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Overview

Creates a citizen council to oversee complaints of unethical behavior against members of the legislature.

Section

1 Citizen council on legislative ethics.

Subd. 1. Creation. Establishes council to receive and investigate allegations of ethical violations against members.

Subd. 2. Powers. Council must create and maintain a reporting system for unethical behavior. The council must also adopt procedures for receiving and investigating complaints. The council may hire outside investigators to investigate complaints when necessary and approve payment of fees for investigators, members, or complainants. The council must report on outcome of any investigation to the house of representatives or senate ethics committee. The council must also review any rules pertaining to member behavior and recommend changes. Finally, the council must propose strategies for preventing harassment.

Subd. 3. Training. The council reviews training materials and requirements for the legislature.

Subd. 4. Procedural requirements. The complaint process set up by the council must include: (1) public hearings to determine probable cause; (2) methods for granting some confidentiality for complainants and witnesses; (3) methods for using

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closed meetings and confidential complaints and evidence; and (4) methods for promoting due process.

Subd. 5. Membership. The council would consist of eight members: two appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; two by the minority leader of the house of representatives; two by the majority leader of the senate; and two by the minority leader of the senate. Appointees must not be current or former members of the legislature and must have background in human resources, employment law, antiharassment policies, or legislative ethics. Appointees serve four-year terms.

Subd. 6. Staff. The director of the Legislative Coordinating Commission serves as administrative staff, but the council may hire other staff as necessary.

Subd. 7. Expenses; reimbursement. Members of the council may be reimbursed for necessary expenses.

Subd. 8. Reports. Reports by the council to the ethics committees of the house of representatives and senate are public but may be redacted to protect confidentiality. Any reports are advisory only and do not bind the ethics committees.