBER, ETC.
  - CONSTITUENT RELATIONS
  - PLANNING AND LOGISTICS

# NONPARTISAN STAFF

- HIRED BY THE HEAD OF AN AGENCY
- LOYAL TO THE INSTITUTION
- HIRE NOT NECESSARILY LIMITED TO SESSION OR INTERIM, MANY IN YEAR ROUND POSITIONS
- HIRED FOR A SPECIALIZED FUNCTION OUTSIDE THE POLITICAL ARENA
  - ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT (ACCOUNTING, HUMAN RESOURCES, MAINTENANCE, SECURITY, SUPPLY, ETC.)
  - INFORMATION SERVICES & LIO'S (PROGRAMMING AND DESKTOP SUPPORT, INFORMATION OFFICES)
  - LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES (BILL DRAFTING, LEGAL OPINIONS, RESEARCH)
  - AUDIT & FINANCE (AUDIT EXECUTIVE BRANCH, SUPPORT FINANCE COMMITTEES)
- ANY PARTISAN ACTIVITIES RESTRICTED BY ETHICS ACT AND EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

# NONPARTISAN STAFF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY

THE MAIN ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT DIVISION CONSISTS OF 11 SECTIONS:

- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE: 3 YEAR ROUND POSITIONS, 1 SEASONAL POSITION, 1 HOURLY TEMP POSITION
- ACCOUNTING SECTION: 4 YEAR ROUND POSITIONS, 1 SEASONAL POSITION
- BUILDING MAINTENANCE: 13 YEAR ROUND POSITIONS, 7 SEASONAL POSITIONS, 1 HOURLY TEMP POSITION
- INFORMATION AND TELECONFERENCE SECTION: 20 YEAR ROUND POSITIONS, 17 SEASONAL POSITIONS, 23 HOURLY TEMP POSITIONS
- INFORMATION SERVICES: 18 YEAR ROUND POSITIONS, 4 SEASONAL POSITIONS, 3 HOURLY TEMP POSITIONS
- LEGAL SERVICES: 19 YEAR ROUND POSITIONS, 11 SEASONAL POSITIONS, 1 HOURLY TEMP POSITION
- PERSONNEL/PAYROLL SECTION: 4 YEAR ROUND POSITIONS
- PRINT SHOP: 3 YEAR ROUND POSITIONS, 12 SEASONAL POSITIONS
- RESEARCH: 7 SEASONAL POSITIONS, 1 HOURLY TEMP POSITION
- SECURITY: 4 YEAR ROUND POSITIONS, 2 SEASONAL POSITIONS, 1 HOURLY TEMP POSITION
- SUPPLY SECTION: 5 YEAR ROUND POSITIONS, 2 SEASONAL POSITIONS, 2 HOURLY TEMP POSITIONS

# NONPARTISAN STAFF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY

TOTAL STAFFING FOR THE 11 SECTIONS:

- 94 YEAR ROUND POSITIONS (FULL-TIME, SALARIED)
- 64 SEASONAL POSITIONS (FULL-TIME WORKING 3 TO 11 MONTHS/YEAR, SALARIED)
- 33 HOURLY TEMP POSITIONS (PART-TIME WORKING VARIED HOURS)
- GRAND TOTAL OF 191 POSITIONS

# NONPARTISAN STAFF


- FOLLOW BEST PRACTICES IN EMPLOYMENT POLICIES FOR SUPPORT STAFF:
  - MERIT SYSTEM FOR PAY INCREASES
    - BASED ON WORK PERFORMANCE AND TIME
    - STANDARD EVALUATION PROCESSES (TOP DOWN OR 360 EVALUATION DEPENDING ON AGENCY NEEDS)
  - JOB TITLES AND CLASSIFICATION
    - SHOULD FOLLOW BEST PRACTICES WITH COMPARABLE GOVERNMENT POSITIONS
    - RECRUITMENTS ARE OPEN AND COMPETITIVE
    - STANDARD TITLES AS USED IN THE INDUSTRY (ACCOUNTANT, BUDGET ANALYST, INTERNAL AUDITOR, ETC.)
  - COMPENSATION
    - BASED ON THE GOING RATE FOR COMPARABLE POSITIONS IN STATE, CITY GOVERNMENT
    - TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION LEGISLATIVE DIFFERENCES

