The Interim: Is it what you want?

Legislators Speak Up

In the fall of 2019, the Legislative Services Division emailed a survey about interim activities to 150 current legislators.*

Survey Summary
January 2020

*92 Responded (61%)
I want to serve on at least one interim committee.

95%

somewhat or strongly AGREED.

2019-2020:
87% serve on at least one interim committee,

BUT...

2019 Legislature added 16 Representatives on 8 interim committees

One-time cost of $67,000

AVERAGE COST:

- 8-member committee $37,000
- 10-member committee $45,000
- 12-member committee $53,000
- 16-member committee $94,000
I want each of my interim committees to meet at least 8 times.

80% or strongly AGREE.

Average cost of 1 day meeting of 8 members = $4,300
I want each of my interim committees to meet at least one time an interim outside of Helena.

68%  

32%

Every interim, a few interim committees will hold a meeting outside Helena or take a field trip to an area of interest to the committee.

Out of town meeting considerations:
• Facility cost
• Adequate seating for members, staff, public
• Adequate light and sound for audio and video recording
• Ability of facility to support live-streaming
• Availability of food for meals and breaks
• Adequate lodging for members, staff, executive branch representatives
• Travel of Helena-area agency personnel
• Notification of local lawmakers, other officials, and public

I want arranged tours of state facilities during the interim. (Prisons, laboratories, colleges, energy facilities, etc.)

Wish you were here! Learning lots!!

85%  

Somewhat or Strongly AGREE

Field trip considerations:
• Cost of transportation
• Accessibility for members of public and media
• Travel time as part of committee workload
• Coordination with private and public entities
I want staff to travel to my area to provide briefings on multiple topics at least once an interim.

21% “See you soon!”

33% “Yeah...maybe.”

32% “Nah...maybe not.”

14% “No.”

Hybrid sedan from State Motor Pool.
Three days + 600 miles = $114.

The most days a month I’m able to commit to organized interim activities such as committee meetings, tours, and staff briefings is:

- None: 3%
- 1 or 2: 37%
- 3 to 5: 43%
- 5+: 17%

Legislator Day:
- Mileage = 58¢ per mile
- Salary = $92
- Three Meal Allowance = $30.50
Staffing Considerations

- The addition of studies, meeting days, out of town trips, and members may increase staff duties.
- Committees may need to further prioritize studies, agency oversight, and committee interests.
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- Additional staffing would require funds and office space.

LEGEND

- Support Staff
- Attorneys
- Researchers
- Committees
- Studies Assigned