

## Legislative Committee System

**Legislative committees** (sometimes called commissions) are units of organization within a legislative chamber that allow groups of legislatures to review policy matters or proposed bills more closely than would be possible by the entire chamber. In many countries, referral to committee is a formal step in the process of adopting a bill (see [Stages of Legislative Procedure](#)). The possible roles of the committees vary from country to country, depending upon the [governing system](#), strength and organization of [political parties](#), available resources and other political factors. Roles might include initiating and amending bills, administrative review, investigations and budgetary review. Committees may also be the locale where inter-party negotiations occur. Few countries, even those that also have a presidential system, have a committee system that approaches the power of the **US** congressional committees to initiate, amend or bury legislation. (For more information, see Table V: Role of the Committee in the Legislative Process.)

Committee systems that play a major role in shaping legislative outcomes often share at least some of the following attributes:

- They have developed a degree of expertise in a given policy area often through continuing involvement and stable memberships, and this expertise is both recognized and valued by their colleagues;
- The committees are both able to represent diversity and reconcile enough differences to sustain recommendations for action;
- Committee arenas are important enough so that people inside and outside the legislature seek to influence outcomes by providing information about what they want and what they will accept;
- When committees function effectively, they provide a means for a legislative body to consider, in depth, a wide range of topics and to identify politically and technically feasible alternatives.

The [Standing Rules](#) of a legislative chamber may list the committees to be formed, provide rules for assigning members and chairs of committees and decide how much power to grant them. In some cases, [constitutions](#) require the establishment of committees in general and/or require specific committees. Committees may be permanent, or they may be organized around a particular topic or bill.

### Number, Size and Membership of Committees

*The number and size of committees vary greatly and does not necessarily correspond to the size of the legislature.*

- **The Senegal** National Assembly has 120 members and 11 permanent committees, while the **French** National Assembly has 577 members and six permanent committees.
- Committees with a large number of members may be unwieldy and ineffective. For example, each French National Assembly committee has 72 to 144 members. One way in which members have dealt with this is to form smaller working groups within committees to deal with particular bills.
- A system with too many committees overextend legislators and/or create duplication in their work. The **US** House of Representatives has 435 members and 19 permanent committees. However, each of these committees has dozens of subcommittees that further divide the labor. The number of subcommittees has been reduced in recent years.

*Legislative rules often require each legislator to sit on at least one committee, but they differ in how members are selected and on the number of committees on which they can serve.*

- Membership on committees is often allocated in proportion to each party's representation in the legislature (very small parties may not be represented on committees in some cases).
- Most countries limit the number of committees on which an individual member may sit. Exceptions to this rule include **Argentina, Canada, Germany, Hungary, India, Ireland, Japan, Namibia and the UK**.
- **Russia** has an unusual system of committee assignment. The Duma (lower house of Parliament) allows each member to choose his or her committee assignments freely, resulting in a wide variation in size and party balance on each committee. However, the Standing Rules stipulate that overall size of each committee be between 12 and 35.

*Committee chairs, who lead committee activities and are often looked to as experts on the committee's subject matter, are determined in several ways.*

- In many countries, committee chairs are chosen only from the majority party. In a few cases, such as in **Germany, Portugal and**

**Romania**, members from opposition or minority parties may chair committees.

- Chairs are nominated and confirmed through several mechanisms, including through party caucuses, by presiding officers, votes of the committee members or entire legislatures.
- In some cases, some special committee chairmanships are reserved for the opposition. For example, the House of Commons (**UK**) Public Accounts Committee has an opposition chair because it reviews the financial performance of government and has an audit function.
- In some countries, for example **Brazil** and most other nations in Latin America, committee chairmanships rotate on an annual basis, therefore there are no longstanding powerful committee chairs, as in the US.
- In the **Russian** Duma, every committee has a chairman and several deputy chairmen. The chairman is typically from the majority party (or party in a majority coalition), but the deputy chairmen are usually from those other than the party the chairman represents.
- Chairs that continue in that office for the longest periods (as in the US House of Representative) and those with special expertise pertaining to the committee (such as lawyers on judicial committees) are often able to be especially effective.