# NONPARTISAN STAFF

## SESSION VS. INTERIM

- GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT
  - SESSION MORE INTENSE, BUT JOB DUTIES SIMILAR BETWEEN SESSION AND INTERIM
- LEGAL SUPPORT
  - DURING SESSION, A HIGHER VOLUME OF BILL DRAFTING AND COMMITTEE SUPPORT
  - DURING INTERIM, LESS COMMITTEE SUPPORT AND MORE LEGAL OPINIONS
- BUILDING MAINTENANCE
  - DURING SESSION, MINOR REPAIRS AND UPKEEP
  - DURING INTERIM, LARGE PROJECTS SUCH AS REMODELING



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**LEGISLATIVE PROCESS, COMMITTEE  
PROCESS, INTERIM ACTIVITIES &  
WORKING WITH LEADERSHIP**

# STANDING COMMITTEES: SETTING JURISDICTIONS

- IN ALL STATES, STANDING COMMITTEE JURISDICTION IS ESTABLISHED MOST FREQUENTLY BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER OR BY CHAMBER RULE.
- ALASKA HOUSE AND SENATE ADHERE TO A SET OF UNIFIED RULES.

## DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- NUMBER OF STANDING COMMITTEES IS SET BY RULE IN 2/3 OF THE NATION'S CHAMBERS, WHILE 22 CHAMBERS GIVE THE AUTHORITY TO THE PRESIDING OFFICER.
- ALASKA'S HOUSE AND SENATE ARE AMONG THOSE THAT DO THIS BY RULE.
- ALASKA USES UNIFIED RULES WHICH ARE ADOPTED FOR EACH LEGISLATURE IN JOINT SESSION BY A MAJORITY VOTE OF THE FULL MEMBERSHIP OF EACH HOUSE.

# NUMBER OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- THE NUMBER OF STANDING COMMITTEES ACROSS THE COUNTRY VARIES WIDELY—FROM 5 TO 42. EIGHT CHAMBERS HAVE 30 OR MORE STANDING COMMITTEES.
- IT IS NOT UNCOMMON TO HAVE FEWER STANDING COMMITTEES IN THE SENATE THAN IN THE HOUSE OR ASSEMBLY.
- IN THE WESTERN STATES, THE NUMBER OF COMMITTEES RANGES FROM 9 TO 18, WITH NEARLY 70% OF THE CHAMBERS HAVING 11 OR MORE.
- ALASKA IS AT THE LOWER END WITH 10 IN EACH CHAMBER.

# ASSIGNING STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS ARE TYPICALLY APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER OR OTHER LEGISLATIVE LEADER. NEARLY 70% OF WESTERN CHAMBERS FOLLOW THIS PROCESS.
- A FEW CHAMBERS, MOSTLY IN WESTERN STATES, USE A COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES OR A RULES OR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE TO APPOINT OR NAME A COMMITTEE CHAIR, AND ACROSS ALL STATES, A VOTE OF THE FULL BODY IS NECESSARY IN ONLY 4 CHAMBERS.
- ALASKA'S TWO CHAMBERS USE A COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEE CHAIRED BY THE BODY'S PRESIDING OFFICER TO APPOINT CHAIRS, AND A VOTE OF THE FULL BODY IS NEEDED TO ADOPT THE ASSIGNMENTS.

# NUMBER OF STANDING COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

NATIONAL AVERAGE SHOWS LEGISLATORS ASSIGNED TO 3 STANDING COMMITTEES.

