

November 17, 1967

TO: House Rules Committee,
FROM: Thomas G. Clifford
House Research Consultant
SUBJECT: Quarterly Report of The House Research Consultant

This statement touches briefly upon the efforts that have been made by this office since its beginnings on August 1, 1967. At this stage of the development of research staff responsibilities it might be beneficial to the Rules Committee to understand how the office has progressed so as to be in a position to ascertain what will be needed in the future.

At the present time there are some 35 areas of inquiry designated for study by the Rules Committee and the several committees and subcommittees that have been activated. This number will increase markedly as other committees are activated in the future. I have attempted to develop a working relationship with each subcommittee or committee chairman who has requested assistance and have offered assistance to those whose assignments require a knowledge of law and legal research techniques.

Committee and Subcommittee assignments to date

A. House Rules Committee

1.) Subcommittee on Space and Physical Facilities

Considerable time has been spent working with the subcommittee, the state architect and the architect responsible for developing the plans for the

renovation and refurbishing of that portion of the Capitol to be available for the House of Representatives by January of 1969.

2.) Subcommittee on Research Staff and Research Facilities

To facilitate the work of this subcommittee, questionnaires were sent to all present chairmen and vice-chairmen of House committees and those members of the minority who have served in these capacities. The questionnaire was gauged to determine the attitudes of each of these members insofar as staff assistance to committees is concerned, the qualifications of staff personnel, salaries to be paid, and how staff members should be supervised.

In addition to the questionnaire result, a report was prepared describing the staff services available in the states of Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio and California.

An inquiry is also being made to determine the feasibility of establishing a legislative intern program in cooperation with the University of Minnesota and other schools of higher learning.

3.) Subcommittee on the Improvement of the Legislative Process

The office has accumulated a great deal of background information evaluating and explaining possible improvements such as bill analysis, fiscal notes, bill preambles, and pre filing of bills to

name only a few. In addition, trips were taken to San Antonio, Texas to the National Legislative Conference and to Lansing, Michigan to view the use of computers in the legislative operation.

The San Antonio Conference provided an opportunity to learn more about the role of data processing in legislative research and bill drafting and to discuss the legislative operation and staff needs with representatives of other states. The Lansing trip entailed a meeting with representatives of R.C.A. who explained the use of computers to facilitate the legislative indexing system. Reports have been made to the chairmen of each of the two subcommittees involved in these areas.

B. House Judiciary Committee

1.) Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency

The initial responsibility of the subcommittee is to evaluate the Minnesota Juvenile Court Act (M.S. 260) in the light of the recent U. S. Supreme Court Case (in the matter of Gault) which extends certain procedural safeguards to juvenile matters. Two memoranda have been developed analysing the decision and suggesting changes that might be needed in the Minnesota Statute. An additional memorandum has been prepared describing the operation of Regional Juvenile Courts in several other states.

I have met with representatives of the Department of Corrections to discuss the problems of juvenile correction and visited the Lino Lakes Treatment Center with members of the subcommittee to gain an additional insight into the state's juvenile treatment effort.

2.) Subcommittee on Abortion

A memorandum has been prepared analysing the recently enacted laws of North Carolina, Colorado, and California and each of the bills relating to this topic introduced during the 1963 and 1967 sessions. Research materials have been received from several states which outline proposed laws and set forth in a concise manner the pros and cons to liberalization of the law.

3.) Subcommittee on County Courts and Judicial Selection

Materials have been requested and received describing the Missouri system of nonpartisan judicial selection. Bills introduced in past sessions pertaining to a county court system have been accumulated and an analysis is in progress.

4.) Subcommittee on Divorce Laws

The chairman has been in communication with this office and a meeting has been scheduled to discuss the goals of the subcommittee and the areas of my responsibility.

C. House Tax Committee

1.) Subcommittee on Tax Exempt Property

A tentative work plan has been developed and a conference with the chairman is contemplated in the near future.

2.) Tax Implication of Urban Renewal

At the request of a member of the House Tax Committee, a study is now in progress which will determine activities in other states relative to providing tax incentives to property owners who improve their property (i. e. Laws of Minnesota 1967 C. 682). The study will include an evaluation of possible constitutional problems in the light of requirements for equal tax treatment. A questionnaire has been sent to legislative research sources in the fifty states and to several national tax organizations in an effort to gain additional background information.

3.) Total or Partial Exemption of Certain Pensions from State Inheritance Tax Provisions

A preliminary memorandum has been prepared on the above subject at the request of a member of the committee. The memo touches upon the various total or partial exemptions granted by law to certain types of gifts, devises, or bequests, and to the proceeds of certain employee retirement plans and could serve as a work plan in the event that the committee wishes to

re-evaluate these sections of the law.

4.) Other Tax Subcommittees

Six subcommittees of the Tax Committee have been appointed and will commence their various inquiries in the near future. I plan to discuss the scope of each inquiry with the various chairmen and offer whatever assistance this office can give.

D. Law Enforcement and Liquor Control

The chairman of this committee has appointed two subcommittees which will meet jointly with subcommittees of the Senate. It has been agreed that this office will provide the research assistance for both subcommittees. Studies of seven topics are to be undertaken during the interim.

E. Miscellaneous

a. At the request of several members, this office prepared a memorandum comparing the statute comprising the veteran's preference law (MS 197.45-197.46) before and after the 1967 legislative session. The Legislative Research Committee has recently approved this topic for study by a subcommittee.

b. Elementary and Secondary Education Interim Commission

This office has provided administrative assistance to this commission since September. I am presently the Acting Executive Secretary to the Commission.

Future Needs of the Office

During the past several months this office has engaged services of six typists who have been available for periodic short assignments. The system has been satisfactory in that the work has been completed without unwarranted delay.

As the work load increases and the organizational aspects of the office become more important it will become essential to proper operation to have a nearly full time stenographer who will be available during the session as well as during the interim.

TGC:ds