2015-2016 House Committees

Agriculture Finance Committee
Agriculture Policy Committee
Capital Investment Committee
Civil Law and Data Practices Committee
Commerce and Regulatory Reform Committee
Education Finance Committee
Education Innovation Policy Committee
Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Finance Committee
Ethics Committee
Government Operations and Elections Policy Committee
Greater Minnesota Economic and Workforce Development Policy Committee
Health and Human Services Finance Committee
Health and Human Services Reform Committee
Higher Education Policy and Finance Committee
Job Growth and Energy Affordability Policy and Finance Committee
Legacy Funding Finance Committee
Mining and Outdoor Recreation Policy Committee
Public Safety and Crime Prevention Policy and Finance Committee
Rules and Legislative Administration Committee
State Government Finance Committee
Veterans Affairs Division
Taxes Committee
    Property Tax and Local Government Finance Division
Transportation Policy and Finance Committee
Ways and Means Committee

*Capitol Quotes

Quotes can be found painted on the walls throughout the Capitol building. Gathered by Elmer Garnsey, chief Capitol decorator, they are meant as inspiration to elected officials and citizens who pass through the state house.

The quote featured on the front of this brochure can be found in the House of Representatives Retiring Room.

It is from George Campbell (1719-1796), who was born in Scotland. As a minister, theologian and professor of divinity, he became a philosopher of rhetoric and is remembered for his work, "A Dissertation of Miracles."

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICES

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Committees

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Capitol Quotes*

"Free and fair discussion will ever be found the firmest friend of truth."

— George Campbell

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The committee's role

It would be impossible for any legislator to be familiar with and understand each of the thousands of bills introduced during any given session. Therefore, House committees act as filters on various subject matters deciding which bills should be heard or if they should be approved and then moved on through the process.

Committees hold public hearings on bills to put each proposal into its best form. During a hearing, the committee can take testimony from the bill sponsors, the public and experts in the areas the bill would affect.

The committee has several courses of action it can take:

- Amend the bill;
- Combine two or more bills under one file number;
- Recommend a bill be approved as introduced;
- Recommend it be approved as amended;
- Send it to another committee for consideration;
- Vote not to approve the bill; or
- Table it, which in essence delays action.

Even if a bill is voted down by a committee, it can be resurrected. For example, a bill defeated by a committee could be amended into another bill in another committee or on the House Floor.

Committee appointments

Committee chairs are appointed by the Speaker of the House. These positions are generally reserved for senior caucus members. Before session begins in the first year of the biennium, members of the speaker-designate's caucus request assignments to certain committees and the minority leader-elect submits to the speaker a list of desired committee appointments for his or her caucus members. The speaker then makes the appointments. Each House member generally serves on three or four committees.

If you want to testify at a committee hearing . . .

Accessing committee information

Committee hearings are open to the public. In addition, all committee hearings are taped. Audio is available on the House website for meetings back to 2004. For information on accessing audio tapes for earlier years, contact the Legislative Reference Library at 651-296-8338.

Information about committee membership, agendas and schedules is available on the House website at www.house.mn. You can sign up to receive an electronic email with committee schedules or hear a recorded version of the House schedule by calling 651-296-9283.

Contact the committee administrator.

Each committee has an assigned committee administrator. It is best to contact that person at least a day or two before the hearing. Provide your name and organization affiliation, if any, tell them which bill/issue area you would like to comment on and indicate if you are for or against the proposed legislation. You should also ask how much time you will be allowed for testimony. Committee and administrator contact information can be found on the House website.

Arrive to the committee hearing early.

Getting to the meeting early will give you a chance to meet the committee administrator, identify legislators and generally get comfortable in the room. Be sure to turn off your mobile device, as these devices can interfere with audio in the room.

When you testify.

When you are asked to testify, you should be seated at the testifiers' table and begin by identifying yourself and the organization you represent, if any. Speak slowly and clearly into the microphone.

Speak through the chair.

All questions and answers during committee hearings are routed through the committee chair. Address the chair as "Madame Chair" or "Mr. Chair."

Be brief.

Make your key points as concise as possible. Most committee hearings are limited in time, and there are generally several bills on the agenda.

Be prepared to answer questions.

The best way to make your case is to provide straightforward answers to the legislators' questions. If you don't know the answer, just say so.

Show respect.

Your views are important and you have a right to be treated courteously by all members and staff. Likewise, legislators are more apt to respond to polite treatment than to browbeating. There are meritorious sides to every issue. Understand the difficult position legislators have in reaching their decisions.

Provide written summaries.

A concise and clearly written letter or summary can be an effective way to help legislators understand your point of view. Notify the committee administrator beforehand of any handouts you would like to provide.