## **ALASKA**

- SENATORS ARE TYPICALLY ASSIGNED TO TWO OR THREE STANDING COMMITTEES; REPRESENTATIVES ARE TYPICALLY ASSIGNED TO ONE OR TWO.
- THERE ARE 19 HOUSE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEES AND 18 SENATE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEES; 4 PERMANENT JOINT COMMITTEES; AND A VARIABLE NUMBER OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES.

# RULES COMMITTEES

- AS WITH ALL STANDING COMMITTEES IN ALASKA, CHAIRS ARE ASSIGNED BY COMMITTEES ON COMMITTEES (WHICH ARE CHAIRED BY PRESIDING OFFICERS) AND INCLUDE A PROPORTIONATE NUMBER OF MINORITY MEMBERS. THESE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE APPROVED BY A VOTE OF THE BODY OF EACH HOUSE.
- THE RULES COMMITTEES INTERPRET THE UNIFORM RULES, SET THE CALENDARS, AND HAVE JURISDICTION OVER THE INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE BODY AND MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE LEGISLATURE AS A WHOLE.

# CREATION OF SUBCOMMITTEES

- IN MOST LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS, SUBCOMMITTEES ARE CREATED BY THE CHAIR OF THE PARENT COMMITTEE. THIS IS THE CASE IN THE MAJORITY OF WESTERN STATE CHAMBERS, INCLUDING THE ALASKA HOUSE AND SENATE.

## SUBCOMMITTEE LIFE EXPECTANCY

- THE DURATION, OR LIFE, OF SUBCOMMITTEES VARIES WIDELY. AT LEAST 42 CHAMBERS CREATE SUBCOMMITTEES THAT ENDURE FOR THE ENTIRE BIENNIUM. THESE ARE KNOWN AS “STANDING SUBCOMMITTEES.”
- MORE COMMON ARE SUBCOMMITTEES CREATED TO DEAL WITH A SINGLE ISSUE OR BILL.
- NEARLY ALL OF THE WESTERN STATE CHAMBERS CREATE SUBCOMMITTEES AROUND AN ISSUE OR SPECIFIC BILL, BUT ONLY ABOUT HALF MAINTAIN THEM THROUGH THE ENTIRE LEGISLATURE.
- ALASKA’S TWO CHAMBERS CREATE SUBCOMMITTEES AROUND AN ISSUE OR A SPECIFIC BILL, AND THEY TYPICALLY EXIST FOR THE ENTIRE BIENNIUM.

# DETERMINATION OF WHICH BILLS ARE HEARD

- IN ALASKA, AS IN MOST STATES, COMMITTEE CHAIRS DETERMINE WHICH—AND WHEN—BILLS WILL BE HEARD.
- ALASKA'S UNIFORM RULES IMPLY THAT ALL BILLS WILL BE HEARD; HOWEVER, BY LONG-STANDING PRACTICE, COMMITTEES FOLLOW THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR IN HEARING, NOT HEARING, MOVING OR NOT MOVING BILLS.



# DISPOSITION AND REPORTING OF BILLS

- FOLLOWING THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR, A BILL IN ALASKA CAN BE REPORTED WITH RECOMMENDATION THAT IT PASS, THAT IT PASS AS AMENDED, OR WITHOUT A RECOMMENDATION.
- BILLS IN ALASKA CAN ALSO CARRY OVER TO THE NEXT SESSION.
- THE RULE IN ALASKA REQUIRES NEITHER THAT ALL BILLS BE HEARD NOR THAT THEY BE REPORTED OUT OF COMMITTEE. IF PRODUCED, HOWEVER, REPORTS IN ALASKA MUST BE IN WRITING AND MUST BE SIGNED BY A MAJORITY OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS.
- AS IN MOST WESTERN STATES, BILLS IN ALASKA CAN BE POSTPONED INDEFINITELY OR KILLED IN COMMITTEE VIA THE POCKET VETO. THE PRACTICE LED TO ADOPTION OF A RULE OUTLINING A REMEDY WHEREBY COMMITTEE MEMBERS CAN FORCE THE CHAIR TO SCHEDULE THE BILL OR TO MOVE IT FROM COMMITTEE, AS WELL AS A PROVISION THAT ANY MEMBER MAY MAKE A MOTION ON THE FLOOR TO DISCHARGE THE BILL. ALTHOUGH IN EFFECT FOR MORE THAN 40 YEARS, THE RULE IS RARELY INVOKED AND EVEN MORE RARELY APPLIED WITH SUCCESS.

# STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

- ALASKA'S TWO BODIES REQUIRE STANDING COMMITTEES TO PRODUCE MINUTES.
- IN 9 WESTERN CHAMBERS, INCLUDING BOTH OF ALASKA'S, COMMITTEE MINUTES ARE CONSIDERED AN OFFICIAL RECORD OF THE BODY.
- IN ALASKA, MINUTES MUST BE RECORDED ELECTRONICALLY FOR TRANSCRIPTION AND FOR A RECORDING LOG ADEQUATE TO LOCATE SPECIFIC TESTIMONY. THEY MUST IDENTIFY THE COMMITTEE NAME, DATE AND TIME OF MEETING, MEMBERS PRESENT AND ABSENT, AND ALL MEASURES CONSIDERED. THEY ALSO LIST THE NAME, AFFILIATION, AND A BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE POSITION OF EACH WITNESS; AND EACH AMENDMENT FORMALLY CONSIDERED AS WELL AS THE NAME OF THE MEMBER MOVING ADOPTION, THE ACTION TAKEN, AND THE ROLL CALL VOTE IF REQUESTED. TRANSCRIPTS SUMMARIZE ALL TESTIMONY, DISCUSSION, AND COMMITTEE ACTIONS.
- TRANSCRIPTS OF MINUTES ARE APPROVED BY COMMITTEE STAFF AND ARE AVAILABLE TO THE LEGISLATURE AND TO THE PUBLIC ON-LINE AS SOON AS PRACTICAL.

# CONFERENCE COMMITTEE SIZE AND MEMBERSHIP

- IN ALASKA, THE PRESIDING OFFICER MAKES CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSIGNS THE CHAIR, AS IS DONE IN THE MAJORITY OF WESTERN STATE CHAMBERS.
- LEGISLATIVE RULES GENERALLY SPECIFY THE NUMBER OF CONFEREES FROM EACH BODY, AND THE U.S. AVERAGE IS THREE TO FIVE MEMBERS, WITH MORE MEMBERS FOR THOSE COMMITTEES DEALING WITH FISCAL BILLS.
- ALASKA—LIKE MOST WESTERN STATES—USES THREE CONFEREES FROM EACH BODY, EVEN FOR FISCAL BILLS.
- BY PRACTICE, ALL CONFERENCE COMMITTEES IN ALASKA HAVE ONE MINORITY MEMBER FROM EACH CHAMBER.



# ADOPTION OF A CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT BY THE LEGISLATURE

- IN ALASKA, THE CHAMBER THAT FIRST CONSIDERS THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT IS NOT SET IN RULE, BUT VARIES.
- THE VOTE TO ADOPT ANY CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT IN ALASKA IS TAKEN BY THE CALLING OF THE ROLL AND REQUIRES A MAJORITY VOTE OF THE FULL MEMBERSHIP OF EACH HOUSE.

# INTERIM ACTIVITIES

- INTERIM COMMITTEE MEETINGS ARE SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR
- ALASKA DOES NOT HAVE AN ACTIVE INTERIM COMMITTEE SCHEDULE
- PERMANENT INTERIM COMMITTEES SUCH AS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, BUDGET & AUDIT AND LEGISLATIVE ETHICS DO MEET DURING THE INTERIM ALONG WITH TASK FORCE OR COMMISSION MEETINGS.
- NO STANDING COMMITTEES MET IN MAY, JUNE, JULY OR AUGUST.

# WORKING WITH LEADERSHIP

- DEPENDS ON THE LEADERS' STYLE AS TO NUMBER OF MEETINGS
- KNOWLEDGE OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS
- START OF NEW LEGISLATURE – ORIENTATION
- BUDGET