

Wyoming Legislative Process: *A brief overview*

By Marguerite Herman, Wyoming LWV

Wyoming Legislative Service Office Website www.wyoleg.gov

State statutes and Constitution

Legislators, their committee assignments and contact information, leadership

Bills from current and previous sessions. Each bill's information includes, action to date, all amendments proposed and any action on them, roll call votes, fiscal notes, conference committee action.

During sessions: floor calendars and committee meeting schedules, seating charts

During interims: committee meeting schedules, agendas, materials and streaming opportunities.

Requirements and suggestions for appearing before committees

How to "read a bill:" guide to deciphering the code for bills and amendments

Manual of Legislative Procedures

Sessions of Wyoming Legislature

General and Budget (General odd years, max 40 days. Two year session max 60 days.) 2020 Budget Session convenes Feb 10.

Session schedules are set by leadership shortly before sessions begin, including deadlines for bill action. (Miss a deadline, and it is dead.)

Organization

60 House Districts of about 9,500 residents each, "nested" into 30 Senate Districts. Legislature redraws district lines after decennial census to ensure "one man, one vote" representation. House traditionally seated geographically, Senate by party affiliation.

Legislators are identified by district number, e.g., Sen. Stephan Pappas, S7.

65th Legislature Leadership

Senate: 27 R, 3 D

President Drew Perkins, Casper

Majority Floor Leader Dan Dockstader, Afton

Vice President Ogden Driskill, Sundance

Minority Floor Leader Chris Rothfuss, Laramie

Minority Whip Liisa Anselmi-Dalton, Rock Springs

Minority Caucus Chairman Mike Gierau, Jackson

House: 51 R, 9 D, 11

Speaker Steve Harshman, Casper

Majority Floor Leader Eric Barlow, Gillette

Speaker Pro Tempore Albert Sommers

Majority Floor Leader Tyler Lindholm, Sundance

Minority Floor Leader Cathy Connolly, Laramie

Minority Whip Charles Pelkey, Laramie

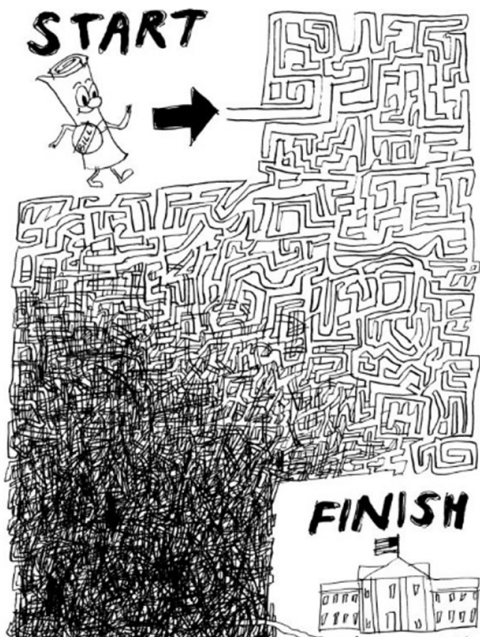
Committee System

Rationale, Organization, Function, Participation by public (you)

Management Council

Standing & Select, Task Force, Commissions

1. Judiciary
2. Appropriations
3. Revenue
4. Education
5. Agriculture, State and Public Lands & Water Resources
6. Travel, Recreations, Wildlife & Cultural Resources
7. Corporations, Elections & Political Subdivisions
8. Transportation, Highways & Military Affairs
9. Minerals, Business & Economic Development
10. Labor, Health & Social Services
11. Journal
12. Rules & Procedures



How a Bill Becomes a Law (maybe)

Legislator submits bill proposal to LSO for drafting. Draft circulated for sponsors. Or bill is written by interim committee, termed a “committee bill.” Bill is filed for introduction, and information appears on LSO Website for public view.

And then begins the proposal’s parlous progress through the Wyoming legislative process.

HOUSE OF ORIGIN

Budget Sessions: Non-budget measures must gain a 2/3 vote to proceed.

Revenue raising bills must start in House.

First Reading - Bill introduced by presiding officer, who refers to committee.

Committee chair schedules bill for hearing. Committee hears testimony, amends, refines and may vote to 1) recommend pass, 2) recommend do not pass, 3) not report out at all (effectively kill).

Bill that wins committee vote is placed on “General File” for consideration of the chamber sitting as “Committee of the Whole.” MFL and presiding officer decide if and when the bill is heard. Bill may be amended by adopting committee amendments and others offered from the floor and then may be passed by voice vote to Second Reading. COW debate is unlimited.

Second Reading debate limited. May further amend. Passed usually “without objection” to Third Reading.

Third Reading debate is limited. Final vote is roll call. Must pass by majority of those elected to the chamber. If approved, sent to second house for same process. As bills move from house to the other, termed “cross over.”

SECOND HOUSE

First Reading (introduction)

Committee

Committee of the Whole

Second Reading

Third Reading (final passage)

CONCURRENCE

Bill RETURNS to chamber of origin for acceptance of amendments.

Yes – bill signed by presiding officers and sent to governor for signature

No – bill goes to conference committee to write a version acceptable to both chambers

Where/when is committee meeting? Who’s on the committee? What does the conference report say?

Yes – bill signed by presiding officers and sent to governor for signature

No – bill goes to a second conference committee (if appointed)

Same questions about committee, meeting and report.

Yes – bill signed by presiding officers and sent to governor for signature

No – bill could go to third (free) conference committee

Oh, no. What will they do? What deals are being struck?

GOVERNOR

Signs, permits to become law without signature or vetoes.

Legislature may veto override. Requires 2/3 vote both houses.

Lobbying:

Registration and financial reports to Wyoming Secretary of State’s Office

Capitol Club (lobbying the lobbyists)

Opportunities during sessions, interim, receptions

Remember:

Mind the calendar and the clock

Every desk has drawer

Committees – be there and bring friends

Folly of assumptions

Know latest actions

Be cautious about using roll call votes

Interim work

Talk to legislators before, during and after sessions and any other time

Take legislation ideas to committees or individual legislators, then work.

Schedule for 2020 Wyoming Legislature

(can be changed by leadership without notice)

Day 1 – Monday, February 10	Session convenes with Joint Session at 10:00 a.m.
Day 3 – Wednesday, February 12	Noon deadline for all bill drafts to be in final form at LSO.
Day 5 -- Friday, February 14	Last day bill introductions.
Day 11 -- Monday, February 24	Last day bills to be reported out of Committee in House of Origin.
Day 12 -- Tuesday, February 25	Last day Committee of the Whole in House of Origin.
Day 13 -- Wednesday, February 26	Last day for 2nd Reading in House of Origin.
Day 14 -- Thursday, February 27	Last day for 3rd Reading on bills in House of Origin.
[CROSS-OVER]	
Day 19 -- Thursday, March 5	Last day bills to be reported out of Committee in second house.
Day 20 -- Friday, March 6	Last day for Committee of Whole on bills in second house.
Day 21 -- Monday, March 9	Last day for 2nd Reading on bills in second house.
Day 22 -- Tuesday, March 10	Last day for 3rd Reading on bills in second house.
Day 23 -- Wednesday, March 11	Concurrence on Amendments/Joint Conference Committee Reports.
Day 24 -- Thursday, March 12	Joint Conference Committee Reports All JCC Reports due to Front Desk by 2:00 p.m. Adjourn by midnight.