*Committee leaders have different roles in the legislative process in different governing systems.*

- In presidential systems, committee chairs usually lead the floor debate on a bill related to the work of that committee.
- In parliamentary systems, the relevant cabinet minister and the opposition spokesperson usually lead floor debate.
- In some parliamentary systems, opposition parties assign "shadow ministers", party leaders who follow the activities of a given ministry. They may be more likely to develop expertise in the relevant area than a committee chairs.

For a comparison of committee systems on number and appointment process, see [Table I](#).

## Activities and Types of Committees

There are two major types of committees. **Ad hoc committees** are formed for the purpose of reviewing particular bills or groups of bills and then are disbanded when that work is completed. They are typical of the British Westminster and some other parliamentary systems where the ministerial cabinets dominate the legislative process. Closely related to "ad hoc" committees are "sessional committees". These exist only for a single legislative session, but are then regularly reconstituted at the beginning of the next session (this is the practice in Uganda). In **permanent committees** (sometimes called *standing* committees), the jurisdiction of the committee is defined by subject matter, which tends to parallel the structure of the administrative or cabinet agencies (such as committees on Health, Defense, Labor, Education, Finance, etc.) There are other types of permanent committees, including those that oversee the rules of the legislature or that have specific auditing functions. In bicameral systems, reconciliation committees may meet to revise differences in a bill that is modified by two different chambers.

- In the Westminster system, the ad hoc committees have very little power. They tend to make only those amendments introduced by cabinet ministers, who exert party discipline at the committee level.
- In the **US** presidential model, committees can prevent bills from proceeding, make substantive amendments and often initiate legislation.
- In the **French** hybrid model, there are permanent, standing committees in the National Assembly, but they can only make technical amendments. They cannot prevent bills from coming to a vote by the full Assembly because each piece of legislation must be reported back to the full chamber within a given period of time.
- The **German** Bundestag (lower house) committees are very active, particularly in the area of reviewing and substantively amending bills.

In addition to reviewing and in some cases initiating proposed bills **oversight committees** hold private and/or public meetings to examine the executive branch's implementation of the laws, call witnesses and produce reports. Permanent committees may act as oversight committees. In the UK and similar Westminster systems, committees that parallel the ministries are called **select committees** and may be permanent. They have an oversight rather than legislative function. Legislatures may also form committees appointed for a given period to consider a specific matter. In presidential systems, *these* are called **select committees**. They differ from the Westminster select committees because they do not necessarily mirror the cabinet ministries in subject matter and always exist for a short term. For example, the **US** Congress recently established a Select Committee to research and publicize the Year 2000 computer problems. The select committees do not usually have formal legislative powers, but are organized to gather information, examine witnesses and hold public hearings.

For a comparison of committee systems and their oversight roles, see [Table II: Attendance at Committee Meetings](#).

## Committee Meetings and Hearings

### When do committees meet?

Many legislatures place controls on the times during which committees can meet. In many instances, committees do not, or cannot, meet when the legislative chamber is meeting in plenary or full session, or they meet and take recesses when the plenary is voting. Most committees meet during the time when the legislature is in session, but special rules may allow committees to meet at other times.

### How do committee members vote?

Committees usually reach decisions by a vote of the majority. The "majority" may not mean a majority of committee members, but a majority of a certain minimal number of members present (a quorum). Voting is usually less formal than in the plenary (i.e. it may be a show of hands.)

For a comparison of timing of committee meetings, see [Table IV: Meetings of Committees](#).

## Public Access to Committees

Many countries hold committee meetings in private. Others allow their committee meetings to be open to the public, as required by their internal rules, the [constitution](#) or by practice (although they may occasionally close them if the subject matter affects national security). Others hold a mix of public and private meetings. Rules concerning public meetings allow for advance posting of time and date, radio or television broadcast and/or the distribution of written transcripts of the meetings.

Committees in some legislatures hold **public hearings** to gather information on legislation, policy issues or to exercise oversight of the executive branch. Members may solicit the opinion of legal and academic experts, representatives of business and civic organizations and individual citizens. In some cases, they can call upon executive branch members to testify or to defend policies.

The benefits of public hearings may include:

- Providing the legislature with outside expertise;
- Providing a forum for the exchange of ideas;
- Educating citizens on current issues; and
- Increasing public confidence in the transparency of the legislature.

