

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Government Administration Committee was assigned a study of space needs of the executive, judicial, and legislative branches, and the Ethics Commission.

Committee members were Senators Randy A. Burckhard (Chairman), Jerry Klein, Scott Meyer, and Erin Oban, and Representatives Rick Becker, Glenn Bosch, Jared C. Hagert, Karla Rose Hanson, Pat D. Heinert, Karen Karls, Jim Kasper, Lawrence R. Klemin, Ben Koppelman, Todd Porter, Shannon Roers Jones, and Dan Ruby.

STUDY OF SPACE NEEDS

The Government Administration Committee studied space needs of the executive, judicial, and legislative branches, and the Ethics Commission. The study included:

- A review of each branch's and the Ethics Commission's employee work location policies;
- An assessment of the space needs of each branch and the Ethics Commission to fulfill their constitutional and statutory responsibilities;
- An evaluation of state agency leases of space from private and other governmental entities in Bismarck, amounts being paid for these leases, and state agency rental payments being made to the Office of Management and Budget from special and federal funds;
- Consideration of the feasibility and desirability of the Office of Management and Budget charging rent to agencies receiving funding from the general fund; and
- The development of a space utilization plan for the Capitol complex.

The study included consideration of whether adequately sized committee rooms, appropriate accommodations under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and flexible meeting areas are available.

Legislative Branch Space

The committee received testimony from the Legislative Council indicating:

- The most significant changes in legislative committee rooms over the last 3 decades occurred during the 2021 legislative session due to the need for social distancing resulting from the COVID-19 emergency.
- The 2021 changes expanded the legislative presence in the judicial wing of the State Capitol through the construction of four new committee rooms.
- Most feedback from legislators and others regarding the newly constructed meeting rooms was positive and many legislators expressed interest in continuing to use the rooms.
- The legislative branch has retained control over the four new rooms since the conclusion of the 2021 legislative session; however, the long-term jurisdiction over the rooms has not been formally resolved.
- North Dakota Century Code Section 48-08-04 identifies areas of the State Capitol which may not be used without the authorization of the Legislative Council.

Recommendations

The committee recommends a bill draft [\[21.1129.01000\]](#) to transfer certain space in the judicial wing of the State Capitol, including judicial wing room 216 and judicial wing rooms 327 B, C, and E, from the State Department of Health and the Department of Human Services to the legislative branch.