



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

The Forum for America's Ideas

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Interim Procedures

During the session, legislators are immersed in the immediate issues and preoccupied with assessing particular bills and appropriations. They have little, if any, time to explore broad policy issues or conduct research and investigation in any depth. Indeed, the more severely the length of a legislative session is limited, the more important it is to carry out these activities during the interim. As a result, interim activity often becomes the “homework” of a legislature. The more a legislature can do during the interim, the more it can do during session.

Just as time during the regular session is planned with care, so should time during the interim. The interim must be looked at strategically and realistically to ensure that the most important issues are being addressed. To be of use during the next regular session, interim study results or legislation must be reported in a timely fashion.

Mechanisms that enhance the flow and continuity of the legislative process save valuable legislative time and increase efficiency. As a result, many legislatures use their standing committees to perform interim work. By using the existing standing committees, there is no delay in beginning interim work. The committee chairs and members are already set. Standing committee members typically have some background in the issues to be studied, so there is a shorter “learning curve.” Standing committees already have procedural rules under which to function, so no time is taken to establish process.

Also, these are the committees that more than likely will deal with the issue the next session. If they do the work during the interim, there is less chance that they will “redo” it during session, resulting in less repetition of efforts. Chambers often encourage their standing committees to meet jointly during the interim; again, this is an attempt to minimize duplication of effort.

The ability for legislators to plan ahead increases their effectiveness. Advance planning probably is even more important during the interim, when citizen legislators are trying to balance their private jobs with their public responsibilities. As a result, some legislatures schedule interim legislative meeting during a certain set time each month to allow legislators to block off that time in advance.

Interim committee meetings do not always have to be held in the capital. Holding meetings may encourage public participation. Committee meetings held out of the capitol provide them with a valuable opportunity to speak personally with legislators, testify, or simply observe government in action. It also gives legislators the opportunity to visit various parts of the state and meet with local officials.

In 1990, NCSL surveyed state legislatures about their interim procedures. A summary of the survey results follows.

Table 1. Types of Committees Used to Perform Interim Work

State	Standing	Select	Ad Hoc	Task Force	Public-Private	Other
Alabama		x	x	x		
Alaska						
Arizona						
Legislative Council		x		x		
Senate	x	x	x		x	
Arkansas	x					
California	x	x		x	x	
Colorado		x	x		x	
Connecticut	x	x	x	x	x	
Delaware	x	x		x	x	
Florida	x	x	x	x		
Georgia	x	x		x		
Hawaii		x		x	x	Work groups; partisan task forces
Idaho			x			
Illinois		x		x	x	
Indiana		x	x			
Iowa		x	x	x		Subcommittees of standing committees
Kansas	x	x	x		x	
Kentucky	x			x	x	
Louisiana	x	x	x	x	x	
Maine	x	x		x	x	
Maryland	x		x	x	x	
Massachusetts	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Michigan	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Minnesota	x	x	x	x	x	
Mississippi	x	x				
Missouri	x	x		x		
Montana	x	x	x	x	x	Joint subcommittees of standing committees
Nebraska	x	x	x	x		
Nevada		x	x		x	
New Hampshire	x	x				
New Jersey	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
New Mexico				x		Limited focus cmte created by statute or Council
New York	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
North Carolina	x		x		x	
North Dakota		x				
Ohio	x	x	x	x	x	
Oklahoma	x	x				
Oregon				x		
Pennsylvania	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Rhode Island	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
South Carolina						
House	x	x	x	x		
Senate	x	x				Jt. legis. committees with Governor's appointees
South Dakota		x				
Tennessee	x	x	x	x	x	
Texas	x	x			x	
Utah			x	x	x	Assigned committees of standing committees
Vermont	x	x	x		x	
Virginia	x				x	
Washington						
House	x	x	x	x	x	
Senate	x	x	x	x	x	
West Virginia	x		x	x		Statutory committees
Wisconsin					x	
Wyoming	x	x		x	x	

Key:

NA = Not applicable; legislature is full-time and does not use interim committees.