## Committee Staff

Staff size and degree of professionalism reflects the relative importance of committees in a given system. It also reflects a legislature's overall access to resources. Committees may be organized with a secretariat that employs staff and organizes the administration of the committee. In the **US**, each of the 19 permanent committees in the lower house can employ 18 professional and 12 clerical staff. Staff may arrange committee meetings, conduct research, assist in drafting legislation, provide expert advice, etc. The minority party may hire one third of the staff. In contrast, in the Legislative Assembly of **Argentina**, each committee has access to a secretary, an administrative secretary and two clerical assistants.

For a comparison of committee leadership and staff, see [Table III: Chair and Staff of Committees](#).

## Why Strong Committees?

Committees provide several benefits for the internal organization of a legislature:

- There are increasing demands on modern legislatures and committees serve as an important mechanism for division of labor.
- Committees allow members to discuss issues informally and to develop relationships with colleagues from other parties. They provide forums for compromise and agreement.
- Committee members (and committee staff) provide continuity, stability, historical knowledge and can develop expertise on certain matters.

- Committees can hold public meetings to disseminate information to the media and public and to gain feedback for legislative decisions.
- Committee hearings allow civil society leaders and experts to present their views. Committee hearings can also serve as the forum where members of the executive branch are questioned.
- Committees provide an opportunity for members of opposition parties to have a say in the policy-making process.

**Criticism of a strong committee system** usually revolves around the differences in the design of parliamentary systems vs. presidential ones. For example:

- In a strong parliamentary system, the focus should be on the political parties because they are the bodies more directly responsible to the voters and strong party discipline is required. Strong committees tend to reduce the distinctions between parties.
- In many parliamentary systems, executive branch ministries are responsible for drafting legislation. An extensive committee system is redundant or is a threat to the constitutional powers of the executive.
- Each legislator may give special attention to narrow areas of interest on his or her committee, at the expense of other issues.

Strong Committee Systems (US)	Weak Committee Systems (UK)
Committee <b>jurisdiction</b> is defined by subject matter, which tends to parallel the structure of the administrative agencies.	Committees are formed for the purpose of reviewing particular bills and then are disbanded.
<b>Membership/tenure</b> on a given committee tends to last the entire legislative term and often during a number of terms -- committee leaders may have more experience in a given area than the relevant Cabinet Minister or Secretary.	Membership/tenure on a committee is temporary and doesn't encourage particular members to gain expertise. Expertise lies in the Cabinet Ministries.
<b>Chairmanships</b> tend to go to the committee members with long experience on the committee.	The membership and leadership of committees is constantly changing.
There are a number of <b>permanent, or standing, committees.</b>	Most committees are ad hoc.

**Table 1: Committees**

The following table was reprinted with the permission of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs from their document: *Committees in Legislatures: A Division of Labor.*

Country & House (s)	Number of Permanent Committees	Appointment of Committee Members	Restrictions on Multiple Memberships

<b>ARGENTINA</b>  Senate  Chamber of Deputies	41  38  Bicameral: 4	Both Houses: Delegate power to appoint committee members to the President. Composition proportional to party strength.	Both Houses: No
<b>BULGARIA</b>  National Assembly	18	Composition proportional to party strength.	No more than 2.
<b>CANADA</b>  Senate  House of Commons	13  20  Joint: 3	By Committee of Selection (9 Members appointed at beginning of session). For Standing Committees: On adoption of report of the Striking Committee; for Special Committees: By House.	No
<b>COSTA RICA</b>  Legislative Assembly	6	Composition proportional to party strength.	No more than one permanent committee.
<b>EL SALVADOR</b> <sup>*</sup>  Legislative Assembly	14	Composition proportional to party strength; party faction decides.	No
<b>FRANCE</b>  Senate  National Assembly	6  6	Both Houses: Composition proportional to party strength.	Both Houses: No more than one permanent committee.
<b>GERMANY</b>  Federal Diet  Federal Council	Select: 24  Select: 24	Both Houses: Composition proportional to party strength.	Both Houses: No

