



## Wisconsin Legislative Council Staff

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### BACKGROUND

The Wisconsin Legislative Council and Staff were created in 1947 by Chapter 444, Laws of 1947. The Council was a committee of 12 legislators and was charged to conduct studies of matters of concern to the Legislature, either during or between sessions of the Legislature, and to report its recommendations to the next general or special session. The Staff consisted of an executive director and two assistants.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY

The current Legislative Council staff consists of 17 attorneys, 2 analysts, and 5 administrative staff. The staff's responsibilities to the Legislature have greatly expanded over time. The staff provides confidential, nonpartisan services to all members of the Legislature to support the institution as a whole and the work of individual legislators.

The Council created in 1947 has been renamed the Joint Legislative Council and has 22 members, including the entire leadership of the Legislature. The Joint Legislative Council and the Legislative Council staff continue to conduct studies, commonly referred to as study committees, which develop legislation to address important issues facing the Legislature. In addition, the staff currently:

- **Staff every standing committee** in the Legislature, with the exception of the Joint Committee on Finance. Legislative Council staff attend every hearing and executive session of the committees and are available to all members of the committee to answer questions regarding pending legislation and current law that arise. Materials distributed at public hearings are available on the Legislative Council website at [https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lc/hearing\\_testimony\\_and\\_materials](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lc/hearing_testimony_and_materials).
- Provide **legal and policy research and analysis** to legislative committees, legislative task forces, and individual legislators to support legislators' work in developing and preparing to vote on legislation. In addition, the staff assist legislators and their staff in responding to legal and policy questions raised by outside stakeholders and constituents.
- Respond to questions regarding **legislative procedure** for committees and for the Legislature as a whole.
- Prepare an **Amendment Memo** to describe every amendment recommended by a standing committee or adopted by either house of the Legislature. Amendment memos are included on the bill history and are available at <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2019/related/lcamendmemo>.
- Prepare an **Act Memo** to describe every enactment of the Legislature. Act memos are included on the act's bill history and are available at <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2019/related/lactmemo>.
- Prepare **Issue Briefs**, which provide a two-page explanation of topics of interest to the Legislature. Issue Briefs are arranged by subject area and are available at [http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lc/issue\\_briefs](http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lc/issue_briefs).
- Prepare **Information Memos**, which provide detailed descriptions of topics of interest to the Legislature. Information Memos are available at [http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lc/information\\_memos](http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lc/information_memos).
- Coordinate **administrative rule review** by the Legislature through operation of the Rules Clearinghouse and as staff for the Joint Committee on the Review of Administrative Rules.

