



The Council

A Kind of Magic

You may have heard the term "engrossing" with respect to a bill and wondered if someone thought the bill was spellbinding or captivating. Actually, the term refers to the act of incorporating an amendment into the current version of the bill to create a new version of the bill.

The process begins with a standing committee adopting an amendment and taking final action on a bill. The committee clerk then delivers the bill and the proposed amendment to the Legislative Council where attorneys review the amendment and ensure the amendment is in its proper form and style. The attorneys create a new version of the bill which fully incorporates all amendments. When a bill is in the chamber of introduction, the bill is deemed engrossed when the amendments are adopted on the floor. When the bill is in the second chamber, the bill is not officially engrossed and the official version remains the version that left the chamber of origin--with the second chamber's amendment attached to the bill. Thus, you will see a bill heading change from the FIRST ENGROSSMENT to the SECOND ENGROSSMENT in the chamber of introduction depending on the number of times the bill is amended. However, in the second chamber, the bill heading will stay at the engrossment level it was at when it left the house of introduction, and only the language after the engrossment level will change. For instance, a Senate Bill that left the Senate at the second engrossment level would read "SECOND ENGROSSMENT with House Amendments" if amended by the House, rather than incrementing to a third engrossment when amended.

Until 2011, when the Legislative Council implemented a new bill drafting system that allowed the creation of the red and green (Christmas tree versions) marked up bills showing amendments, the primary ways to understand amendments were to either write the changes into a copy of the bill or paste cut-outs of the amendment language into a copy of the bill.

For those new to the legislative process, you likely never had the joy of reading line by line amendment instructions and wondering how those instructions actually changed the bill. This session is the first session during which the amendment instructions have been replaced with a copy of the Christmas tree version as the official amendment. This change has greatly reduced the amount of time required for the Legislative Council staff to engross the bill because the attorneys no longer have to compare the amendment instructions to the bill, which also greatly reduces the amount of time required for the Legislative Council administrative staff to proofread and edit both the amendment instructions and multiple versions of the bill. We hope this reduction in review time will especially be noticeable in the final hours of the session. While this explanation may not have been a particularly engrossing read, it hopefully has shed some light on the magic of the engrossing process.

Employee Spotlight



Kylah Aull began working for the Legislative Branch in 1993. After three sessions as a Senate staffer, she joined the Legislative Council in 2009 as a legislative business analyst. Kylah is now the manager of library and records services. Her work includes conducting research on behalf of legislators and staff, advising on legislative procedures, and overseeing legislative archival efforts.

Kylah grew up on a farm near Manfred, North Dakota. She studied music performance and research methodologies at Romerike Folkehøgskole, Moorhead State University, and the University of Minnesota; and was a graduate fellow and a private and university instructor before joining the Legislative Council.

Kylah's greatest joy is her daughter with whom she enjoys traveling, Nordic skiing, and a host of other fun adventures. Kylah also is a church council member, a former assistant host state coordinator for the Council of State Government's Midwest Legislative Conference, and a former staff section director for the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Session Statistics

508 Bills Awaiting Final Action
493 Bills in Committee
89 Bills Enrolled
3 Bills Signed by Governor
799 Amendments Requested

Important Dates

Mar. 19: Crossover Date for Resolutions

Apr. 4: Deadline for Referrals of Bills in Second House to Appropriations Committees

Employee Spotlight



Melissa Ingram joined the Legislative Council in 2017 as a library and records assistant. During session, Melissa provides training and assistance to committee clerks, reviews legislative records for accuracy and completeness before archiving, and processes fiscal notes. She also assists legislators and staff with out-of-state travel arrangements, compiles legislative histories and research, and digitizes and performs quality checks on legislative records.

Originally from Ohio, Melissa graduated from the University of Mary with a bachelor's degree in social and behavioral science and history and from Sam Houston State University with a master's degree in history. She has called North Dakota home for several years. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends, traveling, and taking her dog Cooper on walks and adventures.

