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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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Legislative Budget
Office

To: Chair Jones and Members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development, and Natural Resources

From: Wendy Zhan, Director

Date: March 8, 2023

Subject: LSC FY 2024-FY 2025 budget proposal

Chair Jones, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development, and Natural Resources, I am Wendy Zhan, Director of the Legislative Service Commission (LSC). I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today to present LSC's budget proposal for the next biennium.

I will start by briefly explaining our structure. Our governing body, the Legislative Service Commission, consists of 14 legislators, seven from the House and seven from the Senate. By law, the chair rotates between the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate. Our budget group includes funding for three different legislative agencies – LSC, the Legislative Information Systems (LIS), and the Correctional Institution Inspection Committee (CIIC) – as well as several other legislative functions. The proposed funding levels for the upcoming biennium for LSC, LIS, and CIIC are largely held at their respective current fiscal year's funding level.

GRF appropriation line item 035321 covers the operating expenses of LSC. As a nonpartisan, central service agency for the General Assembly, LSC provides a comprehensive array of products and services. While I am sure you are already familiar with many of our products and services, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you a few key LSC staff workload statistics. We drafted just under 5,700 amendments for H.B. 110, the main operating budget of the 134th General Assembly. In addition, during the last General Assembly, we answered a total of 22,675 legislative bill and other amendment drafting, analysis, and research requests and completed 9,820 or 43.3% of those requests within two days. We also drafted 28,850 letters of commendation and honorary resolutions to assist members with constituent outreach.

It takes people to develop and deliver all of the LSC's services and products, and in fact 95.4% of the LSC budget went to employee personnel costs last fiscal year. For the money, the legislature gets a staff of dedicated, experienced, highly trained, and educated employees. The LSC staff strives to provide quality services in a timely manner to meet the demands of individual General Assembly members and staff. We currently have about 145 staff. We will need to fill a few vacancies. As the director, it is my top priority to search for, develop, and retain people with the talent and experience needed to serve the General Assembly. All of us at LSC appreciate the support of the legislature and look forward to continuing to earn that support.

The Legislative Information Systems line item (035410) pays for the operating expenses of LIS. LIS provides computer networking, application development, telephone, and a variety of other information technology services to the House, the Senate, LSC, and several other legislative agencies. Kurt McDowell is the Director of LIS, and is here with me today. Director McDowell's written testimony is part of our packet, and he is available to answer any questions you may have about his agency.

The Correctional Institution Inspection Committee line item (035405) covers the operating expenses of CIIC. Chris Albanese is the Director of CIIC and is also here today. Director Albanese's written testimony is also part of our packet, and he is also available to answer any questions you may have about his agency.

The Legislative Fellows line item (035402) pays the salaries and expenses for 24 participants in the Legislative Fellowship Program. Ten fellows are placed with the House, ten with the Senate, two with Ohio Government Telecommunications/The Ohio Channel, and two with LSC.

Finally, LSC is the fiscal agent and processes the payments for the remaining three line items. The Legislative Task Force on Redistricting line item (035407) is used to support legislative and congressional district boundary drawing activities. The Litigation line item (035501) is used for the expenses of any lawsuit that might arise challenging state law and to which the General Assembly is a party. The National Associations line item (035409) pays the General Assembly's annual membership dues to belong to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the Council of State Governments (CSG), the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), and three smaller organizations.

Chair Jones and members of the subcommittee, thank you for your consideration. Director McDowell, Director Albanese, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Attachments: LIS Director McDowell's written testimony
CIIC Director Albanese's written testimony