

## Rules Committees

The parliamentary rules and procedures that govern each assembly lie at the heart of the legislative process. Legislative rules provide order, allow for the reasonable management of deliberations and debate, and ensure internal accountability. Stable rules protect the rights of both majority and minority members.

Because parliamentary procedures are vital to the legislative process, it is common for chambers to create a committee whose jurisdiction covers legislative rules. More than 70 percent of legislative assemblies reported having rules committees. Only the following chambers responded that they did not.

Colorado House	Nevada Senate and Assembly
Connecticut Senate and House	New Mexico House
Louisiana Senate and House	Texas Senate
Michigan House	

***Make-up of a rules committee.*** Committee chairs generally are appointed by a designated authority such as the presiding officer of the senate or house, another chamber leader or a committee on committees. In 36 legislative chambers, rules committees are no exception to this practice, and an appointed legislator serves as the head of the committee. In another third of the chambers, however, a legislative leader is designated to fill this position. Table 97-4.24 illustrates who acts as the rules committee chair.

There can be no committee without members. Table 97-4.25 highlights who selects lawmakers to serve on rules committees. In about half the legislative assemblies, the presiding officer appoints the rules committee members. In 13 chambers, another legislative leader makes the selections. Seniority systems are used by the senates in Arkansas, Idaho and Minnesota. Sometimes, all or part of the rules committee membership is set by statute or chamber rule; this is true in six legislative bodies.

The number of members serving on rules committees is shown in Table 97-4.26. This make-up may be affected if membership must be proportional—that is, the percentage of majority and minority members serving on the committee is approximately equal to the percentage of the full body that each party controls.

The following chambers require proportional representation on the rules committee.

Alaska Senate and House	New York Assembly
Arizona House	North Dakota Senate and House
Delaware House	Ohio Senate and House
Idaho Senate and House	Oklahoma House
Illinois Senate and House	Oregon Senate
Indiana House	Pennsylvania Senate
Kentucky Senate	South Dakota Senate and House
Maine House	Tennessee Senate and House
Michigan Senate	Washington Senate and House
Minnesota Senate	West Virginia House
Missouri Senate and House	Wisconsin Senate
Montana Senate and House	American Samoa House
New Hampshire Senate and House	Puerto Rico Senate
New Mexico Senate	

***Powers and duties of rules committees.*** Tables 97-4.27 and 97-4.28 illustrate the powers and duties assigned to rules committees. As the name implies, chamber rules often fall within the committee jurisdiction. The committee writes the rules in 43 chambers and deals with proposed amendments in 53 legislative assemblies. In 12 bodies, the committee makes rulings on questions of parliamentary procedure.

Often, the duties of the rules committee reach far beyond rules and procedure. For example, 22 legislative assemblies responded that their rules committees are responsible for investigating ethics or harassment charges. In seven chambers, the committee issues opinions regarding lobbying regulations. The rules committees of the California Senate, Iowa House, Minnesota Senate and House, Ohio Senate, Pennsylvania House, Rhode Island House, Virginia Senate, West Virginia Senate and Wisconsin Senate oversee their respective chamber's budgets. Legislative employees fall under rules committee jurisdiction in the California Senate, Iowa House, Minnesota Senate and House, Rhode Island House, Virginia Senate, West Virginia Senate, Wisconsin Senate and American Samoa House.

More than half the legislative chambers require the rules committee to provide notice of meetings. In the Alaska Senate and House and the Pennsylvania House, the rules committee provides notice only for substantive hearings such as when bills are considered.

Seventeen chambers do not require meeting notices from their rules committees; they are:

Alabama Senate and House	Oklahoma Senate and House
Arizona Senate	Utah Senate
Hawaii House	Virginia House
Indiana Senate	Washington Senate and House
Maine House	Wisconsin Assembly
New Mexico Senate	Wyoming Senate and House
New York Assembly	

Table 97-4.24 Who Serves as Rules Committee Chair

State (1)	President of the senate	Senate president pro tem	Speaker of the house	House speaker pro tem	Majority leader	Appointed legislator	Other
Alabama						B	
Alaska						B	
Arizona						B	
Arkansas						H	2
California		S				H	
Colorado							
Connecticut							
Delaware						H	
Florida						B	
Georgia						B	
Hawaii					H		
Idaho						B	
Illinois					H	S	
Indiana		S				H	
Iowa						H	
Kansas	S					H	
Kentucky					S		
Louisiana							
Maine			H				
Maryland						B	
Massachusetts							
Michigan						S	
Minnesota					B		
Mississippi							
Missouri					H	S	
Montana					B		

