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# THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM



Photo credit: CSRAB

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## New Legislative Staff Training Ohio Legislative Service Commission



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# ABOUT THIS COURSE

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- In this course, you will learn:
  - The types of committees in the Ohio General Assembly;
  - How members are appointed;
  - The work that committees do;
  - How committees report bills back to the House or Senate.
- If your employer is tracking your course completion, be sure to click on the course completion link at the end of the course.
- Additional reference:
  - [A Guidebook for Ohio Legislators](#) – [Chapter 4: Organizing the General Assembly](#) (PDF)

# PURPOSE OF COMMITTEES

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- Committees provide a system of managing a large volume of legislation in an organized way.
- Committee members are responsible for detailed work on the bills that are referred to a particular committee.
- For example, if a representative is assigned to the House Ways and Means committee (the committee that deals with tax legislation), the member will be hearing testimony on bills related to tax issues during this committee's hearings.



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# ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEES

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- Committees are established in the first days of a General Assembly.
- The number and names of committees usually vary from one General Assembly to the next.
- List of House Committees
- List of Senate Committees



Photo credit: CSRAB

# HOUSE COMMITTEES

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- House committee membership is proportional to the partisan composition of the House.
- The Speaker names all committees and subcommittees and appoints the chairpersons and the majority members of each committee.
- The Minority Leader appoints the ranking member and the minority members of each committee.
  - The ranking member of a committee is the leading minority member of the committee.
- See House Rule 13

# SENATE COMMITTEES

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- In the Senate, the President names all committees and appoints the chairpersons and all members of each committee.
- The Minority Leader may recommend minority member assignments to committees, including ranking minority members.
- See Senate Rules 19 and 20.

# TYPES OF COMMITTEES

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- Standing committees
- Rules and reference committees
- Permanent subcommittees
- Ad hoc subcommittees
- Conference committees



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# STANDING COMMITTEES

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- Standing committees are the most active type of committee.
  - The majority of the work on bills is done there. Work includes:
    - Hearing testimony
    - Considering amendments and substitute bills
  - Each standing committee deals with a broad subject matter area.



Photo credit: CSRAB

# RULES AND REFERENCE COMMITTEES

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- Each chamber has a rules and reference committee.
- These committees are “housekeeping” committees that facilitate the flow of legislation.
- A reference committee refers bills to standing committees.
- A rules committee schedules bills for floor votes.
- Usually, the rules committee and the reference committee are combined into a single committee.

# PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEES

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- A permanent subcommittee is an established body under a standing committee that has members appointed at the beginning of the General Assembly by the presiding officers.
- The House and Senate Finance committees sometimes have permanent subcommittees to hear budget proposals and testimony. For example:
  - Transportation
  - Health and Human Services
  - Education

# AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEES

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- The chairperson of a committee may create an *ad hoc* subcommittee to review a certain bill or several bills on the same subject.
- The chairperson appoints the members of an *ad hoc* subcommittee.

# CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

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- When the first house refuses to concur in changes made to a bill by the second house, a conference committee may be appointed to reach a compromise.
- The presiding officers of the House and Senate each appoint three members of their respective houses to serve on the committee.
- A conference committee is almost always called to resolve differences between the House and Senate versions of the main operating budget bill.
- For more on conference committees, see [Course 2 – How a Bill Becomes a Law](#).

# RULES GOVERNING COMMITTEES

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- Both the House and Senate Rules include requirements governing:
  - Committee duties and functions;
  - Committee reports;
  - What constitutes a quorum necessary for a committee to conduct business;
  - Voting procedure; and
  - “Keeping the roll open” to allow members to vote on a bill if they have checked in at the committee and left to attend another meeting held at the same time.

# COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

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A committee chairperson exercises a great deal of authority by determining most operating procedures for the committee. For example, the chairperson:

- Sets the agenda for committee meetings (hearings);
- Determines how long testimony may last;
- Decides when amendments may be offered; and
- Schedules bills for a committee vote.

# RULES OF THE COMMITTEE

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The chairperson may establish additional rules, such as:

- The procedure to submit written testimony about a bill that will be considered during the committee meeting; or
- The deadline to submit amendments that will be offered at a committee meeting.

# WHICH BILLS MUST BE HEARD

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- A bill must receive at least one public hearing if:
  - The bill is ***introduced in the House*** on or before May 15 of the second year of a General Assembly (see House Rule 37); or
  - The bill is ***referred to a Senate committee*** on or before April 1 of the second year of a General Assembly (see Senate Rule 35).
- The bill's sponsor may waive a hearing.

# COMMITTEE ACTION ON BILLS

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A committee may do one or more of the following:

- Hold public hearings (meetings) regarding a bill
- Refer the bill to a subcommittee
- Consider and adopt amendments to the bill
- Consider and adopt a substitute bill
- Take no action (the bill dies)
- Vote to report the bill and recommend that the full chamber pass the bill



# AMENDMENTS VS SUBSTITUTE BILLS

An amendment uses line commands to describe the proposed changes to be made to a bill. Its LSC assignment number begins with “AM.”

