



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE
Joint Fiscal Office

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Fiscal Note

March 11, 2025

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H.67 – An act relating to legislative operations and government accountability

As recommended by the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs¹

Bill Summary

This bill proposes to create an eight member Joint Government Oversight and Accountability Committee within the General Assembly. This Committee would be charged with exercising oversight by examining and investigating matters of significant public concern relating to State government performance. The proposed Committee would examine the possible reasons for any failure of government oversight, or any failure to properly implement policy, and provide findings and tangible recommendations to standing committees of jurisdiction to prevent future failures.

Fiscal Impact

The eight legislative members of the Joint Government Oversight and Accountability Committee proposed in H.67 would be entitled to compensation and expense reimbursement when attending meetings while the General Assembly is not in session, at an average cost of approximately \$2,000 per meeting.

H.67 would create an eight member Joint Government Oversight and Accountability Committee within the General Assembly.

This Committee would be entitled to compensation and expense reimbursement for meetings when the General Assembly is not in session.

Although H.67 neither contains appropriations nor creates new positions, it charges the Committee with submitting annual reports that may recommend whether to create a position in the General Assembly to support its work, as well as identify any additional resources required by the Committee to adequately conduct its work – both of which could lead to higher costs and demands on the General Assembly’s resources in the future.

Cost savings is not an explicitly stated purpose of the Committee, but its recommendations could potentially lead to future efficiencies. At the same time, Committee recommendations to increase program efficacy may require additional resources. It is not possible at this stage to quantify potential future benefits or costs from any hypothetical work of the proposed Committee.

¹ *The Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) is a nonpartisan legislative office dedicated to producing unbiased fiscal analysis – this fiscal note is meant to provide information for legislative consideration, not to provide policy recommendations.*

Background and Details

Joint Government Oversight and Accountability Committee

H.67 would create a Joint Government Oversight and Accountability Committee within the General Assembly. This Committee would be composed of eight members:

- Four House members appointed by the Speaker, not more than two of whom shall be from the same party:
 - One member appointed from the Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs;
 - One member appointed from the Committee on Appropriations; and
 - Two members-at-large.
- Four Senators appointed by the Committee on Committees, not more than two of whom shall be from the same party:
 - One member appointed from the Committee on Government Operations;
 - One member appointed from the Committee on Appropriations; and
 - Two members-at-large.

The Committee would be authorized to meet as necessary for the prompt discharge of its duties, with members entitled to compensation and expense reimbursement for attending meetings while the General Assembly is not in session. The Committee would have the support of the Joint Fiscal Office, the Office of Legislative Operations, and the Office of Legislative Counsel.

The Committee would be charged with exercising legislative oversight by examining and investigating matters of significant public concern relating to State government performance. The Committee would examine the possible reasons for any failure of government oversight, or any failure to properly implement policy, and provide findings and tangible recommendations to standing committees of jurisdiction to prevent future failures. The Committee would select issues of significant public concern to examine and investigate by a majority of the current Committee members who have not recused themselves from the matter.

The bill defines an issue of significant public concern as any issue that:

- i. Affects the State as a whole;
- ii. Affects a vulnerable population;
- iii. Costs the State more than \$100,000,000;
- iv. Implicates a serious failure of State government oversight or accountability;
- v. Arises from previously enacted legislation; or
- vi. Constitutes a failure to adequately respond to State or federal audits.

With coordination from the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules, the Committee would evaluate Executive entities directed to adopt rules to ensure consistency and accountability in the rulemaking process.

The Committee would be permitted to take or cause depositions to be taken as needed in any investigation or hearing.

The Committee would be required to annually report on:

- Which issues of significant public concern it examined and investigated, including relevant information and data;
- Its current objectives for review of issues of significant public concern and which objectives, to date, have and have not been met;
- Its objectives for review of issues of significant public concern for the upcoming two years; and
- Any additional resources required by the Committee to adequately conduct its work.

As part of its first report, the Committee would be required to include an analysis of whether the General Assembly should empower the Committee to issue subpoenas and administer oaths in connection with its examination and investigation of matters of government oversight and accountability related to issues of significant public concern. The Committee would also include in its report a recommendation for whether the General Assembly should add a staff member dedicated to supporting it in its work.

Fiscal Considerations

- The eight Committee members would be entitled to compensation and expense reimbursement for attending meetings while the General Assembly is not in session. This cost is approximately \$2,000 per meeting.
- The bill creates no additional positions, but the Committee’s work would add demands on legislative staff and could require the creation of one or more positions in the future.
- The Committee could require additional resources (e.g., contracted professional services) beyond staff positions to effectively support its work, which would have to be considered in the development of future legislative budgets.
- Although cost savings is not an explicitly stated purpose of the Committee, its recommendations could lead to future efficiencies. At the same time, Committee recommendations to increase program efficacy may require additional resources. It is not possible at this stage to quantify potential future benefits or costs from any hypothetical recommendations from the Committee.

ⁱ The bill as introduced can be found here: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2026/Docs/BILLS/H-0067/H-0067%20As%20Introduced.pdf>

The full fiscal note history is available on the fiscal tab of the bill page on the General Assembly website and can be pulled up through a bill number search on the JFO page.