**Table 97-4.24 Who Serves as Rules Committee Chair, cont'd.**

State (1)	President of the senate	Senate president pro tem	Speaker of the house	House speaker pro tem	Majority leader	Appointed legislator	Other
Nebraska							3
Nevada							
New Hampshire			H			S	
New Jersey						S	
New Mexico						S	
New York			H				
North Carolina						H	
North Dakota					H		4
Ohio	S		H				
Oklahoma	S					H	
Oregon						S	
Pennsylvania					B		
Rhode Island						H	
South Carolina						H	
South Dakota		S	H				
Tennessee					H	S	
Texas						H	
Utah						B	
Vermont				S			
Virginia			H			S	
Washington	S		H				
West Virginia	S		H				
Wisconsin					B		
Wyoming	S		H				
American Samoa			H				
Puerto Rico					S		

**Table 97-4.24 Who Serves as Rules Committee Chair, cont'd.****Key:**

S=Senate

H=House or Assembly

B=Both chambers

**Notes:**

1. The following chambers did not return a survey: Colorado Senate, Delaware Senate, Hawaii Senate, Iowa Senate, Kentucky House, Maine Senate, Massachusetts Senate and House, Mississippi Senate and House, New York Senate, North Carolina Senate, Oregon House, Rhode Island Senate, South Carolina Senate, Vermont House, American Samoa Senate, District of Columbia Council, Guam Senate, Northern Mariana Islands Senate and House, Puerto Rico House and Virgin Islands Senate and House.
2. Arkansas Senate: A seniority system is used to select the rules committee chair.
3. Nebraska Legislature: The rules committee chair is elected by the full body.
4. North Dakota Senate: The assistant majority leader of the Senate serves as the rules committee chair.

Table 97-4.25 Who Appoints Rules Committee Members

State (1)	Lieutenant governor	President of the senate	Speaker of the house	President or speaker pro tem	Majority leader	Committee on committees	Caucus vote	Election by body	Use seniority system	All or some members are set by statute or rule	Other
Alabama	S		H								
Alaska		S	H			B					
Arizona		S	H								
Arkansas			H						S		
California			H				S	S			
Colorado											
Connecticut											
Delaware			H								
Florida		S	H								
Georgia	S		H								
Hawaii					H						
Idaho			H	S					S		
Illinois											2
Indiana			H	S							
Iowa			H								
Kansas			H				S			S	
Kentucky										S	
Louisiana											
Maine			H								
Maryland		S	H								
Massachusetts											
Michigan					S						
Minnesota			H						S		
Mississippi											
Missouri			H	S							
Montana			H			S					

**Table 97-4.25 Who Appoints Rules Committee Members, cont'd.**

State (1)	Lieutenant governor	President of the senate	Speaker of the house	President or speaker pro tem	Majority leader	Committee on committees	Caucus vote	Election by body	Use seniority system	All or some members are set by statute or rule	Other
Nebraska						S					
Nevada											
New Hampshire		S	H								
New Jersey		S									
New Mexico						S					
New York			H								
North Carolina			H								
North Dakota						B					
Ohio			H			S		S			
Oklahoma			H	S							
Oregon		S									
Pennsylvania			H	S						H	3
Rhode Island			H								
South Carolina			H								
South Dakota			H	S							
Tennessee		S	H								
Texas			H								
Utah		S	H								
Vermont						S					
Virginia			H							S	
Washington			H			S					
West Virginia		S	H								
Wisconsin			H					S		B	
Wyoming		S	H								
American Samoa			H								
Puerto Rico		S									



**Table 97-4.25 Who Appoints Rules Committee Members, cont'd.**

<p>Key:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>S=Senate</li><li>H=House or Assembly</li><li>B=Both chambers</li></ul> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The following chambers did not return a survey: Colorado Senate, Delaware Senate, Hawaii Senate, Iowa Senate, Kentucky House, Maine Senate, Massachusetts Senate and House, Mississippi Senate and House, New York Senate, North Carolina Senate, Oregon House, Rhode Island Senate, South Carolina Senate, Vermont House, American Samoa Senate, District of Columbia Council, Guam Senate, Northern Mariana Islands Senate and House, Puerto Rico House and Virgin Islands Senate and House.</li><li>2. Illinois Senate and House: The president of the Senate or speaker of the House select the majority party members. The Senate or House minority leader chooses minority party members.</li><li>3. Pennsylvania House: The House rules specify seven members of the rules committee by virtue of offices held; of the remaining 12 members, seven are appointed by the speaker and five by the minority leader.</li></ol>
---

Table 97-4.26 Number of Rules Committee Members

State (1)	Senate			House		
	Number from majority party	Number from minority party	Other	Number from majority party	Number from minority party	Other
Alabama	7	2		10	5	
Alaska	3	2		5	2	
Arizona	5	3		8	5	
Arkansas	12	3		15	0	
California	3	2		6	4	
Colorado						
Connecticut						
Delaware				3	2	
Florida	14	8				
Georgia	14	4		17	9	
Hawaii						
Idaho	8	1		11	3	
Illinois	3	2		3	2	
Indiana				5	3	
Iowa				8	6	
Kansas	9	0		3	2	
Kentucky	5	4				
Louisiana						
Maine				3	2	
Maryland	11	3		22	3	
Massachusetts						
Michigan	3	2				
Minnesota	15	6		10	7	
Mississippi						
Missouri	5	4		8	6	
Montana						

Table 97-4.26 Number of Rules Committee Members, cont'd.

