



The Senate Committee on Finance

Budget Bulletin

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September 13, 2019

INTERIM COMMITTEE MEETINGS

West Virginia has a part-time legislature that typically meets for a regular legislative session every year from early January to early March. The legislature does not, however, remain dormant for the rest of the year. Interim committees meet regularly to discuss issues of importance to the state.



This is a chance for the Legislature to monitor ongoing issues, introduce study topics and formulate legislation for the upcoming legislative session.

HOW ARE INTERIM COMMITTEES FORMED?

West Virginia Code §4-1-1 lays out the rules regarding interim committees. Interim committees can be formed either by a resolution from either chamber of the legislature or by a motion from the Joint Committee on Government and Finance. While not required by statute, nearly all interim committees are joint committees, meaning they are composed of members from both chambers. The Senate President and the House Speaker decide the membership of these committees as well as the staffing.

Joint Committee on Government and Finance

This important committee addresses rules governing both chambers of the legislature. It is made up of the following members:

- Senate President
- House Speaker
- Majority and Minority Party leaders from each chamber
- Finance and Judiciary Committee Chairmen from each chamber

WHEN DO INTERIM COMMITTEES MEET?

All interim committees, for the sake of efficiency, meet within a specified two to three day period. These interim meetings typically happen once a month but some circumstances, such as a special session, might lead to less frequent meetings. The interim committee dates and the schedule for those dates are set by the President and the Speaker, who check the availability of their members.

September interims have been scheduled for the 23rd to the 25th. All interim meetings are open to the public except the Commission on Special Investigations. You can check the schedule at: www.wvlegislature.gov/committees/interims/interims.cfm

WHAT DO INTERIM COMMITTEES DO?

After the conclusion of a regular session, the Joint Committee on Government and Finance meets to discuss study topics for the interim meetings. Study topics are often generated from bills that did not pass the regular session but are thought to have merit. Topics might include a reorganization of state government, changes in regulations or modernization of the tax structure. The Committee assigns the topics to the most relevant committee.

The interim committees discuss and debate the topics, often asking outside experts to testify. Sometimes, the committee decides the topic is not worth investigating further. Other times, the topics studied in interim committees become the basis of legislation in the upcoming session.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Joint Committee on Finance interim meetings provide an opportunity for legislators to get updates on the state's finances, as well as hear from agencies about financial legislation they plan propose. Members of the Committee are also informed about topics that may have fiscal impact so that they have a solid understanding of the topic before the session begins. Topics explored in recent years include sports betting, PEIA funding, motor vehicle fleet management and historic tax credits. Each of these issues eventually led to some form of legislation.

KEY TERMS

Regular Legislative Session: The period of time when legislators come to the capitol to debate and pass legislation. Typically, regular session starts the second Wednesday in January and continues 60 days (including weekends).

Resolution: A written statement expressing the will of the legislature.

Chamber: Refers to either the House of Delegates or the Senate, or the House of Delegates and the Senate.

Extraordinary Legislative Session: Commonly referred to as "special session". The constitution allows the governor to convene the legislature to consider specific legislation.