

Legislative Analysis



HOUSE AND SENATE JOURNALS ON INTERNET

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House Bill 5610 as enacted

Public Act 357 of 2014

Sponsor: Rep. Cindy Denby

House Committee: Oversight

Senate Committee: Government Operations

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

Complete to 1-30-15

BRIEF SUMMARY: The bill specifies that the official journals of the Senate and House of Representatives be made available to the public on the Internet, and allows the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House to make decisions about printing and distribution of legislative journals.

FISCAL IMPACT: House Bill 5610 would lower printing costs for the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives by an unknown but significant amount relative to current printing costs. Required distributions of the journal to specific persons and entities would be eliminated. Additionally, the official journals would be printed on less expensive paper products. Access to the official journals would remain available to the public on the Internet. Individuals or entities could still request a printed copy of the official journals. According to the Clerk of the House of Representatives, annual printing costs for the official journal of the House of Representatives are between \$25,000 and \$30,000. It is estimated that the Secretary of the Senate spends a similar amount on printing costs for the official journal of the Senate.

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

The daily business of both legislative chambers is recorded in the House and Senate Journals. There, attendance is recorded (both floor and committee); the amendments for each bill and the action taken are described; and, official communication to the legislature is announced—for example, executive orders and veto messages from the governor, recently completed financial audits of state programs from the auditor general, and proposed administrative rules from department directors. The staffs of the Clerk of the House and of the Secretary of the Senate prepare, print, and distribute the daily journals.

The state statute that specifies publication of the daily journals in the Senate and House dates from 1899—more than 100 years ago. Under that statute, the official journals must be printed in "highland type or equivalent," and on the "same size of page as that of the journals of 1929." Further, no more than 500 copies of the journals must be printed, and bound into volumes of "convenient size."

The statute also specifies distribution. Under the law, the following agencies and officials receive one copy: each principal state department; the members of the legislature in the year when the journals are issued; the secretary, assistant secretary and clerks of the Senate,

and the clerk and assistance clerks of the House; the Legislative Service Bureau; the Library of Congress; the Clerk of the State Supreme Court; state-supported universities or colleges; and private universities and colleges in Michigan, upon written request to the Secretary of the Senate or the Clerk of the House.

Legislation was introduced to update this statute.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

House Bill 5610 revised Public Act 44 of 1899, which provides for the publication and distribution of legislative documents, to:

- Specify that the official journals of the Senate and House of Representatives be made available to the public on the Internet.
- Eliminate the requirement that up to 500 copies of the official journals be printed and bound in a certain format and distributed to certain specified places and persons.
- Require, instead, the official journals to be printed and bound in volumes of convenient size and in a quantity to be determined by the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives.
- Require the Senate Secretary to retain at least one printed and bound copy of the Senate Journal, and the House Clerk to retain at least one printed and bound copy of the House Journal; and also to provide one printed and bound copy of each journal to the Library of Michigan.
- Specify that copies of the journals would be provided to any governmental officers and agencies and libraries when approved by the secretary and/or clerk.

MCL 24.6

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The statute governing the preparation, printing, and distribution of the House and Senate daily journals is over 100 years old, and must be updated. Costly statutory requirements to print and bind the daily journals are antiquated and unnecessary, because electronic versions of the legislative journals are available to citizens and state officials online. This bill continues to ensure transparency in government, while eliminating inefficiency and reducing operational costs.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.