



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #129

Task Force on Technology and Electoral Participation (DOA -- General Agency Provisions)

[LFB 2001-03 Budget Summary: Page 55, #9]

CURRENT LAW

Under s. 16.40(14) of the statutes, the Governor may authorize special and executive order committees to make expenditures not exceeding \$2,000 GPR per fiscal year from an appropriation that supports the costs of special and executive order committees and dues payments to various interstate bodies [s. 20.505(3)(a)]. Requests for annual expenditures from this appropriation for a special or executive order committee that would exceed \$2,000 GPR per fiscal year must be approved by the Joint Committee on Finance. Base level funding in the appropriation is \$359,800 GPR annually.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$50,000 GPR in 2002-03 to the Department's special and executive order committees appropriation [recodified as s. 20.505(4)(ba)] for the purpose of supporting the operation of a task force to be charged with finding ways to use technology to increase voter participation.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Currently, the appropriation supporting special and executive order committees and the state's membership in interstate bodies funds 28 different executive order committees and task forces (at an annual cost of \$24,000 GPR in 2000-01) and the state's membership in such bodies as the Education Compact Commission, the Great Lakes Compact Commission, the Midwest Higher Education Compact, and half the costs (the legislative branch pays the other half) of the Council of

State Government (at an annual cost of \$335,400 GPR in 2000-01). There is currently an unobligated balance of \$400 GPR in the appropriation.

2. Most of the special committees and task forces that are currently authorized by the Governor to expend from \$500 GPR to \$2,000 GPR annually were created by the previous administration. It is not known at this writing which of the current special and executive committees will be continued by the new administration. To the extent that these bodies are not continued or are allowed to expire, base level funding would be freed to support some of the costs of the proposed Task Force on Technology and Electoral Participation.

3. The Task Force on Technology and Electoral Participation has yet to be created and charged with additional, specific tasks. Currently, there is no detail with respect to how the \$50,000 GPR in 2001-02 recommended for the Task Force would be used, though some of the funding would undoubtedly be used for members' actual and necessary meeting expenses. Typically, these types of costs are funded under the allocations of up to \$2,000 GPR annually that a Governor may already allocate to a special committee under current law.

4. The Governor also has the inherent authority to direct executive branch agencies to provide staff and technical assistance to any special and executive order committees.

5. In light of the uncertainties surrounding the charge that will be given to the proposed Task Force on Technology and Electoral Participation, the current lack of budget detail with respect to the recommended \$50,000 GPR allocation, the ability of the Governor to direct state agencies to provide base level staffing and technical assistance to the Task Force, and the potential for some base level funding to become available in the current special and executive committees appropriation, the Committee could choose to delete the Governor's recommendation at this time.

6. However, Wisconsin has traditionally been among the states with the highest levels of voter participation. The Committee may conclude it is desirable to make the recommended commitment of state resources to ensure even higher levels of turnout. Under this alternative, the Committee could approve the Governor's recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation provide \$50,000 GPR in 2002-03 to support the operation of a task force to be charged with finding ways to use technology to increase voter participation.

2. Delete the Governor's recommendation.

Alternative 2	GPR
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Bill)	- \$50,000

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