

Inside the Legislative Process Committee Meeting Minutes

2021 ASLCS Spring Business Meeting
Boston
Saturday, June 5, 2021

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 9:06 a.m. by Chair Buddy Johnson (Ark.).

Attendance

The following members were present: Buddy Johnson (Ark.), Brad Hendrickson (Wash.), Joyce Wright (Ala.), Robert Haney (Texas), Ali Sagraves (Ohio), Jen Storie (Utah), Tim Sekerak (Ore.)

Guests in attendance: Holly South (NCSL) and Angela Andrews (NCSL, remote).

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the April 30, 2021 electronic meeting were approved.

Old Business

Brad Hendrickson presented a report from the Subcommittee on Technology on the modernization of ILP project. The pilot project developed by the Washington State legislative systems department was successfully migrated to digital environment and deployed and made available via the NCSL website. The 1997-2008 survey results and analysis are now online and key word searchable. Angela Andrews (NCSL) noted that the Inside the Legislative Process survey stopped in 2010 as the response rate became so low as to make meaningful analysis impossible. The ILP was not designed or envisioned as an online database of answers, but a value-added narrative analysis of the information provided through systematic surveys of all the states. Updates to the database can happen at any time, but the survey tool will need refinement and recalibration. Perhaps smaller, more focused topics, or more frequent questions, less value-added analysis. It's a matter for us to decide how to restart the data collection process.

Brad Hendrickson inquired about inclusion of ListServ questions and answers in the database. Holly South said that it was possible to do so, however currently the process is to retain those answers only for the requesting state. Only one other NCSL staff section (LINCS) provides open information sharing and they anonymize the answers. Ali Sagraves offered that just the list of questions asked would be helpful.

Joyce Wright inquired about the ways the information could be protected from general or unauthorized access. Is it possible to set up a log-in so that the system could filter access? Robert Haney inquired if we had the authority to set up restrictions to "our" data on NCSL's website. Holly South provided that it's not so much a question of authority but architecture of the website. NCSL is undergoing a lengthy technology upgrade and this has delayed exploration of solutions to partition access to various parts of the NCSL website to authorized persons only. Angela mentioned that currently NCSL has Microsoft SharePoint, but it requires a Microsoft account and license from the end-user which is not something all states have adopted. Jen Storie provided

that as a new ASLCS member and principle all the historical data is helpful. Buddy Johnson mentioned that even if the information about other states is not relevant to your own state's processes because of your own rules, customs and practices, having that perspective can be enlightening. Brad asked if we could make the existence of the database invisible unless the person was authorized, for example visible only to those on the online roster. Holly said that a log-in would take a while to develop given NCSL's technology and architecture.

New Business

Robert Haney proposed collecting the rules documents from all chambers related to COVID-19 changes. Many questions have been posed in every state about whether special rules needed to be adopted to accommodate concerns about virus transmission in the legislative setting. Should these changes be woven in to the "ordinary" rules or should they be adopted as separate sections which could be easily deleted once the pandemic was over. What are the common changes made, what are the uniquely clever solutions, and are there similarities which can be identified? Holly mentioned that she has this information but does not post it on the website. She would be happy to provide it upon request.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:59 a.m.