

PROPOSED HOUSEKEEPING RESOLUTION

The House of Representatives functions as an independent agency of state government. Its administration and operations are governed primarily by the Housekeeping Resolution.

HR 4 by Black, the proposed Housekeeping Resolution for the 74th Legislature (1995-96), would amend the Housekeeping Resolution in effect during the 73rd Legislature regarding member budgets, termination dates of nonreturning member and committee employees, caucus funding and fundraising and the House Research Organization.

Member Budgets

Member budget operating accounts would be allocated for fiscal years instead of "session years" that generally track the two calendar years in each legislature. This would allow House accounting practices to follow the Uniform Statewide Accounting System. Fiscal Year Five would run from January 10, 1995 to August 31, 1995, Fiscal Year Six from September 1, 1995, to August 31, 1996, and Fiscal Year Seven from September 1, 1996, through January 14, 1997.

The monthly allocation to members' operating accounts would increase from \$7,500 to \$8,000 (page 10). Freshman members would receive an additional \$2,000 in Fiscal Year Five (1995), twice the freshmen supplement for the 73rd Legislature. (Returning members would still be allowed to carry over up to \$10,000 to the new fiscal year.) All members would be allowed to carry over up to \$10,000 from Fiscal Year Six to Fiscal Seven (page 11).

House and Committee Staff

HR 4 would clarify that only House committee and nonreturning member staffs are terminated at 12 noon on the first day of the next legislative session (page 9).

The salary cap for member and committee employees would remain at \$2,650 a month.

Caucuses

During the 73rd Legislature members were allowed to pay dues to caucuses and other House-member organizations from their operating accounts. The House Administration Committee could also fund such groups. During the interim the House Administration Committee decided to eliminate House funding that had been provided to the Democratic and Republican caucuses, the Legislative Black Caucus and the Mexican-American Legislative Caucus. Caucuses and organizations were required to provide the chief clerk with a membership and officers list.

HR 4 would prohibit members from paying caucus dues from their House operating accounts. No House operating funds could be used to attend a meeting, function or activity sponsored by a caucus. A caucus would be defined as an organization made up exclusively of members of the Legislature, but could also include the lieutenant governor or governor. Caucuses would be permitted, but not required, to provide the chief clerk with a list of their members and officers on a regular basis.

HR 4 would prohibit, upon its adoption, caucuses from knowingly accepting a contribution from a source other than a caucus member 30 days prior to the session and during the legislative session. Until caucuses are required by law to report contributions and expenditures to another entity, caucuses would be permitted, but not required, to file these reports periodically with the chief clerk (pages 12-13).

House Research Organization

The current Housekeeping Resolution allows the House Administration Committee to provide operating funds for a house research organization that will be an administrative department of the House, and for that purpose the committee may adopt policies and procedures relating to the operation of the organization.

HR 4 would require the House Administration Committee to provide operating funds for a house research organization and allow the committee to adopt policies and procedures relating to the administrative operation of the organization. It would add that the functions and duties performed by the House Research Organization would be governed by a 15-member steering committee composed of House members serving staggered four-year terms, who would be subject to approval of the House membership. The organization would have an operating account and in compliance with the terms of its establishment would operate under a budget approved by the steering committee and the House Administration Committee (page 14).

Member Budget and Salary Limits in Housekeeping Resolution

| | 70th | 71st | 72nd | 73rd | Proposed 74th |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|----------------------------|---------|------------------|
| Monthly member account | | | | | |
| Session | \$6,500 | \$7,000 | \$7,250 | \$7,500 | \$8,000 |
| Interim | \$5,500 | \$6,000 | \$6,250 | \$7,500 | \$8,000 |
| Maximum staff salary | \$2,000 | \$2,250 | \$2,375 '91 \$2,500 '92 | \$2,650 | \$2,650 |