



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

One East Main, Suite 301 • Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 266-3847 • Fax: (608) 267-6873

April 16, 2009

Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #172

Option to Provide Budget Materials on the Internet (Budget Management and Compensation Reserves)

[LFB 2009-11 Budget Summary: Page 118, #9]

CURRENT LAW

Under current law, the Department of Administration (DOA) is required to provide a copy of the state budget report that is submitted at the same time as the executive budget bill in printed or optical disk format to each member of the Legislature.

GOVERNOR

AB 75 would specify that the budget-in-brief and the biennial state budget report could be posted on the Internet as an alternative to the current requirement that a copy in printed or optical disk format be provided to each member of the Legislature.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. For the Governor's 2009-11 budget recommendations, DOA provided printed copies of four budget documents for each legislative office. These documents include: (a) the Budget Message (9 pages); (b) the Budget-in-Brief (91 pages); (c) the Executive Budget book (574 pages); and (d) Summary of Tax Exemption Devices (88 pages). The administration indicates that it could save printing costs by posting these executive budget documents on its website, rather than providing printed copies to each legislative office.

2. Staff from DOA indicate that this proposal is a cost saving measure that is consistent with the Legislature's efforts to use more technology in its operations. DOA had from 425 to 700 copies of each of these four documents printed for distribution at the time of the Governor's budget

speech. It estimates that printing these documents for the 2009-11 budget process cost approximately \$20,000 in 2008-09.

3. The biennial budget bill is the primary focus of the Legislature from its introduction in February through passage of the bill in June or later. The executive budget documents are useful in providing information about the Governor's policy goals and intentions that is not included in the statutory language of the bill itself. It is likely that if printed copies of the executive budget documents were not provided to members of the Legislature by DOA, most legislative offices would use their office printers to produce copies so that they would be available for reference at meetings or hearings where computer access is not available, transferring to the Legislature costs associated with a current function of the administration.

4. Staff from DOA indicate that printed copies of these documents would be provided to legislative offices upon request. To ensure that printed copies would be available, the Governor's recommendation could be modified to require that printed copies be provided to legislative offices, if requested.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to specify that the budget-in-brief and the biennial state budget report could be posted on the Internet as an alternative to the current requirement that a copy in printed or optical disk format be provided to each member of the Legislature.

2. Modify the Governor's recommendation to require DOA to provide printed copies of the budget documents to legislative offices upon request.

3. Delete provision.

Prepared by: Dave Loppnow