

The Connecticut Legislative Reform Agenda

Proposed by Connecticut House Republicans

Robert M. Ward, House Minority Leader

Lawrence F. Cafero, Jr., Deputy House Minority Leader

Claudia "Dolly" Powers, Deputy House Minority Leader

1. Budget deliberations shall be conducted out in the open.
2. New taxes and tax increases shall receive a public hearing before coming to a vote in the legislature.
3. We propose that emergency-certified bills (e-certs) must be available publicly, via the Internet, at least 72 hours prior to a vote.
4. All e-certs must be passed by a legislative committee of cognizance before coming to a vote by the full House or Senate.
5. All legislative committee agendas shall be publicly available in the committee room and on the Internet at least 36 hours before every meeting.
6. Legislative sessions shall end at midnight.
7. Require legislative committee offices to have easily accessible e-mail addresses for the public to e-mail testimony and require that testimony be distributed to the committee members on the day of the public hearing.
8. Legislative committees are encouraged to bring public hearings into the 21st century and increase the public's participation by experimenting with remote, interactive hearing locations across the state.
9. The number of legislative committees shall be combined and reduced. To simplify the cumbersome committee process and make it more understandable to the public, we propose to consolidate the number of legislative committee from 26 to 17.
10. The separate Appropriations Committee and the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee shall be merged into a Ways and Means Committee that shall consider what revenues are available as well as how that money is then spent. A separate Capital Projects Committee shall consider state bonding and capital projects.

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PROPOSED COMMITTEE CONSOLIDATION

The Joint Standing Committees of the General Assembly shall be:

Ways and Means (Appropriations+Finance)

Combining both the sources and uses of state revenues under a single committee. Same as current Appropriations Committee cognizance minus bills that create or enlarge a state mandate to local governments, defined in subsection (a)(2) of section 2-32b of the general statutes and favorably reported by any other committee. Same as current Finance, Revenue and Bonding minus bills on employer contributions for unemployment compensation purposes and minus bonding (going to a new a separate Capital Projects Committee)

Capital Projects Committee

Cognizance for all bonding.

Banks and Insurance

Combine Banks and Insurance, minus matters relating to real estate law

Commerce and Business

Combine cognizance of Commerce, and General Law committees plus those issues within cognizance of Labor committee other than matters relating to the conditions of employment of state and municipal employees and the substantive law of state and municipal employees' collective bargaining; the law of business organizations currently within the cognizance of the Judiciary committee, including uniform laws related to business matters; all matters relating to telecommunications and information systems; bills on employer contributions for unemployment compensation purposes; and job training institutions and programs, apprenticeship training programs, adult job training programs offered to the public by any state agency or funded in whole or in part by the state, and the office of workforce competitiveness.

Education	Combine Education & Higher Education & Employment Advancement minus job training institutions and programs, apprenticeship training programs, adult job training programs offered to the public by any state agency or funded in whole or in part by the state, and the office of workforce competitiveness.
Energy and Environment	Combine Energy & Technology and Environment, minus matters relating to telecommunications and information systems
Executive and Legislative Nominations	Same as current
Government Administration & State Employees	Same as current plus all matters relating to conditions of employment of state employees and the substantive law of state collective bargaining
Human Services	Same as current
Judiciary	Same as current minus the law of business organizations, including those uniform laws related to business matters and all matters related to the Department of Correction and adding all matters relating to real estate law.
Legislative Management	Same as current plus Interns
Planning, Development & Housing	Same as current plus all matters relating to conditions of employment of municipal employees; the substantive law of municipal collective bargaining; and, bills that create or enlarge a state mandate to local governments, defined in subsection (a)(2) of section 2-32b of the general statutes and favorably reported by any other committee.
Program Review and Investigations	Same as current
Public Health	Same as current
Public Safety and Corrections	Same as current plus all matters related to the Department of Correction
Regulation Review	Same as current
Transportation	Same as current