

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill No:** SB 155a

**49th Legislature, 1st Session, 2009**

**Short Title:** Equalize Membership of LESC

**Sponsor(s):** Senators Cynthia Nava and Mary Jane M. García

**Analyst:** Kathleen Forrer

**Date:** March 6, 2009

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**AS AMENDED**

**The Senate Floor amendment changes to twelve the voting membership of the LESC to include six Senate and six House members.**

**Original Bill Summary:**

SB 155 amends statute to change the composition of the voting membership of the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) from four Senate and six House members to five Senate and five House members.

**Fiscal Impact:**

SB 155 makes no appropriation. However, because the bill does not increase the total number of committee members (10), there is no apparent fiscal impact.

**Issues:**

Information provided by the Legislative Council Service indicates that, not including task forces and commissions, there are 12 interim legislative committees established in current statute. Of these 12 committees, 10 have equal representation from the Senate and the House and two—the LESC and the New Mexico Finance Authority Oversight Committee—have more members from the House than from the Senate:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Senate</b>	<b>House</b>	<b>Total</b>
Legislative Council [§2-3-1 NMSA 1978]	8	8	16
Legislative Education Study Committee [§2-10-1 NMSA 1978]	4	6	10
Legislative Finance Committee [§2-5-1 NMSA 1978]	8	8	16
Interim Legislative Ethics Committee [§2-15-7 NMSA 1978]*	8	8	16
Legislative Committee on Compacts [§11-13A-5 NMSA 1978]	8	8	16
Legislative Health and Human Services Committee [§2-13-1 NMSA 1978]	4	4	8
Mortgage Finance Authority Act Oversight Committee [§58-18-5 (W) NMSA 1978]	4	4	8
New Mexico Finance Authority Oversight Committee [§6-21-30 NMSA 1978]*	7	10	17
Radioactive & Hazardous Materials Committee [§74-4A-9 NMSA 1978]	6	6	12
Revenue Stabilization and Tax Policy Committee [§2-16-1 NMSA 1978]	9	9	18
Tobacco Settlement Revenue Oversight Committee [§2-19-1 NMSA 1978]	3	3	6
Welfare Reform Oversight Committee [§2-17-1 NMSA 1978]	6	6	12

\*The total number of committee members is not specified in statute.

## **Background:**

The LESC was created in 1965 as a permanent committee of the New Mexico Legislature, authorized by statute to “conduct a continuing study of all education in New Mexico, the laws governing such education and the policies and costs of the New Mexico educational system...; [to] recommend changes in laws relating to education...; and [to] make a full report of its findings and recommendations...” to the Legislature at each odd-year session.

As specified in current statute [§2-10-1 NMSA 1978], the LESC consists of 10 members, six from the House and four from the Senate, and membership is proportional, both in terms of the total membership in each chamber and of the political affiliation of those members. For the 2007 and 2008 interims:

- Of the four voting Senators on the LESC, two were Democrats and two were Republicans. This distribution was based on a total Senate membership of 42, 24 of whom were Democrats and 18 of whom were Republicans.
- Of the six voting Representatives on the committee, four were Democrats and two were Republicans. This distribution was based on a total House membership of 70, 42 of whom were Democrats and 28 of whom were Republicans.

The Senate voting members are appointed by the Senate President Pro Tempore in consultation with the Senate Committees’ Committee. The Speaker of the House appoints the six House members but, in regard to the minority party, must make the appointments from recommendations made by the Minority Floor Leader while retaining the right to reject any of the Minority Floor Leader’s recommendations.

The 10 voting members are usually joined by approximately 18 advisory members, who are not mentioned in statute but are appointed in the same manner. Appointments are for two-year terms, which expire on the first day of each 60-day session at the beginning of the new Legislature. The LESC Chair and Vice Chair are also appointed for two-year terms that are coterminous with their membership on the committee, and each office is alternated between the respective houses.

Assisted by permanent staff, the committee meets regularly during each interim to conduct studies that have been identified by the committee or individual legislators or are requested by the Legislature through legislative memorials. To fulfill its statutory responsibilities, the LESC attempts to provide all legislators with objective information pertaining to New Mexico public schools as well as to state and national education trends.

During each interim, the committee meets in Santa Fe at the Capitol but also regularly travels to other communities throughout the state to visit local school representatives in their home facilities and to invite wider public participation in LESC meetings. This process provides the opportunity for school personnel and other citizens to present their opinions.

Each year, the LESC provides the Legislature with a report of its activities, summarizing the findings of interim studies and the recommendations of the committee for action during the upcoming legislative session. The report, which is available to the public, is distributed to the members of the Legislature and to all local school districts and education agencies.

**Related Bills:**

SB 154 *Expand Authority of LESC*

CS/SB 172 *Interim Human Services Committee*