<b>HUNGARY</b>  National Assembly	  Standing: 11  Special: 6	Composition proportional to party strength.	No
<b>INDIA</b>  House of the People*  Council of States	12  9  Joint committees: 7  Department Related: 17 (Standing Committees)	Both Houses: Appointed or elected by the House on a motion made, or nominated by the Presiding Officer under the rules.	Both Houses: No
<b>IRELAND</b>  Senate  Dail	Select committees: 2  3  Joint committees: 2	By the Committee of Selection of the House, taking account of the strength of parties and non-party groups.	Both Houses: No
<b>JAPAN</b>  House of Councillors  House of Representatives	17  20	Both Houses: Places are allocated by the Presiding Officer proportional to party strength.	Limited to 2 standing committees.  At least 1 standing committee (but those holding other office may refuse). Special Committees unrestricted.
<b>JORDAN</b>  Senate  House of Deputies	Permanent: 4  Temporary & Ad Hoc: 8	Elected by secret ballot.	House:  Not more than 2.
<b>NAMIBIA</b>  National Assembly	Permanent: 4	Nominated by the parties and announced by the speaker.	No

<b>PORTUGAL</b>  Assembly of the Republic	Permanent: 12	Composition proportional to party strength.	Restricted to 2 permanent committees, or 3, if a group is too small to be represented on all committees.
<b>ROMANIA</b>  House of Deputies  Senate	14  14  Joint on Intelligence Service: 1	Composition proportional to party strength and the party then selects who will serve on each committee.	Both Houses: Restrict membership to 2 committees. If on joint Intelligence Service Committee then can serve on no others.
<b>RUSSIA</b>  State Duma  Council of the Federation	23  13	Both Houses: Composition proportional to party strength.	Both Houses: No more than 1.
<b>SENEGAL</b>  National Assembly	11	Appointed by the Assembly following proposals from the group chairman.	Limited to 3 committees. Bureau members may not serve on parliamentary committees.
<b>THAILAND</b>  House of Representatives*  Senate	15  13	Both Houses: Elected members relative to party strength.	Limited to 2 committees.  Limited to 1 committees.
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>  House of Commons	30	Committee of selection nominates standing committees and proposes members of 14 select departmental committees for appointment by the House. Other select committees are appointed by the House on motion of Government Whip after discussions between the parties.  On recommendation of the Committee of Selection except Ecclesiastical Committee and the Joint Committee on Consolidation	Both Houses: None

House of Lords	14 (with 10 permanent sub committees)	Bills whose members are recommended by the Lord Chancellor.	
<b>UNITED STATES</b>			
Senate	Standing: 16 Select committees: 3 Special committees: 1	Both Houses: Elected by each House proportional to party strength.	Usually 3 Standing committees plus 1 Select committee.  Limit to 1 or 2 with certain exceptions by party rules.
House of Representatives	Standing: 19 Select Permanent: 2 Joint: 4		

**Table 2: Chair and Staff of Committees**

The following table was reprinted with the permission of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs from their document: *Committees in Legislatures: A Division of Labor*.

Country & House (s)	Appointment of Chair	Distribution of Chair among Parties	Committee Secretariat	Secretariat Functions:  A) Administrative  B) Research  C) Document Preparation
<b>ARGENTINA</b>  Senate  Chamber of Deputies	Both Houses: Elected by members of each committee.	Both Houses: Chairs awarded proportional to party strength.	Both Houses: Each committee appoints a secretary. The administration provides an administrative secretary, typist and stenographer.	Both Houses:  A) Yes  B) No  C) No

<p><b>BULGARIA</b></p> <p>National Assembly</p>	<p>Consultations with political forces.</p>	<p>Chairs are elected by the assembly from a list formulated by each party. Opposition parties may decline to nominate chairs and are rewarded by the majority with Deputy Chairs.</p>	<p>1 technical secretary and 1 expert plus consultants depending upon the budget of the committee.</p>	<p>A) Yes B) Yes C) Yes</p>
<p><b>CANADA</b></p> <p>Senate House of Representatives</p>	<p>Both Houses: Elected by members of each committee.</p>	<p>Both Houses: Chair is in principle member of ruling party. In the Commons, the Committee on Public Accounts is an exception.</p>	<p>Committee clerk is designated by the Chief of Committees and Private Legislation Branch of each Chamber. Research officers from the library are assigned to committees on request.</p>	<p>Both Houses: A) Yes B) Yes B) Yes</p>
<p><b>COSTA RICA</b></p> <p>Legislative Assembly</p>	<p>Appointed by the President of the Assembly.</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Each committee has a secretariat attached to it drawn from the administrative personnel of the Assembly.</p>	<p>A) Yes B) Yes C) No</p>
<p><b>EL SALVADOR</b></p> <p>Legislative Assembly</p>	<p>Elected by plenary.</p>	<p>Chairs awarded according to relative strength of parties; majority party decides which committee it chairs.</p>	<p>Each committee has 1 technical assistant and 1 secretary.</p>	<p>A) Yes B) Yes C) Yes</p>
<p><b>FRANCE</b></p> <p>Senate  National Assembly</p>	<p>Both Houses:  Elected by each committee.</p>	<p>Concerted attempt to distribute between the political groups.  Distributed among the groups forming the parliamentary party.</p>	<p>Both Houses: Permanent secretariat of several people for each committee.</p>	<p>Both Houses: A) Yes B) Yes C) Yes</p>