State (1)	Senate			House		
	Number from majority party	Number from minority party	Other	Number from majority party	Number from minority party	Other
Nebraska			6			
Nevada						
New Hampshire	4	3		10	5	
New Jersey	6	3				
New Mexico	5	3				
New York				25	12	
North Carolina				12	2	
North Dakota	5	4		5	2	
Ohio	7	4		12	7	
Oklahoma	3	2				
Oregon	3	2				
Pennsylvania	11	7		11	8	
Rhode Island				12	5	
South Carolina				12	3	
South Dakota	4	3		5	2	
Tennessee	3	2		9	5	
Texas				7	4	
Utah	5	2		6	3	
Vermont	3	2				
Virginia	10	5		8	2	
Washington	11	8		12	7	
West Virginia	7	3				
Wisconsin	3	2		7	5	
Wyoming	3	2		9	4	
American Samoa				9	0	
Puerto Rico	3	2				

**Table 97-4.26 Number of Rules Committee Members, cont'd.**

<p>Key:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>S=Senate</li><li>H=House or Assembly</li><li>B=Both chambers</li></ul> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The following chambers did not return a survey: Colorado Senate, Delaware Senate, Hawaii Senate, Iowa Senate, Kentucky House, Maine Senate, Massachusetts Senate and House, Mississippi Senate and House, New York Senate, North Carolina Senate, Oregon House, Rhode Island Senate, South Carolina Senate, Vermont House, American Samoa Senate, District of Columbia Council, Guam Senate, Northern Mariana Islands Senate and House, Puerto Rico House and Virgin Islands Senate and House.</li></ol>
--

Table 97-4.27 Powers of Rules Committees

State (1)	Writes chamber rules	Hears or reports proposed amendments to rules	Rules on questions of parliamentary procedure	Appoints committee chairs	Appoints committee members	Establishes a general committee schedule	Refers bills to committee	Sets the daily floor calendar	Sets the consent calendar	Sets any special calendars	Supervises the engrossing or enrolling of bills	Supervises journal production
Alabama		S							H	B	S	S
Alaska	B	B						B		B		
Arizona								S				
Arkansas	B	B	B			S		S	S	S		
California	S	S	S	S	S	S	B					
Colorado												
Connecticut												
Delaware	H	H										
Florida		B	S			S		S	S	S		
Georgia	H	B						S		H		
Hawaii	H											
Idaho	B	B	S				H				B	B
Illinois		H					B					
Indiana	H	H									H	
Iowa	H											
Kansas	B	H	H	S	S	S		S				
Kentucky	S	S										
Louisiana												
Maine												
Maryland												
Massachusetts												
Michigan		S										
Minnesota	B	B								H		
Mississippi												
Missouri	B	B									B	
Montana		B	B									

Table 97-4.27 Powers of Rules Committees, cont'd.

State (1)	Writes chamber rules	Hears or reports proposed amendments to rules	Rules on questions of parliamentary procedure	Appoints committee chairs	Appoints committee members	Establishes a general committee schedule	Refers bills to committee	Sets the daily floor calendar	Sets the consent calendar	Sets any special calendars	Supervises the engrossing or enrolling of bills	Supervises journal production
Nebraska		S										
Nevada												
New Hampshire	B	B				S						
New Jersey		S										
New Mexico	S	S										
New York										H		
North Carolina	H					H		H				
North Dakota	B	B										
Ohio	H	H					B	B		B		
Oklahoma	S											
Oregon	S	S				S						
Pennsylvania	B	S										
Rhode Island	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
South Carolina		H								H		
South Dakota	B	B				B					B	
Tennessee	S	B										
Texas		H										
Utah	B	B								H		
Vermont	S	S										
Virginia	B	B										
Washington	H	H					S	B	B	B		
West Virginia	S	B				H				B		
Wisconsin						S		B	S	S		
Wyoming		B	B									
American Samoa	H	H	H			H			H	H	H	H
Puerto Rico	S					S		S		S		

**Table 97-4.27 Powers of Rules Committees, cont'd.****Key:**

S=Senate

H=House or Assembly

B=Both chambers

**Notes:**

1. The following chambers did not return a survey: Colorado Senate, Delaware Senate, Hawaii Senate, Iowa Senate, Kentucky House, Maine Senate, Massachusetts Senate and House, Mississippi Senate and House, New York Senate, North Carolina Senate, Oregon House, Rhode Island Senate, South Carolina Senate, Vermont House, American Samoa Senate, District of Columbia Council, Guam Senate, Northern Mariana Islands Senate and House, Puerto Rico House and Virgin Islands Senate and House.