A substitute bill is a new version of a bill with all the proposed changes already engrossed (incorporated into the bill). Its LSC assignment number begins with “L.”

Amendment No. **AM\_135\_0004**

S. B. No. 10  
As Introduced

\_\_\_\_\_ moved to amend as follows:

In line 1 of the title, after "Code" insert "and to amend Section 1  
701.10 of H.B. 45 of the 134th General Assembly" 2

In line 4 of the title, after "law" insert ", to modify the 3  
requirements for a temporary arts economic relief grant program," 4

After line 44, insert: 5

"Section 3. That Section 701.10 of H.B. 45 of the 134th 6  
General Assembly be amended to read as follows: 7

Reviewed As To Form By  
Legislative Service Commission

**I\_135\_0084-2**

135th General Assembly  
Regular Session  
2023-2024

**Sub. S. B. No. 4**

—  
**A BILL**

To amend sections 122.85, 5726.55, 5726.98, 1  
5733.59, 5747.66, 5747.98, 5751.54, and 5751.98 2  
and to enact sections 122.852, 5726.58, 5747.67, 3  
and 5751.55 of the Revised Code to modify the 4  
film and theater tax credit and to authorize a 5  
tax credit for capital improvement projects 6  
relating to the film and theater industries. 7

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:**

**Section 1.** That sections 122.85, 5726.55, 5726.98, 8  
5733.59, 5747.66, 5747.98, 5751.54, and 5751.98 be amended and 9  
sections 122.852, 5726.58, 5747.67, and 5751.55 of the Revised 10  
Code be enacted to read as follows: 11

**Sec. 122.85.** (A) As used in this section and in sections 12  
5726.55, 5733.59, 5747.66, and 5751.54 of the Revised Code: 13

# VOTING ON AMENDMENTS AND SUB BILLS

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- To vote on an amendment or a substitute bill, a committee member must be physically present at the time of the vote.



No member, no vote!

# VOTING TO REPORT A BILL

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- To vote to report a bill, a committee member must be “checked in” (recorded as present) before or during the vote.
  - A member may check in at a committee meeting and then leave for another meeting.
- The committee chair may hold the roll open for a set period after the meeting ends to allow members who have checked in to vote on a bill, so long as those additional votes do not change the outcome of the vote.

# COMMITTEE REPORT

- The committee report is the document by which a committee reports a bill back to the full House or Senate.
- A majority of committee members must sign the report indicating that they are in favor of the bill for it to move out of committee.
- The committee report must specify:
  - Whether the committee made changes to the bill;
  - If so, whether the bill is reported as an **amended bill** or a **substitute bill**.

Representative Russo submitted the following report:

The standing committee on Rules and Reference to which was referred Am. H. B. No. 312-Representatives White, Young, T., et al., having had the same under consideration,

- reports it back and recommends its passage.
- reports it back **with the following amendment(s)** and recommends its passage when so amended.
- reports it back **as a substitute bill** and recommends its passage.
- reports it back and recommends its re-referral to the committee on Finance.

RE: Establish Regional Partnerships Program

YES	NO
Stephens	
Oelslager	
Russo	
Edwards	
Galonski	
Hoops	
Jarrells	
Lightbody	
Ray	
Richardson	
Schmidt	

# FOUR WAYS TO REPORT A BILL

How does the chair  
choose between these  
two options?  
See the next slide.

Committee reports  
the bill with no  
changes

The committee secretary  
files the signed committee  
report and the bill with the  
Clerk.

The Clerk creates the bill As  
Reported by Committee.

The Journal indicates that  
the committee reported the  
bill.

Committee adopts a  
**substitute bill**, then  
reports it (with or  
without further  
amendments)

The committee secretary files  
the signed committee report  
with the Clerk.

If there are further  
amendments, **LSC engrosses**  
them. LSC sends the  
substitute bill to the Clerk.

The Clerk creates the bill As  
Reported by Committee.

The Journal indicates that the  
committee reported the bill  
as a substitute bill.

Committee adopts  
**amendments**, then  
reports the bill as an  
**amended bill**

The committee secretary files  
the signed committee report,  
the bill, and the amendments  
with the Clerk.

The **Clerk engrosses** the  
amendments to create the bill  
As Reported by Committee.

The Journal indicates that the  
committee reported the bill  
as amended, and **the full text  
of the amendments is  
printed in the Journal.**

Committee adopts  
**amendments**, then  
reports the bill as a  
**substitute bill**

The committee secretary files  
the signed committee report  
with the Clerk.

**LSC engrosses** the  
amendments to create a  
substitute bill and sends it to  
the Clerk.

The Clerk creates the bill As  
Reported by Committee.

The Journal indicates that the  
committee reported the bill as  
a substitute bill.

# REPORTING BILLS WITH AMENDMENTS

## Committee adopts **amendments**, then reports the bill as an **amended bill**

The committee secretary files the signed committee report, the bill, and the amendments with the Clerk.

