

The Policy Committee Role in Budget Matters: Joint Rule 314

Joint Rule 314 establishes the role of policy committees (any joint standing or joint select committee other than the Appropriations Committee) in budget matters:

1. Advising the Appropriations Committee on those portions of the State budget bill that affect subject matter within the jurisdiction of the policy committee; and
2. Advising the Appropriations Committee on the policy committee's budgetary priorities for bills favorably reported out of the policy committee and having a fiscal impact.

Advising on the budget bill

According to the subject matter jurisdiction of each policy committee, the Appropriations Committee schedules a series of joint public hearings with policy committees on the Governor's budget bill. Unless the policy committee elects not to participate by notifying the chairs of the Appropriations Committee in writing, the policy committee, or a subcommittee of the policy committee, sits with the Appropriations Committee at the hearing on the relevant portions of the budget bill.

After the joint public hearing, policy committees typically hold their own work sessions on the relevant portions of the budget bill. The chairs of the Appropriations Committee, after consultation with the chairs of the policy committees, establish a schedule for the policy committees to report their recommendations on the budget bill to the Appropriations Committee. The recommendations must be made within the budgetary constraints set by the Appropriations Committee, though a policy committee may recommend funding that exceeds the budgetary constraints if the committee explains its rationale. Policy committee recommendations are not binding on the Appropriations Committee.

Each policy committee is required to appoint a budget subcommittee of 3 and 5 members to serve as liaison to the Appropriations Committee and to notify the Appropriations Committee of the subcommittee membership. The Appropriations Committee must notify the policy committee chairs and the subcommittee chair when the Appropriations Committee will be considering parts of the budget relevant to that policy committee so the budget subcommittee may participate.

Prioritizing bills with fiscal impact

Bills with fiscal impact that have been reported out of committee and received initial approval in both houses are tabled before final enactment on the Senate's Special Appropriations Table. Near the end of session, the Appropriations Committee, with input from the committees of jurisdiction, makes final recommendations to the Senate on which, if any, such legislation should be enacted, not enacted or amended given budgetary considerations. Each policy committee is required to advise the Appropriations Committee of the policy committee's priorities among these bills within 5 days after receiving a list from the Office of Fiscal and Program Review of all bills reported out of the committee that involve appropriations or revenues. The policy committee's list of priorities must be accompanied by a form signed by all committee members indicating how they voted on the priority recommendations.

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