<p><b>GERMANY</b></p> <p>Federal Diet</p> <p>Federal Council</p>	<p>Both Houses: Appointed according to agreements by the parliamentary groups.</p>	<p>Both Houses: According to their relative strengths.</p>	<p>Both Houses: Permanent with 1 secretary and assistant as well as clerical staff as needed.</p>	<p>Both Houses:</p> <p>A) Yes</p> <p>B) Yes</p> <p>C) Yes</p>
<p><b>HUNGARY</b></p> <p>National Assembly</p>	<p>Elected by the plenary.</p>	<p>Proportional, ad hoc bargaining.</p>	<p>Permanent, independent from caucus, hired by Parliament Administration.</p>	<p>A) Yes</p> <p>B) Yes</p> <p>C) Yes</p>
<p><b>INDIA</b></p> <p>Council of States</p> <p>House of the People</p>	<p>Both Houses:</p> <p>Appointed from among the committee members by the respective Presiding Officer. The Presiding Officer is ex-officio Chair of some committees.</p>	<p>Both Houses:</p> <p>Effort is generally made to accommodate maximum number of parties and groups in proportion to strength. However, a practice exists in which Chair of the Public Accounts Committee is from the opposition.</p>	<p>Both Houses:</p> <p>Provided according to the requirements of each committee. The House Secretary is secretary to all committees but is assisted by the Joint Secretary.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p><b>IRELAND</b></p> <p>Senate</p> <p>Dail</p>	<p>Both Houses: Elected by each committee except for Joint Committee on a Private Bill where chair is jointly appointed by Chair of each House and committee on Procedure and Privileges of both houses have ex officio chairs.</p>	<p>Both Houses: By agreement in the committee or by majority decision.</p>	<p>Both Houses: Provided from parliamentary staff.</p>	<p>Both Houses:</p> <p>A) Yes</p> <p>B) Yes</p> <p>C) Yes</p>







Country & House(s)	Is Committee Stage Prerequisite for Adoption of Bill	Are Any Bills Automatically Referred to Committees	Are There Provisions for External Consultations at Committee Stage
<b>ARGENTINA</b>  Senate  Chamber of Deputies	Both Houses: Yes, except very occasionally when the House decides on immediate consideration.	Both Houses: Yes	Both Houses: No provisions but possible.
<b>BULGARIA</b>  National Assembly	Yes	President of parliament decides which committees review legislation.	Yes and is done from time to time.
<b>CANADA</b>  Senate  House of Commons	Both Houses: Yes	Both Houses: All bills.	Both Houses: Standing Orders empower committees to send for persons, papers, and records required to discharge their mandate.
<b>COSTA RICA</b>  Legislative Assembly	Yes	Not Applicable.	Committee may invite oral and written comments from interested parties.
<b>EL SALVADOR</b>  Legislative Assembly	Yes	Some go directly to committees ( <i>i.e.</i> , budget) and others are assigned.	Yes, the Rules of Procedure state that committees may consult individuals to clarify issues and requisition documents from the government or a private organization.
<b>FRANCE</b>  Senate  National Assembly	Both Houses: Yes	Both Houses: Referral to appropriate permanent committee, except when special committee is created.	Both Houses: No

