Chapter 44.28 RCW
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

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RCW 44.28.005 Definitions. Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Economy and efficiency audits" means performance audits that establish: (a) Whether a state agency or unit of local government receiving state funds is acquiring, protecting, and using its resources such as personnel, property, and space economically and efficiently; (b) the causes of inefficiencies or uneconomical practices; and (c) whether the state agency or local government has complied with significant laws and rules in acquiring, protecting, and using its resources.

(2) "Ethnic commissions" means the Washington state commission on African American affairs established in chapter 43.113 RCW, the Washington state commission on Asian Pacific American affairs established in chapter 43.117 RCW, and the Washington state commission on Hispanic affairs established in chapter 43.115 RCW.

(3) "Final compliance report" means a written document, as approved by the joint committee, that states the specific actions a state agency or unit of local government receiving state funds has taken to implement recommendations contained in the final performance audit report and the preliminary compliance report. Any recommendations, including proposed legislation and changes in the agency's rules and practices or the local government's practices, based on testimony received, must be included in the final compliance report.

(4) "Final performance audit report" means a written document adopted by the joint legislative audit and review committee that contains the findings and proposed recommendations made in the preliminary performance audit report, the final recommendations adopted by the joint committee, any comments to the preliminary performance audit report by the joint committee, and any comments to the preliminary performance audit report by the state agency or local government that was audited.

(5) "Joint committee" means the joint legislative audit and review committee.

(6) "Legislative auditor" means the executive officer of the joint legislative audit and review committee.

(7) "Local government" means a city, town, county, special purpose district, political subdivision, municipal corporation, or quasi-municipal corporation, including a public corporation created by such an entity.

(8) "Performance audit" means an objective and systematic assessment of a state agency or any of its programs, functions, or activities, or a unit of local government receiving state funds, by an independent evaluator in order to help public officials improve efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability. Performance audits include economy and efficiency audits and program audits. A performance audit of a local government may only be made to determine whether the local government is using state funds for their intended purpose in an efficient and effective manner.

(9) "Performance measures" are a composite of key indicators of a program's or activity's inputs, outputs, outcomes, productivity, timeliness, and/or quality. They are means of evaluating policies and programs by measuring results against agreed upon program goals or standards.

(10) "Preliminary compliance report" means a written document that states the specific actions a state agency or unit of local government receiving state funds has taken to implement any recommendations contained in the final performance audit report.

(11) "Preliminary performance audit report" means a written document prepared for review and comment by the joint legislative audit and review committee after the completion of a performance audit. The preliminary performance audit report must contain the audit findings and any proposed recommendations to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, or accountability of the state agency or local government audited.

(12) "Program audits" means performance audits that determine: (a) The extent to which desired outcomes or results are being achieved; (b) the causes for not achieving intended outcomes or results; and (c) compliance with significant laws and rules applicable to the program.

(13) "State agency" or "agency" means a state agency, department, office, officer, board, commission, bureau, division, institution, or institution of higher education. "State agency" includes all elective offices in the executive branch of state government. [2021 c 310 s 3; 1996 c 288 s 2.]

Reviser's note: The definitions in this section have been alphabetized pursuant to RCW 1.08.015(2)(k).

Findings and intent—1996 c 288: "The public expects the legislature to address citizens' increasing demand for the basic services of state government, while limiting the growth in spending. The public demands that public officials and state employees be accountable to provide maximum value for every dollar entrusted to state government. The public believes that it is possible to improve the responsiveness of state government and to save the taxpayers' money, and that efficiency and effectiveness should result in savings.

The legislature, public officials, state employees, and citizens need to know the extent to which state agencies, programs, and activities are achieving the purposes for which they were created. It is essential to compare the conditions, problems, and priorities that led to the creation of government programs with current conditions, problems, and priorities, and to examine the need for and performance of those programs in the current environment.

