

The Council

Special Session Planning

The Legislative Management will be meeting on Wednesday, January 14, to finalize arrangements in response to the Governor calling for a special session to convene on January 21. In addition to receiving a report from the Rural Health Transformation Committee, the Legislative Management will consider special session rules recommended by the Legislative Procedure and Arrangements Committee. The Legislative Management also will establish a schedule for the 1st day of the special session.

If the Legislative Management follows a schedule similar to the most recent special session in October 2023, the House and Senate will convene at 8:30 a.m. on the 1st day. Before convening that morning, rules committees from both chambers will meet at 7:30 a.m. to approve the rules to be recommended to each chamber. After the chambers meet separately, the Governor will present the constitutionally required state of the state address at 10:00 a.m. The remainder of the day will be dedicated to meetings of the Joint Appropriations Committee and the Joint Policy Committee. Because the Constitution of North Dakota requires the first and second reading of a bill to be on two separate natural days, there is not likely to be another floor session until Thursday morning. If any bill introduced on Wednesday is adopted in the chamber of origin on Thursday, the bill may be introduced in the second chamber that day and sent to the floor for second reading on Friday.

Legislative Procedure and Arrangements Committee

The Legislative Procedure and Arrangements Committee held its third meeting on January 8. The committee reviewed proposed legislative rule changes for the upcoming special session. The rule changes approved by the committee for recommendation to the Legislative Management include changes to allow for expedited floor procedures and changes to the manner in which bills may be introduced during the special session. The rule changes limit bill introduction to those bills approved for introduction by the Legislative Management and bills approved for introduction on the floor by a two-thirds vote of the

Upcoming Meetings

January

13-14 Rural Health Transformation

14 Higher Education Funding Review
Legislative Management

15 Higher Education Institutions

February

18 Budget Section (including divisions)

23 Child Custody Review Task Force

March

26 Water Topics Overview





National Conference of State Legislatures Training Sessions

Representatives from the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) traveled to North Dakota on January 7 to deliver three in-person training sessions to Legislative Council staff. Jessica Hoffman, from NCSL's Legislative Training Institute, delivered a presentation on communication styles, allowing participants to identify their communication styles and the communication styles of others to learn how to best communicate effectively. Mark Quiner, the director of NCSL's Center for Ethics in Government, delivered presentations on how staff can demonstrate perseverance and resiliency during challenging times and practical tools staff can use to manage the demands of multiple tasks and enhance personal productivity. The training also offered the opportunity for 10 of the newest members of the Legislative Council staff, onboarded as a result of the Legislative Council's approved staff expansion, to interact with their peers and be exposed to the workplace culture of the office.

Legislative Procedure and Arrangements Committee Continued

members of the House or Senate present and voting. The rule changes eliminate the operation of the Delayed Bills Committee during the special session. The proposed rules also eliminate the normal standing and appropriations committees for each chamber and instead create two joint committees. The Joint Appropriations Committee, consisting of the 39 members who served on the Appropriations Committees in each house during the regular legislative session, will jointly hear all bills that serve primarily to provide an appropriation. The Joint Policy Committee, consisting of 28 members appointed by the Majority Leader in each house, will hear all other bills not assigned to the Joint Appropriations Committee. If adopted by each house, the proposed rule changes will expire at the conclusion of the special legislative session.

The committee also approved for recommendation to the Legislative Management an additional rule change for consideration during the special session, which would become effective at the conclusion of the special session. This rule change would move the prefiling deadline for agency bills to the day before Thanksgiving, rather than the current deadline of the day after the conclusion of the Organizational Session. The proposed rule also changes the deadlines for introducing study resolutions and resolutions proposing amendments to the constitution and the crossover date for those resolutions.

The committee received an interim report from the consultant hired to assist the committee in its study of term limits, and a presentation on the impacts of term limits in other states from a representative of the National Conference of State Legislatures. The committee held an executive session to receive a presentation from representatives of the Highway Patrol regarding legislator security and the results of a Capitol threat assessment. The committee approved for recommendation to the Legislative Management a proposed legislative rule amendment to eliminate the printing of legislator address information in the legislative rule book. The committee also reviewed and approved for recommendation to the Legislative Management revisions to the *North Dakota Legislative Assembly Policy Against Workplace Harassment* and a proposed bill draft and rule change to reduce the number of journals and state documents required to be printed and delivered in a hard copy format.





Justine Burnham

Justine joined the Legislative Council as a Policy Analyst at the beginning of January. She holds a B.A. in English from the University of Massachusetts. Put simply, the defining theme of her career is turning complexity into clarity -- most recently for a client who needed research, writing, and project management support during the 2025 legislative session. In her free time, Justine enjoys spending time with friends and traveling. (Speaking of travel: Justine has a long commute and is desperately in need of your podcast recommendations!)



Cody Sorenson

Cody Sorenson joined the Legislative Council as an IT Specialist for the Information Technology Services Division. Originally from Bismarck, Cody recently graduated from Minnesota State University Moorhead with a bachelor's degree in computer information systems, where he also played collegiate football. Outside of work, Cody enjoys spending time with family, watching football, and staying active by playing golf.



Lisa Andersen

Lisa Andersen joined the Legislative Council in January 2026 as counsel. She also worked for the North Dakota Supreme Court, federal courts, and in private practice before she joined Legislative Council. Lisa also serves as a Judge Advocate in the North Dakota National Guard.

Lisa grew up in Barnesville, MN, and attended North Dakota State University where she earned a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Communication before completing her juris doctorate from the University of North Dakota School of Law. While in law school, Lisa served as a legislative intern for the House Industry, Business and Labor and Agriculture Committees during the 2019 legislative session. In her free time, Lisa enjoys hiking and traveling with her husband and son, exercising, and reading.

Legislative Council Holiday Party

The Legislative Council staff held its annual holiday party last Friday evening and celebrated with pizza and a cornhole tournament.



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