

## **BACKGROUND**

Shortly before adjourning in August 2005, the Oregon State Senate and the Oregon House of Representatives passed Senate Bill 1084, which created the Public Commission on the Oregon Legislature. The bill, which was co-sponsored by Senate President Peter Courtney and House Speaker Karen Minnis, was subsequently signed into law by Governor Theodore Kulongoski.

Senate Bill 1084 specified that the commission “shall conduct a review of and make recommendations on all aspects of the legislative branch, including the timing, frequency and length of legislative sessions, legislative procedures and the adequacy of legislative facilities and staffing.” The legislation also charged the commission to prepare a report for submission to the Emergency Board and to members of the Seventy-Fourth Legislative Assembly. Previous comprehensive reviews of the legislative branch were conducted in 1968 and 1974 and their recommendations were considered and implemented by subsequent Legislative Assemblies.

The legislation further specified that the commission be comprised of two members of the House of Representatives, two members of the Senate, and 26 members of the public, who would be jointly appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. Commission members represented diverse knowledge of and experience with the legislative process in all committee and commission discussions.

Under the leadership of Co-Chairs Judge Laura Pryor and Gary Wilhelms, the commission held its first meeting on September 6, 2005, and met on eight subsequent occasions, with its final meeting on November 13, 2006.

Each member of the commission was also assigned to serve on one of the following committees: Facilities; Human Resources; Management; Process; and The Public Institution. Each committee met on numerous occasions throughout 2005 and 2006 to hear testimony from experts on the legislative process, and to consider all proposals and ideas that had been received by the commission from members of the public, legislators, staff, agencies, local governments and commission members. All meetings of the full Public Commission and committee meetings were open to the public and to the media.

The Supplemental Information section of this report contains: summaries of committee work; Senate Bill 1084; lists of members of the Public Commission, meeting dates of commission and committees and witnesses; proposals considered by committees; and proposed legislation.