NR = No response; state did not respond to survey

Table 2. Structure of Interim Committees

State	Committee Make-up		Who Acts as Chair?			
	Single-House	Joint	Standing Cmte Chair	Member Selected by Leadership	Member Selected by Interim Cmte	Sponsor of the Bill or Resolution
Alabama	x	x		x	x	
Alaska	x	x	x		x	x
Arizona						
Legislative Council	x	x				
Senate	x	x	x	x		
Arkansas		x				
California	x	x	x			
Colorado		x		x		
Connecticut	x	x	x		x	
Delaware		x	x	x		
Florida	x	x	x	x	x	
Georgia	x	x	x	x	x	x
Hawaii	x	x	x			
Idaho		x				
Illinois	x	x	x	x		
Indiana		x		x		
Iowa		x				
Kansas	x	x	x	x	x	
Kentucky		x	x	x		
Louisiana	x	x	x	x	x	x
Maine		x	x	x	x	
Maryland	x	x	x	x		
Massachusetts	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Michigan	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Minnesota	x	x	x	x	x	
Mississippi	x	x			x	
Missouri	x	x	x	x		
Montana		x			x	
Nebraska	x		x			x
Nevada		x			x	
New Hampshire	x	x	x			
New Jersey	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
New Mexico		x		x		
New York	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
North Carolina	x	x		x		
North Dakota		x				
Ohio	x	x	x	x	x	
Oklahoma	x					
Oregon	x	x		x	x	
Pennsylvania	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Rhode Island	No response		No response			
South Carolina						
House	x	x	x		x	
Senate	x	x	x		x	
South Dakota		x				
Tennessee	x	x		x		
Texas	x	x	x	x		
Utah		x		x		
Vermont	x	x	x	x	x	
Virginia	x	x				x
Washington						
House	x	x	x	x	x	
Senate	x	x	x	x	x	
West Virginia		x				
Wisconsin		x		x		x
Wyoming		x	x	x		

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Table 3. Funding Source for Interim Committees

State	Standing Committee Budget	Special Appropriation	Other
Alabama	x		
Alaska	x	x	
Arizona			
Legislative Council			
Senate			
Arkansas			
California	x		
Colorado		x	
Connecticut		x	
Delaware		x	
Florida			
Georgia			
Hawaii			
Idaho			
Illinois	x	x	
Indiana		x	
Iowa			
Kansas			
Kentucky			Legis. Research Cmsn budget
Louisiana	x	x	
Maine			Legis. Council budget
Maryland			
Massachusetts	NA	NA	NA
Michigan	NA	NA	NA
Minnesota	x	x	
Mississippi			
Missouri			
Montana		x	
Nebraska		x	
Nevada		x	
New Hampshire			
New Jersey	NA	NA	NA
New Mexico		x	
New York	NA	NA	NA
North Carolina	x	x	
North Dakota		x	
Ohio		x	
Oklahoma			
Oregon			
Pennsylvania	NA	NA	NA
Rhode Island	No response		
South Carolina			
House	x		
Senate			
South Dakota			
Tennessee	x		
Texas	x	x	
Utah		x	
Vermont			
Virginia	x	x	
Washington			
House		x	
Senate		x	
West Virginia			
Wisconsin		x	
Wyoming	x		

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Table 4. Interim Committee Membership

State	All Legislators Serve	Non-Legislative Members Serve	Standing Cmte Remains Intact	Members are:	
				Appntd by Leaders	Appntd by Joint Nonpartisan Cmsn/Cmte
Alabama	N	Y		x	x
Alaska	Y	Y	x	x	
Arizona					
Legislative Council	Y	N		x	
Senate	Y	N	x	x	
Arkansas	Y	N		x	
California	Y	Y	x		
Colorado	N	Y		x	x
Connecticut	Y	Y	x	x	
Delaware	N	Y	x	x	
Florida	Y	N	x	x	
Georgia	Y	N	x	x	
Hawaii	N	Y		x	
Idaho	N	N			x
Illinois	N	Y	x	x	
Indiana	N	Y		x	
Iowa	Y	N		x	x
Kansas	Y	Y	x	x	x
Kentucky	Y	Y	x	x	x
Louisiana	N	Y	x	x	
Maine	N	Y	x	x	
Maryland	Y	Y	x	x	
Massachusetts	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Michigan	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Minnesota	N	Y	x	x	
Mississippi	N	Y	x	x	
Missouri	N	Y	x	x	
Montana	N	Y		x	
Nebraska	Y	Y	x		x
Nevada	Y	Y		x	x
New Hampshire	N	N	x	x	
New Jersey	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
New Mexico	N	N		x	x
New York	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
North Carolina	Y	Y		x	
North Dakota	N	Y			x
Ohio	N	Y	x	x	x
Oklahoma	Y	N	x		
Oregon	Y	Y		x	
Pennsylvania	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Rhode Island	No response		No response		
South Carolina					
House	Y	N	x	x	
Senate	N	Y	x	x	
South Dakota	Y	N		x	x
Tennessee	N	N	x	x	
Texas	Y	Y	x	x	
Utah	Y	Y		x	
Vermont	N	Y	x	x	
Virginia	Y	Y		x	
Washington					
House	Y	Y	x	x	
Senate	Y	Y	x	x	x
West Virginia	N	Y		x	
Wisconsin	Y	Y			x
Wyoming	Y	Y	x	x	

