

Ukraine

Elizabeth and Pam raised the question of whether we, as IndivisibleSOS, wanted to do anything to help members cope with the potentially potent mix of feelings being stimulated by the horrors of what is happening in Ukraine. Various options were discussed, and will continue to be discussed until some appropriate format is selected. But the consensus was that 1) yes, it would be good if we offered something, but 2) outside the context of regular meetings.

General Discussion Around Committee Work

Committees are working committees, whose work ebbs and flows depending on where in the election or legislative cycles we are. Some committees have narrower or more broad lanes. Members have differing amounts of time and energy they can contribute which can also fluctuate over time. We must, as chairs, try to accommodate member's differing levels of activity with jobs that fit.

We need new chairs for Gun Violence and Immigration committees. Many people are more receptive to a direct ask.

Behavioral Health noted that many bills do not have adequate long term funding and that the committee needs to get a better understanding of this issue.

Offer of Training in Budget and Legislative Analysis

Rachel requested approval for a survey of members to determine their interest in getting trained to 1) understand and analyze proposed legislation and 2) understand how to access and analyze the budget. Her request was approved, and Patricia Pearce will be asked to create a Survey Monkey questionnaire for the survey.

Rachel explained her perception that as we have grown, we need more expertise in both these areas, but since both of them are complex it might be best to have her clone herself so that 2-3 people could be resources to committees for budget analysis, possibly same on state agency regulations, and maybe a few more (like 3-5) people who could help committees understand specific pieces of legislation.

A third training might be offered just to acquaint members with how to use the nmlegis.gov website—how to find your reps and senators, how to find a bill, how to know what has happened to a bill, where to find the Financial Impact report if there is one, etc.

These offers were met with enthusiasm.

1. Rachel has drafted a survey to be sent to all members asking who would like training on working with the legislature, including bill and budget tracking. Patricia Pearce will prepare the survey for distribution.
2. Rachel and Roberta have created a template for committee alerts which they want to share with the group so we are all using the same format.

Website

Dottie and Jana, who manage our website, explained their view of the site as our public face and as such, needs to be kept up to date. This need applies especially to the “take action” items and the committee descriptions, which contain information about what the committee is working on at present. They gave examples from the pages of almost all committees of paragraphs that are out of date, pertaining to legislation we are supporting and campaigns we are undertaking.

They are asking that each committee:

Have someone, who does not have to be the chair...

- Check the committee's page on the website regularly, and in particular very shortly after a legislative session in which the committee has been active. Dottie and Jana suggested that “regularly” means every week.
- Replace outdated material.
 - This means writing new material, sending it to Dottie and Jana, and telling them which paragraph(s) are to be replaced with the new material.

- The most obvious content that gets outdated is “what is the committee working on” and “take action” items.
- Whatever you are doing, describe it. If the committee is not working on anything specific but is instead monitoring things at the federal level, studying how laws they worked on are being implemented, or learning about a new component of their overall charge, then say that. E.g., the Reproductive Rights Committee worked hard last year on repeal of our horrible abortion law. This year there was no abortion-related legislation, but the committee is monitoring federal and legal developments elsewhere and could be learning about the unequal distribution of contraceptive availability, prenatal care, and other aspects of women’s access to reproductive health services and how to redress the inequalities.

Dottie and Jana also asked that everyone (which is many members) who haven’t written or updated **their bio** within the 300-word limit to do so by March 16 (deadline extended from March 7).

Meeting Schedule

We reiterated the regular meeting schedule: 2nd Monday of every month is the combined Leadership/Committee Chairs meeting, following immediately after the Monday morning meeting that day. 3rd Monday of every month is the evening meeting, all virtual.

Clarity on Committee Functioning

There was no formal discussion of the Committee Functioning memo, but several topics were discussed in passing that need clarification:

- *What does membership on a committee mean?* – we discussed 3 types of involvement with committees: 1) chair or co-chair; 2) active participation, which can be around 1 issue within the committee’s bailiwick up to all issues; 3) learning about the committee’s issues—usually for new members of the committee, whether new to IndivisibleSOS or just new to the committee. In addition, IndivisibleSOS members may not want to be a committee member but do want to get alerts and take actions on some or all of them. All of these ways of relating to committees are fine.
- *Seeking uniformity in creating and sending out alerts.* Some committees were very active in sending out alerts during the 2022 legislative session because many bills were pertinent to their issues. These alerts were sometimes confusing to members because information was forwarded from other organizations and it was hard for some members to determine who was asking them to do what. Rachel suggested that we standardize the alert-sending process and give ourselves some guidelines.
- Clarification that committees work on things, like influencing legislation or public agency functioning. While a lot of their process is educating themselves about their issues, they are not *just* study groups.

Marti offered to write drafts of the first two items—committee membership and an alerts protocol, which Rachel pointed out that we actually do have but it is not well-distributed or used. These will be available for review before the April Leadership/Committee Chairs meeting.