NCSL Standing Committees
NCSL Standing Committees: The Basics

An introduction to the NCSL Standing Committees -- their structure and membership, the appointment process, role of the steering Committee, responsibilities of officers and the meeting schedule.
Committee Structure

- About the Committees
- The Appointment Process
- What is the Steering Committee
- Officer Responsibilities
- Committee Work Products
- Upcoming Meetings
Committees of legislators and staff have always had an important role in NCSL.

- Opportunities for exchanging information on state policy and practice.
- Draft the policy directives and resolutions that are used to lobby the federal government.
Committee Structure

The present structure:

- Number of committees has changed now and then; currently there are nine standing committees

- In the topics they cover, they are similar to committees in a legislative chamber
Committees

- Budget and Revenue
- Communications, Financial Services and Interstate Commerce
- Education
- Health and Human Services
- Labor and Economic Development
- Law, Criminal Justice and Public Safety
- Legislative Effectiveness
- Natural Resources and Infrastructure
- Redistricting and Elections
Legislator Committee Members
Appointments

• NCSL sends requests for appointments following biennial elections.

• Presiding officers of legislative chambers appoint legislator committee members—as many as they like.

• Members continue when chamber leadership is unchanged.
NCSL sends requests to staff directors in every legislature.

Legislative staff directors appoint legislative staff committee members— as many as they like.

Members continue until changes are submitted by the appropriate staff director.
Officer Appointments

• NCSL president and president-elect appoints legislator officers.

• NCSL staff chair appoints staff officers.

• Clearance by presiding officers and staff appointing authorities.

• Legislator officers serve terms of two years.
Overall Officers of the Standing Committees

- **Legislator co-chairs** (ex-officio members of the NCSL Executive Committee)
- **Legislative staff co-chairs** (ex-officio members of the NCSL Executive Committee)
- Two or more legislator vice chairs
- Two or more legislative staff vice chairs
The Steering Committee usually meets twice during each meeting of the Standing Committees.

- Reviews pending policy directives and resolutions.
- Makes joint and re-referrals of policy directives and resolutions.
- Sets the order of business and the calendars for NCSL business meetings.
Committee Officer Responsibilities

- Set the committee agenda and plan committee activities and programs
- Moderate or make presentations
- Encourage involvement
- Develop committee work products
- Lobby Congress and the administration
- Testify on behalf of NCSL
Committee Work Products

- Federal policy directives and resolutions
- Publications
- Committee newsletters
- Listservs
- Audio teleconferences
- Webinars
Upcoming Committee Meeting

Legislative Summit
August 6-9, 2017
Boston, MA

NCSL Capitol Forum
December 10-13, 2017
San Diego, Calif.
The NCSL Policy Process

An introduction to the NCSL policy process -- An overview of the rules, procedures and customs that govern adoption of policy positions regarding state-federal issues.
Purpose of Policy Directives

- Rule II(B)

“Policy directives and resolutions developed by the Standing Committees shall be directed at Congress, the Administration or the federal courts and shall be related to issues that affect the states and shall be consistent with support of state sovereignty and state flexibility and protection from unfunded federal mandates and unwarranted federal preemption.”
Policy Directives

Policy Directives should:

• Be concise and between one to three pages
• Clearly set forth the Conference’s position
• Address the broader issue area, avoiding detailed policy analysis

Policy Directives should not:

• Contain superfluous or biased preambles
• Contain superfluous or biased historical narratives
• Address issues outside of the Committee’s jurisdiction
• **Resolutions**
  – Bolster a lobbying position
  – Clarify a question of ambiguity in current policy
  – Provide guidance about the specifics of pending federal regulatory decisions
  – Provide guidance about strategy or tactics regarding a lobbying matter
Filing Policy Directives and Resolutions

- **Most policy directives and resolutions originate in committee**
  - Reviewing existing policies
  - Addressing new issues

- **Any legislator, though, can introduce a policy directive or resolution**
  - Referred by the overall co-chairs
Deadlines and Referrals

- Policy statements and resolutions must be introduced/submitted to NCSL 30 days before a meeting.

- Amendments to existing Policy Directives and Resolutions must be submitted 30 days before a meeting.

- Co-Chairs of the Standing Committees refer policy directives and resolutions developed by committees.

- Policy directives and resolutions are disseminated 20 days before a business meeting:
  - Posted to the NCSL website and e-mailed.
Committee Quorum and Voting

Quorum – Legislators from 10 jurisdictions voting

• Additional quorum calls can be requested by five member jurisdictions or by the presiding Co-Chair of the Standing Committee

Voting

• Only legislator members of the committee can vote
  • Voice Vote
  • Roll call
  • At request of two states, or if presiding Co-Chair is in doubt
Voting Procedures

- Voting is by jurisdiction (state or territory)
- Only legislators may vote
  - Only states responding to the most recent quorum call shall be called
  - Only one vote per jurisdiction

More than one legislator from a state?

*Majority vote of the legislators from the state if tied vote, the state passes.*
Votes Required

- **Final passage**
  - ¾ of jurisdictions responding to the most recent quorum call
  - E.g., 12 aye votes if there were 16 states that responded to the most recent quorum call
  - Passes and abstentions are counted towards the total

- **Amendments/Defer/Table**
  - Simple majority of the states responding to the most recent quorum
General Business Meeting Quorum

- **20 member jurisdictions**
  - During Roll Call of the States each delegation must designate a spokesperson

- Additional Quorum Calls can be requested by five member jurisdictions or by the presiding Co-Chair of the Standing Committees
Voting in General Business Meeting

- **Who votes?**
  - All legislators registered for the meeting
  - Do not need to be a committee member

- **Voting procedures**
  - Voice
  - Roll call
    - At request of five jurisdictions or if presiding co-chair is in doubt
    - Only states responding to the most recent quorum call shall be called
    - Vote of each jurisdiction shall be announced by delegation spokesperson
    - Votes can be changed until presiding co-chair announces the results of the vote
Questions & Answers

Thank you