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Table 5. Scheduling of Interim Committee Meetings

State	Call of Chair	Call of Chair; Leader Limits	Call of Chair; Approval of Cncl	By Leaders	Joint Nonpart Cmsn
Alabama	x	x			
Alaska	x	x		x	
Arizona					
Legislative Council	x				
Senate		x			
Arkansas	x				
California	x		x		
Colorado		Other			
Connecticut	x				
Delaware	x				
Florida	x	x			
Georgia	Check				
Hawaii		x			
Idaho		x			
Illinois	x			x	
Indiana		x			
Iowa	OTHER				
Kansas	x		x		
Kentucky			x		x
Louisiana		x			
Maine	x	x	OTHER		
Maryland		x			
Massachusetts	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Michigan	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Minnesota	x				
Mississippi	x				
Missouri	x	x			
Montana	Other				
Nebraska	x				x
Nevada	x				
New Hampshire		x			
New Jersey	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
New Mexico					
New York	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
North Carolina	x				
North Dakota	x				
Ohio	x				
Oklahoma		x			
Oregon	x	x			
Pennsylvania	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Rhode Island	No response				
South Carolina					
House	x				
Senate	x				
South Dakota			x		
Tennessee	x				
Texas	x				
Utah	x	x		x	x
Vermont		x			
Virginia	x				
Washington					
House			x		
Senate	x				
West Virginia					x
Wisconsin	x				
Wyoming	x				

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Table 6. Powers of Interim Committees

State	Draft Legis/Amend	Profile Legislation	Recommend Floor Action	Conduct Investigations	Conduct Public Hearings	Conduct Special Studies	Oversee Agencies/Prog	Other
Alabama	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Alaska	x			x	x	x	x	
Arizona								
Legislative Council	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Senate	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Arkansas	x	x		x	x	x	x	
California	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Colorado	x	x			x	x	x	
Connecticut	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Delaware	x	x		x	x	x		
Florida	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Georgia	x		x	x	x	x	x	
Hawaii	x				x	x	x	
Idaho	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Illinois	x			x	x	x	x	
Indiana	x			x	x	x	x	
Iowa	x		x	x	x	x	x	
Kansas	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Kentucky	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Louisiana	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Maine	x	x			x	x	x	
Maryland	x	x			x	x	x	
Massachusetts	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Michigan	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Minnesota	x			x	x	x	x	
Mississippi	x			x	x	x		
Missouri	x		x	x	x	x	x	
Montana	x			x	x	x	x	
Nebraska	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Nevada	x	x		x	x	x	x	
New Hampshire	x		x		x	x		
New Jersey	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
New Mexico	x	in House		x	x	x	x	
New York	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
North Carolina	x				x	x	x	
North Dakota	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
Ohio	x		x	x	x	x	x	
Oklahoma	x		x	x	x		x	
Oregon	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Pennsylvania	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Rhode Island	No response							
South Carolina								
House	x		x	x	x	x	x	
Senate	x	x		x	x	x		
South Dakota		x		x	x	x	x	
Tennessee	x				x	x		
Texas	x		x	x	x	x		
Utah	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Vermont	x			x	x	x	x	
Virginia	x			x	x	x		Other
Washington								
House	x			x	x	x	x	
Senate	x			x	x	x	x	
West Virginia	x			x	x	x	x	
Wisconsin	x				x	x		
Wyoming	x	x		x	x	x	x	

Key:

NA=Not applicable; legislature is full-time and does not use interim committees.

