

## Legislative Effectiveness Committee

### Meeting Summary

August 2013

#### Meeting Session:

#### Getting Practical Help From NCSL

#### Overview & Panelists:

NCSL provides meetings, information, advice and technical assistance to legislatures and legislators. This help can take many forms, such as testifying at committee hearings about practices in the other states, providing workshops to learn tips about working with the media and briefing legislators on the impact of recently enacted federal legislation.

Moderator: Brian Weberg, Group Director, NCSL

Panelists: Senator John Goedde, Idaho

Senator Joyce Elliott, Arkansas

Karmen Hanson, Program Manager, NCSL

#### Summary:

The panelists and participants created an informal discussion group and identified the ways for legislators and staff to get the most out of their membership with NCSL:

- Talk with the expert. NCSL has experts on every topic that legislatures encounter. State legislators and staff benefit greatly by talking to that expert and getting the 50-state perspective of the bills and approaches to the topic. The expert can also help you sort out the pros and cons of the different approaches.
- Check out the website. NCSL has lots of fact-based objective information, much of it available on the website. When dealing with a new issue, a good first step is to check out what resources are available from NCSL's website at: <http://www.ncsl.org/>.
- Participate on an NCSL committee or task force. Senators John Goedde and Joyce Elliott both described how much they learned when they chaired or participated as a member of an NCSL committee or task force. The experience also connects you with key legislators and staff across the country.
- Use NCSL expertise in your own state. NCSL staff may be available to hold workshops or provide testimony or other assistance in your state. You need to coordinate these requests with your leadership, but this kind of assistance can often provide learning opportunities or objective information when it is most needed.
- Meet your state liaison. NCSL provides one or two staff liaisons for each state. These liaisons help a state's legislators and staff connect with NCSL and its resources, as well as providing information about the state to NCSL staff. If you are ever in doubt as to how NCSL can help you on a problem or an issue, just call or email your state liaison.

- Advocate with the federal government. NCSL's DC office lobbies Congress and the federal executive branch to carry out bi-partisan policies of the organization. Legislators and staff benefit as they come to know the NCSL DC staff that connect to their areas of interest.