File = NSITSP Legislative Position Process

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**Draft**

**NSITSP Legislative Position Process**

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**Background**

From time to time, it will be useful or necessary for the NSITSP to take a position on a piece of legislation. This might be at any level of government (local, state, or federal). Positions might include: Favor, Oppose, or Neutral (take no position).

This also applies to topics or proposals that might become legislative topics at a future date.

Any organization that takes a position on issues in the political realm should have a process for determining whether a position should be taken and, if so, which position should be taken. This is an outline of the process to be followed by the NSITSP.

"Legislators and their aides stand behind the belief that if they do not hear about an issue, it is not considered a priority."

– Stefanie Reeves, FASAE, CAE

**Overview of the Process**

1. The subject is discussed in the Legislative Committee
2. The Legislative Committee drafts a position paper no greater than three pages in length (see below)
3. The Legislative Committee forwards the position paper to the Board of Directors with a formal request to take a position
4. The Board of Directors may send the document back to the Legislative Committee for clarification or with suggested changes
5. This back-and-forth communication will continue until the Board of Directors decides to take action
6. The Board of Directors may take any action it wants. The most likely scenarios are to endorse the Legislative Committee's position or to reject the request to take a position.
7. At any time, the Board of Directors may make additional request of the Legislative Committee, or send additional instructions.

It is important that the Board be involved in this process since they speak on behalf of the membership. On rare occasions, the board may wish to take an issue to the membership, whether to collect input, gather support, or "rally the troops."

At this time, the NSITSP does not have money to engage a professional lobbyist. And we certainly do not have the money to be engaged with fifty state legislatures plus the federal Congress. And so, we are by default a "grass roots" organization.

**The Position Paper**

A position paper should be one or two pages, with a one-page summary. That means, in total, it should never exceed three pages.

A position paper should present the facts, as we see them. It may present our philosophy on a topic as well. It must make clear what we believe and why we are taking a particular position.

If there is room to refute the most important points from the opposition, this can improve a position paper. But this must be done within the limit of 1-2 pages plus summary.

Bullet points can help in both clarity and brevity:

* Define the issue as we see it
* State our position
* Support our position with facts and data
* Avoid jargon, especially technical jargon beyond what is already part of the conversation

In the process defined above, a position paper will probably emerge from the Legislative Committee or a subcommittee of the Legislative Committee. Once drafted, the document should be reviewed by as many people as possible, including committee members, Board members, and other members of the NSITSP.

The first question of the Legislative Committee should be, should we take a position? If the answer is yes, then the Committee should proceed to discuss which position to take, and why it is in the long-term best interest of our membership.

And, of course, any position we take should align with our stated Mission, Vision, and Values.