Table 7. Selection of Interim Topics and Projects

State	By Adoption of a Bill/ Resolution	By Leadership	By the Committee	By the Committee Chair	By a Joint Nonpartisan Commission	Other
Alabama	x		x	x		
Alaska	x	x	x	x	x	
Arizona						
Legislative Council		x			x	Special act
Senate		x		x	x	
Arkansas			x			
California		x	x	x		Rules Cmte
Colorado	x					
Connecticut	x	x	x	x		
Delaware	x	x	x	x		
Florida		x	x	x		
Georgia	x		x	x		
Hawaii	x	x		x		
Idaho	x					
Illinois	x	x	x	x		
Indiana		x				Legis Cncl
Iowa	x				x	
Kansas	x				x	x
Kentucky	x		x	x	x	
Louisiana	x	x	x	x	x	
Maine	x	x	x		x	
Maryland	x	x	x		x	
Massachusetts	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Michigan	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Minnesota		x	x	x		Establish legis
Mississippi	x			x		
Missouri	x	x				
Montana	x				x	
Nebraska	x				x	
Nevada	x				x	
New Hampshire		x				Vote of legis
New Jersey	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Mexico					x	Establish legis
New York	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
North Carolina	x	x		x		
North Dakota	x				x	
Ohio	x	x	x	x	x	
Oklahoma		x				
Oregon	x	x	x	x		
Pennsylvania	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rhode Island	No response					
South Carolina						
House	x		x	x		
Senate	x		x	x		
South Dakota					x	
Tennessee	x					
Texas	x	x		x		
Utah	x	x	x	x	x	
Vermont	x	x	x	x		
Virginia	x			x		x
Washington						
House		x	x	x		
Senate	x		x	x		
West Virginia	x	x			x	
Wisconsin					x	
Wyoming			x		x	

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Table 8. Results of Interim Work

State	Legis/Amend Drafted	Legis Prefiled	Agency/Prog Reviewed	Testimony Gathered	Floor Action Recommend	Final report to Legislature	Final Rept to Jt Cmnsn/Cmte	Other
Alabama	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Alaska	x		x	x		x	x	
Arizona								
Legislative Council	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Senate	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Arkansas	x	x	x	x		x		
California	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Colorado	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Connecticut	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Delaware	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Florida	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Georgia	x		x	x	x	x		
Hawaii	x			x		x	x	
Idaho	x	x		x		x		
Illinois	x		x	x		x		
Indiana	x		x	x			x	
Iowa	x		x	x	x	x	x	
Kansas	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Kentucky	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Louisiana	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Maine	x	x	x	x		x		
Maryland	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Massachusetts	NA							
Michigan	NA							
Minnesota	x	x	x	x		x		
Mississippi	x			x		x		
Missouri	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Montana	x	x	x	x		x		
Nebraska	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Nevada	x	x	x	x		x	x	
New Hampshire	x			x	x	x		
New Jersey	NA							
New Mexico	x	In house	x	x		x	x	More
New York	NA							
North Carolina	x		x	x		x	x	
North Dakota	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Ohio	x		x	x	x	x	x	
Oklahoma	x		x	x	x			
Oregon	x	x	x	x		x		
Pennsylvania	NA							
Rhode Island	No response							
South Carolina								
House	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Senate	x	x				x		
South Dakota	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Tennessee	x	x		x		x		
Texas	x		x	x		x		x
Utah	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Vermont	x		x	x	x	x		
Virginia	x	x	x	x		x		
Washington								
House	x		x	x		x		
Senate	x			x	x	x		
West Virginia	x		x	x		x		x
Wisconsin	x						x	
Wyoming	x	x	x	x		x		

Key:
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Table 9. Reporting and Monitoring of Interim Committee Work

