



ROLE OF STAFF

To talk about role of staff, you need to talk about how these committees, and what they are accomplishing, are different from the other legislative committee.

Best way to talk about different roles of staff is to reiterate the different nature of the subcommittees and the appropriations process from other committees

- Other staff writes the bills that legislators request they write. They advise on the best way to write the bill to accomplish what the legislator wants, and will point out if there are legal or constitutional problems with the bill
- Staff does not raise issues or appear adversarial to any bill or with what the bill is designed to do, except when legal/constitutional issues are involved
 - The proponent/opponent structure tends to bring out the pros and cons of the bills
- Staff is there to write amendments, answer questions about the bills, and advise on legal/constitutional issues

In budgeting, the structure is different

- It is not a hearing, per se, in that you open on the bill, have formal proponents and opponents.
- Essentially, the executive and the agency try to convince you to pass the budget as written
- Except in certain cases, you do not have public testimony, and when you do it is essentially people trying to get additional funding, or to change the priorities of funding
- Staff acts as the voice to raise questions about or issues with the budget, and provide alternatives to the Governor's proposals and different ways to look at it the budget and reasons to take a different approach than the budget presented

- The result is that staff can provide issues and other observations that can seem to be very adversarial.
- Particularly given that you have a Governor's office and an agency aligned for the other argument, staff can be vulnerable
- Can be open to various attacks on integrity, bias, advocacy
- Many instances it is either just perception or lack of understanding of our role, some instances can be deliberate

If you feel, or if you are getting complaints, that staff is crossing the line, come and see me (Taryn)

Among the many types of issues the staff can raise are whether:

- The amount requested is appropriate or correct, and in many instances whether it is necessary
- The request could be cut or the priorities changed
- The funding source could be changed to non-general fund
- There is enough money (if a state special revenue or federal funding source) to adequately fund the request, and whether the account is structurally balanced
- A fee increase is necessary to generate the revenue assumed in the budget
- There is any way of determining whether the program is meeting its goals and if so, whether they are doing so
- The agency has adequately articulated why a change in the budget or a new proposal is necessary, and how achievement of success will be determined
- The current program is being run efficiently
- There are reasons the legislature may wish to question whether the program should continue, or continue at the level requested