

Montana

Legislative Services Division

Staff Training: Bill Drafting, Committee Staffing, and Legislative Rules

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September 2014

Bill Drafting

- Role of drafter
- The process and flow of drafting
- Special considerations
- Efficiencies
- Bill drafting macros
- Searching the Montana Code
- Keeping bill files; documentation
- Legal Review and Editing
- Drafting deadlines
- Amendment drafting



Committee Staffing

- Tasks, Issues, Situations
- Knowledge of policy area, applicable MCA, Rules, federal/court
- Ability to provide professional consultation and advice
 - Fair, impartial, objective, discreet
 - Humility
- Earning and maintaining Trust and Respect



Committee Staffing

- Understanding the Committee Environment
 - Letting go
 - Close to the Vest
 - Venting Frustrations and "Out-of-School" Conversations
 - Don't Assume – Clarify
 - Motions Rule
 - Flexibility and Preparation
 - "Go Deep" -- Anticipate impacts and consequences
 - Effects of term limits

Legislative Rules

- Focus on Rules "Principles" first
 - There must be a "meeting", i.e., properly called and a quorum present
 - The group (committee) must have the authority to take a proposed action
 - The question to be debated and decided must be clear
 - There must be an opportunity to debate the question
 - The question is decided by a vote
 - A majority vote decides the question

Legislative Rules

- Rules Tools -- In priority order
 - *Constitutions*: Montana and U.S.
 - Montana Statutes
 - Montana Legislative Rules Book (Joint; Senate; House)
 - History, Tradition, and Customs in the committee
 - *Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedures*

Legislative Rules

- Rules on Committee Procedures
 - Presiding Officer Duties and Authority
 - Notice to Committee, Sponsors, Public
 - Assembly of members – Quorum
 - Meetings Open
 - Sponsor duty, privileges
 - Public Participation and Testimony
 - Member "privileges"
 - Executive Session
 - Voting and Proxies
 - Committee Report and Meeting Minutes

Other Training

- Staff participate in Webinars sponsored by NCSL, CSG, et al.
- Staff is developing mini-webinars for in-house use
- Staff conduct training for: bill drafting; Montana Environmental Protection Act; legislative process; Bar Association; etc.
- Staffing interim committees
- Subject area training: Education; Taxation; Workers' Compensation; Water; Health/Human Services
- “In-Boarding” through HR Office

Links to Montana Legislative Staff Training Material

Bill Drafter Training

- Bill Drafting Manual:
<http://leg.mt.gov/content/Services%20Division/Reference%20Center/staff-training-documents/Bill-Drafting/2014-bill-drafting-manual.pdf>
- Everything You Wanted to Know About Bill Drafting:
<http://leg.mt.gov/content/Services%20Division/Reference%20Center/staff-training-documents/Bill-Drafting/everythingcombo.pdf>
- Bill Drafting Training Syllabus:
<http://leg.mt.gov/content/Services%20Division/Reference%20Center/staff-training-documents/Bill-Drafting/2012-Excalibur-Legislative-Staff-Bill-Drafting-Agenda.pdf>
- Amendment Drafting Syllabus:
<http://leg.mt.gov/content/Services%20Division/Reference%20Center/staff-training-documents/Bill-Drafting/Amendment-Drafting-Training-Outline.pdf>

Session Staffing Training

- PowerPoint:
<http://leg.mt.gov/css/Services%20Division/Reference%20Center/staff%20training.asp>
(Under “Session Staffing” as “Session Staffing—It Is What You Live”)

Legislative Rules:

- Standing Committee Rules and Procedures PowerPoint:
<http://leg.mt.gov/css/Services%20Division/Reference%20Center/staff%20training.asp>
(Under “Rules Training Regarding Committees”.)
- Sample of Rules Questions & Decisions:
<http://leg.mt.gov/content/Services%20Division/Reference%20Center/staff-training-documents/Rules/Sample-2011-Rules-Questions.pdf>

Sample: Letter of introduction to presiding officer:

<http://leg.mt.gov/content/Services%20Division/Reference%20Center/staff-training-documents/Rules/House-Committee-Chair-letter.pdf>

Sample: Introductory letter to committee members:

<http://leg.mt.gov/content/Services%20Division/Reference%20Center/staff-training-documents/Rules/Committee-Staff-Functions-2013.pdf>

Legislative Automated Workflow System (LAWS)

- Database content and searching--instructional videos:
http://leg.mt.gov/bills/demos/default.asp?p_sess=20151