State	Required to Report on Activities	How Reported	Cmte Work Monitored	Work Monitored by:
Alabama	Y	To legislature , etc.	Y	Committee chair
Alaska	N		N	
Arizona				
Legislative Council	Y	Meeting minutes; final report	Y	Leadership staff; research staff
Senate	Y	Recommend or draft legislation	Y	Leaders, leaders staff, research dir
Arkansas	N		Y	Legislative Council
California	N		N	
Colorado	Y	Written and oral rept to Leg Cncl	Y	Legislative Council
Connecticut	Sometimes	Final report to legislature	N	
Delaware	Y	To body originating the cmte	N	
Florida	Y	Written report to leadership	Y	Leadership staff
Georgia	N		N	
Hawaii	N		Y	House Majority staff
Idaho	Y		Y	Legislative Council
Illinois	N		Y	Committee staff
Indiana	Y	Legis Cncl; written mid- & final reports	Y	Legislative Council
Iowa	Y	Report to General Assembly	Y	Legislative Service Bureau
Kansas	Y	Report to legislature	Y	LCC
Kentucky	Y	LRC and General Assembly, etc	Y	Dir and Dep Dirs of LRC
Louisiana	N		N	
Maine	N		Y	Ofcs of Pol/Leg An & Fis/Prog Rev
Maryland	Y	Report to Legis Policy Committee	Y	Legislative Policy Committee
Massachusetts	NA			
Michigan	NA			
Minnesota	N		N	
Mississippi	Y	Final report to the legislature	N	
Missouri	Y	Final report to Speaker	Y	Speaker's General Counsel
Montana	Y	Final report to the legislature	Y	Legislative Council
Nebraska	Y	Written statement to Clerk of Leg	N	
Nevada	Y	Report to Legislative Commission	Y	Legislative Counsel Bureau
New Hampshire	Y	To leadership and clerks	Y	
New Jersey	NA			
New Mexico	Y	Report to legislature at end of interim	Y	Legislative Council
New York	NA		N/A	
North Carolina	Y	To Genl Assbly as required by statute	N	
North Dakota	Y	Report to Legislative Council	Y	Legislative Council
Ohio	N	Generally issue final rept however	N	
Oklahoma	N		N	
Oregon	Y	Written report or bill draft to leaders	Y	Legis Administration Cmte Staff
Pennsylvania	NA			
Rhode Island	No response		N/R	
South Carolina				
House	Y	Varies by type of cmte doing work	N	
Senate	Y	Annually to General Assembly	Y	Jt. Op & Mgmt Committee
South Dakota	Y	To Legis Research Cncl Exec Bd	Y	Legislative Research Council
Tennessee	N		N	
Texas	N		N	
Utah	Sometimes	Varies	Y	Ofc of Legis Res and Genl Cnsl
Vermont	Y	Rept to Gen Asmby or respect hse	Y	Legislative Council
Virginia	Y	Report to Gov & Genl Assembly	Y	Div of Legislative Services
Washington				
House	Sometimes	If report required by resol or statute	Y	Leadership of both caucuses
Senate	Sometimes	Written rept if created by resoltn	Y	Committee staff director
West Virginia	Y	Legis or Jt Cmte on Govt & Fin	Y	Jt Cmte on Govt & Finance
Wisconsin	Y	Legislative Council	Y	Legislative Council
Wyoming	Sometimes	If required by statute or resolution	N	

Key:

NA=Not applicable; legislature is full-time and does not use interim committees.

Table 10. Staffing for Interim Committees

State	Standing Cmte Staff	Joint Nonpart Research Staff	Caucus Research Staff	Research Staff Hired by Chair	Clerical Provided by Jt. Nonp Cmn	Clerical Staff Hired by Chair	Other
Alabama	x	x		x	x	x	x
Alaska	x			x		x	
Arizona							
Legislative Council	x			x			
Senate	x	x	x				
Arkansas	x						
California	x						
Colorado		x					
Connecticut	x	x		x	x	x	
Delaware	x	x	x	x		x	
Florida	x	x		x		x	
Georgia	x						
Hawaii			x				
Idaho		x					
Illinois	x	x					
Indiana		x			x		
Iowa		x					
Kansas		x			x		
Kentucky		x			x		
Louisiana	x						
Maine	x	x		x			
Maryland						x	x
Massachusetts	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Michigan	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Minnesota	x		x	x		x	x
Mississippi	x	x					
Missouri	x						
Montana		x					
Nebraska	x	x					
Nevada	x	x					
New Hampshire	x	x					
New Jersey	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Mexico		x			x		
New York	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
North Carolina	x	x					x
North Dakota		x					x
Ohio		x		x			x
Oklahoma	x						
Oregon	x	x		x			
Pennsylvania	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rhode Island	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R
South Carolina							
House	x						x
Senate	x		x				
South Dakota		x			x		
Tennessee	x	x					
Texas	x	x		x		x	
Utah		x					x
Vermont		x				x	
Virginia		x					
Washington							
House	x	x					
Senate	x						
West Virginia	x	x			x		
Wisconsin		x					
Wyoming		x			x		
District of Columbia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Puerto Rico	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R
American Samoa	x	x					x

N/A=Not Applicable
N/R=No Response