

**SUPREME COURT OF ILLINOIS:
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

PRINCIPLES, MISSION, AND CHARGE--MAY 2012

OVERVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The Legislative Committee (Committee) is comprised of seven statewide judicial members, the Supreme Court's contract lobbyist, and legislative staff of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts. The judicial members, each appointed by a Supreme Court Justice from his or her District, are selected for their knowledge of the legislative process and comprehensive understanding of legislative issues at both the state and local levels.

The judicial Committee members appointed by the Court serve as a conduit through which the appellate judges, chief circuit judges, and associate/circuit judges in each District can convey feedback with respect to legislative matters. Under this structure, the Committee communicates with the General Assembly, via the Administrative Office and the Court's contract lobbyist, with regard to pending legislation relevant to the judiciary. The Court is kept informed of draft legislation and is called upon when extreme legislative proposals violate Judicial Branch independence and operations. The Committee process enhances and expedites communication with the General Assembly, thereby facilitating movement toward a mutually agreeable product in advance of formalized legislation.

CORE PRINCIPLES

The Committee structure affords geographic diversity, assuring that local voices are heard with respect to legislative concerns while maintaining the fundamental principle that the Judicial Branch speaks with a singular and unified voice on legislative matters. The Committee endeavors to bring awareness and a forum for those matters affecting the judiciary and ensure credibility in its communications with other state government entities on behalf of the judicial branch.

COMMITTEE MISSION AND CHARGE

With Court oversight and assistance from the Administrative Office, the Committee provides review of legislation, coordinates a response to the General Assembly, and prepares legislative reports for the Court. In so doing, the Committee seeks to inform the judicial and legislative branches regarding issues of mutual concern; enable compromise in advance of legislative action; facilitate and promote communication between branches; provide opportunities for members of the branches to work toward one purpose; and contribute to a better understanding of financial and jurisdictional limitations.

The Committee shall analyze and comment on legislation that affects the operations and independence of the Judicial Branch. Specific focus will be given to those legislative matters that:

- Have a fiscal impact on the Judicial Branch;
- Affect the operation or independence of the Judicial Branch;
- Limit the discretion of a judge in court proceedings; or

- Violate the separation of powers clause of the Illinois Constitution.

COMMITTEE TASKS

The Committee task flow is as follows:

1. The Administrative Office provides the first level of review, analysis and intervention on pending legislation and responds to inquiries from General Assembly members, staff and lobbyists.
2. The Administrative Office transmits weekly e-mails to the Committee member judges regarding pending legislation and other communications.
3. The Committee convenes weekly via conference call to discuss pending legislative matters. In addition, from time to time, the Committee assembles to consider legislative measures which require immediate attention or response.
4. The Committee may communicate with the Court, from time to time, on matters which require immediate attention.
5. The Committee communicates responses from the judiciary to the Contract Lobbyist.
6. The Contract Lobbyist and Administrative Office staff communicates with the General Assembly.

For purposes of swift consideration of legislation, and timely response to the Legislature, the majority of the Committee's work is performed electronically and telephonically.

ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

The role of the Committee includes proposing amendments, opposing draft legislation which negatively impacts the judiciary, and otherwise informing the Legislative Branch regarding the impact of proposed legislation. The Committee works to enable compromise in advance of legislative action; facilitate and promote communication between the Legislative and Judicial Branches, and contribute to the General Assembly's better understanding of Judicial Branch interests.

The role of the chairperson is vitally important. The chairperson must be swift and resolute in his/her assessment of legislative impact, and readily available to communicate when called upon by the Administrative Office legislative staff and the Supreme Court's contract lobbyist.

ROLE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

On occasion, and in consultation with the Committee chairperson, legislative staff of the Administrative Office will respond directly to legislative inquiries, lobbyists, and other proponents/opponents without full Committee input. Generally, this is contemplated in situations during which immediate response is required, such as filing/reading deadlines, and the close of the legislative session.