The **Clerk engrosses** the amendments to create the bill As Reported by Committee.

The Journal indicates that the committee reported the bill as amended, and **the full text of the amendments is printed in the Journal.**

## Committee adopts **amendments**, then reports the bill as a **substitute bill**

The committee secretary files the signed committee report with the Clerk.

**LSC engrosses** the amendments to create a substitute bill and sends it to the Clerk.

The Clerk creates the bill As Reported by Committee.

The Journal indicates that the committee reported the bill as a substitute bill.

- The committee chair chooses between these two options based on:
  - The number and complexity of the amendments:
    - Whether the Clerk or LSC should engross the amendments into the bill;
    - Whether the full text of the amendments should be printed in the Journal.
  - The policies of the House or Senate, as applicable;
  - The chair's preferences.
- If there are multiple amendments, the bill often will be reported as a substitute bill so that the chair can instruct LSC to **harmonize** the amendments. When creating the sub bill, LSC then resolves any technical conflicts between the amendments so that the sub bill properly reflects the substance of all the changes the committee made to the bill.
- The committee secretary should communicate with the LSC staff member assigned to the committee about this decision.

# THE “AS REPORTED” BILL

- After the committee secretary files the committee report and any other required documents with the Clerk, the Clerk creates the version of the bill As Reported by the Committee.
- Once the Clerk creates this version of the bill, LSC can draft amendments to the bill upon request to be offered at the next stage (typically, on the House or Senate floor).

**As Reported by the Senate General Government Committee**

135th General Assembly  
Regular Session  
2023-2024

Am. S. B. No. 158

Senator Cirino

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**A BILL**

To amend section 705.19 of the Revised Code  
regarding the disbursement of municipal funds by  
residents and to declare an emergency. 1 2 3

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:**

Section 1. That section 705.19 of the Revised Code be  
amended to read as follows: 4 5

Sec. 705.19. ~~(A)~~ No money shall be drawn from the treasury  
of a municipal corporation except in pursuance of appropriations  
made by the legislative authority, and whenever an appropriation  
is so made the clerk shall forthwith give notice to the auditor  
and treasurer. Appropriations may be made in furtherance of  
improvements or other objects or work of the municipal  
corporation which will not be completed within the current year.  
At the end of each year all unexpended balances of  
appropriations shall revert to the respective funds from which  
they were appropriated and shall then be subject to future  
appropriations. 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

~~(B) A municipal corporation charter or ordinance shall not  
circumvent division (A) of this section or the plans of  
government provided for under sections 705.41 to 705.86 of the~~ 17 18 19

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# Time for a pop quiz!

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# QUESTION 1

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True or False?

The number and names of committees do not change from General Assembly to General Assembly.

# QUESTION 1 – ANSWER

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False

Each General Assembly meets for a period of two years and establishes committees to conduct its business during that period. When a new General Assembly begins, the members of each house adopt new rules and reorganize, and thus the number and names of committees usually change from General Assembly to General Assembly.

## QUESTION 2

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Which of the following applies to Ohio General Assembly committees?

1. Ad hoc subcommittees exist for every standing committee.
2. The Governor appoints standing committees and subcommittees.
3. The House and Senate Rules require bills introduced and referred to committee by a certain date to have at least one public hearing.

# QUESTION 2 – ANSWER

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#3 is the correct answer.

The House and Senate Rules require bills introduced and referred to committee by a certain date to have at least one public hearing.

In the Senate, bills referred to a committee by April 1 of the second year of a GA must be scheduled for at least one public hearing. In the House, bills introduced by May 15 of the second year of the GA must be scheduled for at least one public hearing.

# QUESTION 3

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Which of the following applies to Ohio General Assembly committees?

1. Standing committees are the committees that do the bulk of the work on legislation.
2. There are no permanent subcommittees.
3. The Speaker of the House or the Senate President sets the agenda for committee meetings.

# QUESTION 3 – ANSWER

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#1 is the correct answer.

Standing committees are the committees that do the bulk of the work on legislation.

As a result, standing committees are the most active type of committee.

# QUESTION 4

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True or False?

Conference committees have an equal number of House and Senate members.

# QUESTION 4 – ANSWER

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True

The presiding officers of the House and Senate each appoint three members of their respective houses to serve on a conference committee.

# QUESTION 5

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True or False?

When a committee adopts amendments to a bill and then reports it, the Clerk always engrosses the amendments into the bill.

# QUESTION 5 – ANSWER

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False

When a committee adopts amendments to a bill and then reports it, the chair must determine whether to report the bill as an amended bill or a substitute bill.

If the bill is an amended bill, the Clerk engrosses the amendments.

If the bill is a substitute bill, LSC engrosses the amendments.

# THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS COURSE.

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- Report your completion of this course
- Email [Training@lsc.ohio.gov](mailto:Training@lsc.ohio.gov) if you have any questions or comments about this course