

The general business affairs of each house of the Legislature are conducted by the respective rules committees of each house. However, the roles of these two committees, one in the Assembly and one in the Senate, are different in several aspects. The Committee on Rules acts as the executive committee, if you will, of their respective houses.

Let's take a look in greater detail about some of the differences between the two. In addition to running the business of each house, both rules committees, they consider substantive legislation in the same manner as the other standing committees in the California Legislature. Because of their importance, the rules of each house provide that the rules committees continue in existence during any recess of the Legislature, after final adjournment, and until the convening of the next regular session. And they'll continue to have the same powers and duties as they do while the Legislature is normally in session. Note that no other standing committee in either house is provided with this special provision.

Another critical function of the Rules Committees is to refer all the bills and resolutions to their appropriate standing committees. And some of the other important powers and duties the Rules Committees perform in their respective houses include: authorizing the appointment of employees, setting their salaries, adopting rules and regulations, and placing expenses and allowances elsewhere; also to approve all claims for expenses incurred by committees, to approve all proposed expenditures before they're actually incurred, and to assign the subject matter of bills recommended for any study to the appropriate committees.

So now let's look a little bit further into the two respective rules committees. With regard to the Assembly Committee on Rules, in the Assembly the Rules Committee consists of a Chair and Vice Chair and nine other members with two alternates. All of these members of the Rules Committee are appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.

The main functions of the Assembly Rules Committee are to run the administrative functions of the Assembly, as well as the initial assignment of bills to the appropriate standing committees for consideration. The Rules Committee also provides clerical assistance and offices for Assemblymembers and they approve the expenditures that are made by committees.

The main staff person in the Assembly is the CAO, the Chief Administrative Officer. To assist the committee with its administrative, fiscal, and business affairs, the Assembly Rules Committee employs a staff of secretaries and administrators.

Now, in essence, the Speaker of the Assembly has the same powers as the Senate Committee on Rules, which is to appoint the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the standing committees as well as the remaining committee members. Note that the Senate Rules Committee also confirms gubernatorial appointees, which is a role that the Assembly Rules

Committee does not play. As I've said before, the Assembly Rules Committee essentially acts as the executive committee for the State Assembly.

So now let's look at some of the provisions of the Senate Committee on Rules. In the Senate, the leader - the President Pro Tem - actually serves as the Chairperson of the Senate Rules Committee while the other four members are elected by the Senate as a whole by way of a resolution. It's generally done at the commencement of each new two-year session. As you would expect, any change in the membership of the Rules Committee during the session requires the adoption of a new resolution. If there's a vacancy on the Rules Committee, or somebody ceases to be a member or, resigns, then that is filled except in the case of the President Pro Tem of the Senate.

While they're on recess or at interim study, then the remaining four members of the Rules Committees will fill the vacant. But if they're in session then the entire Senate votes by resolution to fill that vacancy.

Similar to their colleagues in the Assembly, the Senate Committee on Rules appoints all other committees of the Senate and designates a Chair and a Vice Chair of each committee. In the Senate, the Committee on Rules is supposed to give consideration to seniority, preference, and experience. However, in making committee appointments, the Committee on Rules must as far as is practicable give equal representation to all of the parts of the state.

In addition, under the Senate rules, the Senate Committee on Rules is charged with the general responsibility for the administrative functions of the Senate including keeping the books and documents and records and other papers and property of the Senate, and they're properly cared for, kept on file, and disposed of appropriately.

The Committee also has the duty of making and studies and any recommendations to promote, improve, and expedite, the business and procedures of the entire Senate as well as its committees. That includes investigating committees and they can certainly propose any amendments to the rules that are appropriate or necessary to accomplish any of the purposes specified.

The Senate Committee on Rules also makes available and furnishes to Senators as well as the committees all the personnel resources and everything else that is necessary for the members and the committees to carry out their duties. Any executive communication of nomination that are sent by the Governor or any other entity that's provided to the Senate for confirmation, those all get referred to the Committee on Rules without debate.

Also, the Committee on Rules, at each regular session appoints a member of the Senate to serve on the Judicial Council and has the ultimate authority during any joint recess to fill any vacancy in that particular position that may occur during the recess.

And finally, when a report of a joint legislative committee is delivered to the Senate Desk, the Committee on Rules in the Senate refers that particular report of the joint committee to a standing committee for its review and any consideration and appropriate action that may need to be done.

So that is a look at the Senate Rules Committee and concludes our podcast today on an examination of the Senate and Assembly Committee on Rules and their function in their respective houses.

Thanks for joining today's podcast. I hope you enjoyed it.