

**§165. Joint committees, authority**

The Legislature may by rule establish such joint standing committees and joint select committees as it deems necessary. Such committees shall have the authority, both when the Legislature is in session and when it is not in session: [PL 1973, c. 590, §8 (NEW).]

**1. Collect information.** To collect information concerning the government and general welfare of the State as related to assignments received from the council; [PL 1973, c. 590, §8 (NEW).]

**2. Information and reports provided.** To assist the Legislature in the proper performance of its constitutional functions by providing its members with impartial and accurate information and reports concerning the legislative problems which are assigned by the Legislative Council which information may be obtained by independent studies or by cooperation with and information from similar agencies in other states as to the practice of other states in dealing with similar problems; [PL 1973, c. 590, §8 (NEW).]

**3. Quorum.** A majority of the members of a committee shall constitute a quorum, and a majority thereof shall have the authority to act in any matter falling within the jurisdiction of the committee. A committee may hold either public or private hearings and may hold executive sessions, excluding all except members of the committee; [PL 1973, c. 590, §8 (NEW).]

**4. State department to furnish information.** Each state department shall furnish to a committee such documents, material or information as may be requested by a committee; [PL 1973, c. 590, §8 (NEW).]

**5. Minutes.** A committee shall keep minutes of matters considered and votes taken at its meetings and shall make reports to the Legislature on all matters which come before the committee, the actions taken thereon and the progress made in relation thereto; [PL 1973, c. 590, §8 (NEW).]

**6. Reports to Legislature and public.** Reports of a committee may be made from time to time to members of the Legislature and to the public; [PL 1973, c. 590, §8 (NEW).]

**7. Other subpoenas, etc.** When the duties assigned to a committee so require, the Legislature may grant to it the power to administer oaths, issue subpoenas, compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of any papers, books, accounts, documents and testimony, and to cause the deposition of witnesses, whether residing within or without the State, to be taken in the manner prescribed by law for taking depositions in civil actions in the Superior Court. When the Legislature grants this power to a joint standing committee or joint select committee, such committee functions as an investigating committee and is subject to the provisions of chapter 21. No appropriation or allocation may be made for a specific study unless the Legislative Council has first approved a budget adopted by the joint standing committee that is to conduct the study. No appropriation or allocation may be made for the operation of any joint select committee unless the Legislative Council has first approved a budget adopted by the joint select committee. In case of disobedience on the part of any person to comply with any subpoena issued in behalf of a committee, or on the refusal of any witness to testify to any matters regarding which the witness may be lawfully interrogated, it is the duty of the Superior Court of any county, on application of a member of a committee, to compel obedience by proceedings for contempt, as in the case of disobedience of the requirements of a subpoena issued from that court or a refusal to testify in that court. Each witness, other than a state officer or employee, who appears before a committee by its order or subpoena is entitled to receive for that witness's attendance the fees and mileage provided for witnesses in civil cases in courts of record, which must be audited and paid upon

the presentation of proper vouchers sworn to by such witness and approved by the chair of the committee;

[PL 2019, c. 475, §19 (AMD).]

**8.**

[PL 1975, c. 750, §2 (RP).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 1973, c. 590, §8 (NEW). PL 1975, c. 593, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 1975, c. 623, §3 (AMD). PL 1975, c. 750, §2 (AMD). PL 1975, c. 770, §6 (AMD). PL 1985, c. 377, §1 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 475, §19 (AMD).

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