**Table 97-4.28 More Powers of Rules Committees**

State (1)	Deals with gubernatorial appointments	Deals with all personal or congratulatory resolutions	Investigates any ethics or harassment charges	Issues opinions on lobbying rules and activities	Authorizes subpoenas, summons, writs, etc.	Oversees chamber budget	Oversees chamber office space	Oversees parking for members and staff	Has jurisdiction over legislative employees	Is authorized to meet while the chamber is in floor session	Other
Alabama	S	S		S							
Alaska		B	B				B	B			
Arizona			B								2
Arkansas	S	S	S	S	S					B	
California	S	S	H		B	S	S	B	S	S	
Colorado											
Connecticut											
Delaware											
Florida		S	S								
Georgia		S								H	3
Hawaii											
Idaho	S										
Illinois		H								B	4
Indiana										H	
Iowa			H			H			H		
Kansas							S				
Kentucky										S	
Louisiana											
Maine											5
Maryland											
Massachusetts											
Michigan	S		S								6
Minnesota		H	S			B			B	H	
Mississippi											
Missouri		H									
Montana			B								



Table 97-4.28 More Powers of Rules Committees, cont'd.

State (1)	Deals with gubernatorial appointments	Deals with all personal or congratulatory resolutions	Investigates any ethics or harassment charges	Issues opinions on lobbying rules and activities	Authorizes subpoenas, summons, writs, etc.	Oversees chamber budget	Oversees chamber office space	Oversees parking for members and staff	Has jurisdiction over legislative employees	Is authorized to meet while the chamber is in floor session	Other
Nebraska											
Nevada											
New Hampshire											
New Jersey											
New Mexico	S										
New York										H	
North Carolina	H										
North Dakota											
Ohio	S	H				S					7
Oklahoma											
Oregon	S	S									
Pennsylvania	S					H					
Rhode Island	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	
South Carolina										H	
South Dakota											
Tennessee											
Texas		H									
Utah											8
Vermont			S	S	S						
Virginia			H			S	S		S	S	9
Washington	S	H	S		S					H	
West Virginia		H	B	B		S	H	H	S		
Wisconsin		S	S			S	S	S	S		10
Wyoming										B	
American Samoa	H	H	H	H	H		H	H	H		
Puerto Rico										S	

**Table 97-4.28 More Powers of Rules Committees, cont'd.**

<p>Key:</p> <p>S=Senate H=House or Assembly B=Both chambers</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The following chambers did not return a survey: Colorado Senate, Delaware Senate, Hawaii Senate, Iowa Senate, Kentucky House, Maine Senate, Massachusetts Senate and House, Mississippi Senate and House, New York Senate, North Carolina Senate, Oregon House, Rhode Island Senate, South Carolina Senate, Vermont House, American Samoa Senate, District of Columbia Council, Guam Senate, Northern Mariana Islands Senate and House, Puerto Rico House and Virgin Islands Senate and House.</li> <li>2. Arizona Senate and House: Both rules committees review all legislation for constitutionality and proper form.</li> <li>3. Georgia House: The committee also deals with all contests to the seating of any person elected as a member and oversees the admittance of guests to the floor.</li> <li>4. Illinois Senate: The rules committee considers or refers all floor amendments, joint action motions and conference committee reports.</li> <li>5. Maine House: The committee handles any business referred to it by the chamber.</li> <li>6. Michigan Senate: The committee issues opinions concerning the rules on legislative conduct and ethics and deals with any resolutions that are not personal or congratulatory in nature.</li> <li>7. Ohio Senate: The rules committee considers resolutions proposing the creation of special investigatory committees and deals with complaints against press or media representatives.</li> <li>8. Utah House: The committee proposes bill referrals to the speaker.</li> <li>9. Virginia Senate and House: Both committees deal with resolutions establishing studies. In addition, the Senate rules committee issues advisory opinions pertaining to conflict of interest, hears all questions concerning bill referrals, deals with any matters concerning the Senate clerk's office and handles matters related to the news media.</li> <li>10. Wisconsin Assembly: The rules committee has the power to introduce bills during special, extended or extraordinary sessions.</li> </ol>
---