
HOUSE BILL 2871

State of Washington

53rd Legislature

1994 Regular Session

By Representatives R. Meyers, Ballard, Kremen, Moak, Roland, Chappell, Jones, Rayburn, Dorn, Sheldon, L. Johnson, Eide, Campbell, Finkbeiner, Conway, Springer, Karahalios, Johanson, Ogden, Patterson, Kessler, Orr, Basich and Anderson; by request of Secretary of State

Read first time 01/26/94. Referred to Committee on State Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to the legislative process; and adding a new
2 chapter to Title 44 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes in parliamentary
5 forms of government the contribution of the device of "question period"
6 in fostering constructive debate and communication within that system
7 between the ministers who are responsible for the administration of the
8 departments and bureaus of the government and the remainder of the
9 legislative body. It is the intent of the legislature by this chapter
10 to provide a similar interchange of information between the members of
11 the house of representatives and the elected officials, agency
12 directors, and others in the executive branch who are responsible for
13 the implementation of the laws of this state. The legislature also
14 believes that this interaction will better inform the public about the
15 operations of state government and the functions of developing and
16 implementing public policy.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** During the regular legislative session in
18 each odd-numbered year, the house of representatives shall dissolve

1 into a committee of the whole for the purpose of receiving reports by
2 elected officials, appointed heads of agencies, or representatives of
3 multimember boards or commissions and examining these officials about
4 the conduct of the statutory responsibilities of their respective
5 agencies. An agency shall be requested to report on its statutory
6 operations and respond to questions from members of the house of
7 representatives under this chapter if at least one-fourth of the
8 members of each caucus agree to the request.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** Under appropriate rules of the house of
10 representatives, caucuses or members shall specify any specific
11 subjects about which members intend to inquire in connection with the
12 report of that agency. Following the report by the agency to the
13 committee of the whole, any member of the house of representatives may,
14 subject to the rules of the house of representatives adopted under
15 section 7 of this act, freely inquire about those subjects for which
16 prior notice has been provided to the agency.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The speaker of the house of representatives
18 shall arrange for a date and time at which the house of representatives
19 will receive the report regarding the operations of an agency and
20 provide the agency with adequate prior notice of the subjects about
21 which the members of the house of representatives intend to inquire in
22 connection with that agency.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) For any agency the head of which is
24 directly responsible to the governor or to another state elected
25 official, the governor or that official may decline to permit the
26 attendance of any representative of that agency before the committee of
27 the whole or may designate any other person to attend and report on
28 behalf of that agency in place of the person to whom the request was
29 directed under section 4 of this act.

30 (2) For any agency the head of which is directly responsible to the
31 governor or to another state elected official, the governor or that
32 official may designate any other person or persons in addition to the
33 person to whom the request was directed under section 4 of this act to
34 attend and respond on behalf of that agency to specific subjects about
35 which notice has been given under section 4 of this act.

1 (3) If an official declines to attend the committee of the whole at
2 the date and time requested by the speaker of the house of
3 representatives or refuses to respond to specific subjects about which
4 prior notice was provided under section 4 of this act, the house of
5 representatives may initiate a proceeding under chapter 44.16 RCW.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Full transcripts of any proceedings
7 conducted under this chapter shall be included as part of the official
8 journal of the house of representatives.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** The house of representatives shall provide
10 procedures in its rules for determining which agencies shall be
11 requested to report under this chapter and respond to inquiries by the
12 members, which officials shall represent an agency, the subjects about
13 which the agency shall be requested to provide information, the time to
14 be provided for respective agencies to report and respond to inquiries
15 from the members, and any limitations on the conduct of the committee
16 of the whole under this chapter.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** Sections 1 through 7 of this act shall
18 constitute a new chapter in Title 44 RCW.

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