

CCJS01 Canadian House of Commons

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Y Pwyllgor Busnes | Business Committee

Rhannu swydd cadeirydd pwyllgor | Committee chair job sharing

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RESPONSE FROM THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

"Job-sharing," when understood as an alternative work arrangement where duties and responsibilities of a full-time position are shared by two employees, has not been considered for committee chairs or any other parliamentary office in the Canadian House of Commons.

However, to provide some relevant insights, we are sharing some information on the roles of "Vice-Chairs", "Acting Chairs" and "Co-Chairs" (also known as Joint Chairs), which are integral to our procedure and practice. This information offers a perspective on how these roles allow for a temporary replacement of a Chair. (See also House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Third Edition, pp. 1039-1050)

ROLE OF VICE-CHAIRS

·Primary Function: Vice-Chairs preside over meetings or parts thereof when the Chair is absent.

·Additional Roles: Vice-Chairs may have roles outside of meetings, such as presenting committee reports in the House or defending budget submissions. However, they do not have administrative responsibilities unless instructed by the Chair.

·Authority: They hold the same authority as Chairs in maintaining order and decorum.

·Hierarchy: The first Vice-Chair is the primary replacement for the Chair, followed by the second Vice-Chair if needed, although there is some flexibility.

·Limitation: Vice-Chairs cannot perform any function if the Chair's office is vacant.

ROLE OF ACTING CHAIRS

• **Primary Function:** An Acting Chair is appointed when both the Chair and Vice-Chairs are absent. In 2005, however, the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics designated one of its members as Acting Chair for a period of several months. This was done in response to the prolonged absence of the Committee Chair, who had given his consent to the designation. The designation was to end as soon as the Chair was able to resume his functions. A similar situation took place in 2011, in the Standing Committee on Health.

• **Authority:** Acting Chairs have the same authority as the Chair.

• **Limitation:** No Acting Chair can be designated if the Chair's office is vacant.

ROLE OF CO-CHAIRS (or “JOINT CHAIRS”)

• **Primary Function:** Joint Chairs both convene and preside over meetings jointly. They operate under a hybrid of procedures from both the House of Commons and the Senate.

• **Authority:** They hold the same authority in maintaining order and decorum over the members of their respective Houses.

• **Limitation:** Co-Chairs (of Joint Chairs) must collaborate and make arrangements to ensure the proper management of the committee's proceedings.

Of the three roles described above, and while not a case of job-sharing per se, the role of Joint Chairs/Co-Chairs for our Parliament's standing joint and special joint committees is the most relevant in the current case.

While Co-Chairs are not part of the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, they do provide for Joint Chairs of standing joint committees. These committees are composed of members from both Houses of Parliament: the Senate and the House of Commons. There are currently two standing joint committees: the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament and the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations. In the case of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations, as an example, traditionally, one Joint Chair has been from the Senate, representing the government party, and the other Joint Chair has been from the House, representing the Official Opposition. (House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Third Edition, p. 812)

Special joint committees, for their part, are often created to study matters of great importance and are also composed of members of the House of Commons

and Senators. As an example, the Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency, established in March 2022 by orders adopted in the House and the Senate, was created following the February 14, 2022 invocation of the Emergencies Act, issuing a declaration of a public order emergency and giving the federal government certain temporary powers. (DEDCC - About - House of Commons of Canada (parl.ca))

For this committee, the motion adopted by the House of Commons contained provisions for the inclusion of three Co-Chairs, for which the two House Co-Chairs were from the Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party (two opposition parties) and the Senate Co-Chair was determined by the Senate.

ALLOWANCES

In accordance with the Board of Internal Economy's current policies related to budgets, allowances, entitlements and services, the House of Commons Chairs of all Standing, Special, Standing Joint, and Special Joint Committees are entitled to the full salary increase commensurate with the role of a Chair (exceptions: the Liaison Committee and the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament). (MAS-e.pdf: See Appendix: Sessional Allowance and Additional Salaries)

OTHER RELATED INFORMATION

For more information on the roles of Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Acting Chairs and Joint Chairs, as well as their methods of designation, you can consult:

·House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Third Edition, 2017, Chapter 20, "Committees"

·Standing Orders of the House of Commons, Striking of Committees

Finally, if the interest in job-sharing examples comes from efforts to promote "family-friendly working" in the Senedd, we are also sharing links to three studies and their respective reports conducted by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. These studies focus on topics that align with fostering a more family-friendly environment in parliamentary settings:

1. Regulations Respecting the Non-Attendance of Members by Reason of Maternity or Care for a New-Born or Newly-Adopted Child

Report 97 (Concurred in by the House: Wednesday, June 12, 2019)

2. Services and Facilities Provided to Members of Parliament with Young Children

Report 48 (Presented to the House: Thursday, November 30, 2017)

3. Initiatives toward a family-friendly House of Commons

Report 11 (Concurred in by the House: Tuesday, April 4, 2017)