<p><b>GERMANY</b></p> <p>Federal Diet</p> <p>Federal Council</p>	Both Houses: Yes	Both Houses: No	Both Houses: Yes, hearing experts.
<p><b>HUNGARY</b></p> <p>National Assembly</p>	Yes	All	Not obliged yet possible and used.
<p><b>INDIA</b></p> <p>House of the People</p> <p>Council of States</p>	Both Houses: No, committee stage is only motion of House or if referred to the Committee by the presiding officer of the respective house.	Both Houses: No	Both Houses: Oral and documentary evidence as considered necessary.
<p><b>IRELAND</b></p> <p>Senate</p> <p>Dail</p>	Both Houses: Yes	Both Houses: All Bills referred, usually to committee of whole House.	Both Houses: Select Committees may send for persons and documents, and may take evidence upon any Bill. Special reports may be made of any matters thought fit to bring forward.
<p><b>JAPAN</b></p> <p>House of Councillors</p> <p>House of Representatives</p>	Both Houses: Yes, except by urgent request of the proposer and House resolution may the committee stage be omitted.	Both Houses: Yes	Both Houses: Generally no, but on important matters a committee can hold open hearings and if necessary it may hear from witnesses.
<p><b>JORDAN</b></p> <p>Senate</p> <p>House of Deputies</p>	Yes	All bills.	Standing Orders provide for committee to invite any person it wishes to hear.
<p><b>NAMIBIA</b></p> <p>National Assembly</p>	No	No	No

<p><b>PORTUGAL</b></p> <p>Assembly of the Republic</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes, certain legislation requires consultation with NGOs such as labor laws and committees are entitled to consult experts and NGOs on any matter.</p>
<p><b>ROMANIA</b></p> <p>Senate</p> <p>House of Deputies</p>	<p>Both Houses: Yes</p>	<p>Both Houses: Yes</p>	<p>Both Houses: Not prohibited.</p>
<p><b>RUSSIA</b></p> <p>State Duma</p> <p>Council of the Federation</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Submitted first to Duma then automatically to committees.</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Both Houses: Yes.</p>
<p><b>SENEGAL</b></p> <p>National Assembly</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>If requested by the representative of the President of the Republic or the relevant committee.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>THAILAND</b></p> <p>Senate</p> <p>House of Representatives</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Yes, normally by ad hoc committee.</p>	<p>No, referred to committee by the resolution of the Senate.</p> <p>Not Applicable.</p>	<p>Both Houses: Yes</p>
<p><b>UNITED KINGDOM</b></p> <p>House of Lords</p> <p>House of Commons</p>	<p>All Bills are referred to a committee except by agreement otherwise.</p> <p>All Bills except those authorizing government expenditures.</p>	<p>Public Bills referred to standing committees</p>	<p>Yes, but only in those rare cases of bills referred to a select committee.</p> <p>Yes, but only in those rare cases of bills referred to a select committee. Recent experiments have allowed standing committees to take evidence.</p>

		unless the House orders otherwise.	
<b>UNITED STATES</b>			
Senate	Both Houses: Committee consideration usual but not mandatory.	Usually, House passed bills not referred to the Senate committee if a Senate bill or related subject has already been referred.	Both Houses: Yes
House of Representatives		No, at the Speaker's discretion. Speaker rarely refers one bill to several committees and sets time limits for committee action.	

### Further Reading

1. Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parliaments of the World, Geneva, IPU. (see website below)
2. Kurian, George Thomas, ed., World Encyclopedia of Parliaments and Legislatures, Volume II, 1998.
3. Longley, Lawrence D. and Roger H. Davidson, eds., *The New Roles of Parliamentary Committees*, The Journal of Legislative Studies, Frank Cass Publishers, Issue 4.1, 1998. (see website below)
4. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, *Committees in Legislatures: A Division of Labor*, Legislative Research Series, Paper # 2, 1996.
5. Ogle, David B., *Management and Organization of Representative Assemblies*, National Council of State Legislatures, 1997.
6. Olson, David M., Democratic Legislative Institutions: A Comparative View, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York, London, England, 1994.

### Websites

[www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org) – PARLINE database provides links to sites of various parliaments, some include a description of committee systems.

[www.frankcass.com/jnls/jls.htm](http://www.frankcass.com/jnls/jls.htm) – Publishers of The Journal of Legislative Studies. Includes article abstracts and subscription and ordering information.

### Organizations focusing on this area:

International Republican Institute – [www.iri.org](http://www.iri.org)

Inter-Parliamentary Union – [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs – [www.ndi.org](http://www.ndi.org)