Along with examining the performance of state agencies and programs, the legislature, public officials, state employees, and citizens must also consider the effect that state government programs

can reasonably expect to have on citizens' lives, how the level of programs and services of Washington state government compares with that of other states, and alternatives for service delivery, including other levels of government and the private sector including not-for-profit organizations. It is essential that the legislature, public officials, state employees, and citizens share a common understanding of the role of state government. The performance and relative priority of state agency programs and activities must be the basis for managing and allocating resources within Washington state government.

It is the intent of the legislature to strengthen the role of the current legislative budget committee so that it may more effectively examine how efficiently state agencies perform their responsibilities and whether the agencies are achieving their goals, and whether units of local government are using state funds for their intended purpose in an efficient and effective manner. It is also the intent of the legislature to enact a clear set of definitions for different types of audits in order to eliminate confusion with regard to government reviews." [1996 c 288 s 1.]

RCW 44.28.010 Committee created—Members. The joint legislative audit and review committee is created, which shall consist of eight senators and eight representatives from the legislature. The senate members of the joint committee shall be appointed by the president of the senate, and the house members of the joint committee shall be appointed by the speaker of the house. Not more than four members from each house shall be from the same political party. Members shall be appointed before the close of each regular session of the legislature during an odd-numbered year. [2010 c 26 s 1; 1996 c 288 s 3; 1983 c 52 s 1; 1980 c 87 s 30; 1969 c 10 s 4; 1967 ex.s. c 114 s 1; 1963 ex.s. c 20 s 1; 1955 c 206 s 4; 1951 c 43 s 1.]

RCW 44.28.020 Terms of members—Vacancies. The term of office of the members of the joint committee shall be two years, ending two years from the date of appointment or when a member is no longer a member of the house from which he or she was appointed, except that members shall continue to serve until a successor is appointed. Vacancies on the joint committee shall be filled from the same political party and from the same house as the member whose seat was vacated. Senate vacancies shall be filled through appointment by the president of the senate, and house vacancies shall be filled through appointment by the speaker of the house. [2010 c 26 s 2; 1996 c 288 s 4; 1980 c 87 s 31; 1969 c 10 s 5; 1955 c 206 s 5; 1951 c 43 s 12.]

RCW 44.28.040 Travel expenses. The members of the joint committee shall serve without additional compensation, but shall be reimbursed for their travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120 for attending meetings of the joint committee or a subcommittee of the joint committee, or while engaged on other business authorized by the joint committee. [1996 c 288 s 6; 1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 34 s 134; 1951 c 43 s 14.]

Effective date—Severability—1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 34: See notes following RCW 2.08.115.

RCW 44.28.050 Expenses of committee—Vouchers. All expenses incurred by the committee, including salaries and expenses of employees, shall be paid upon voucher forms as provided by the auditor. The legislative auditor may be authorized by the *legislative budget committee's executive committee to sign vouchers. Such authorization shall specify a dollar limitation and be set out in writing. A monthly report of such vouchers shall be submitted to the executive committee. If authorization is not given to the legislative auditor then the chair, or the vice chair in the chair's absence, is authorized to sign vouchers. This authority shall continue until the chair's or vice chair's successors are selected after each ensuing session of the legislature. Vouchers may be drawn on funds appropriated generally by the legislature for legislative expenses or upon any special appropriation which may be provided by the legislature for the expenses of the committee or both. [1989 c 137 s 1; 1955 c 206 s 7; 1951 c 43 s 15.]

*__Reviser's note:__ The "legislative budget committee" was redesignated the "joint legislative audit and review committee" by 1996 c 288 s 3.

Vouchers on public funds: Chapter 42.24 RCW.

RCW 44.28.055 Administration. The administration of the joint legislative audit and review committee is subject to RCW 44.04.260. [2001 c 259 s 2.]

RCW 44.28.060 Executive committee—Legislative auditor—Rules, subcommittees. The members of the joint committee shall form an executive committee consisting of one member from each of the four major political caucuses, which shall include a chair and a vice chair. The chair and vice chair shall serve for a period not to exceed two years. The chair and the vice chair may not be members of the same political party. The chair shall alternate between the members of the majority parties in the senate and the house of representatives.

Subject to RCW 44.04.260, the executive committee is responsible for performing all general administrative and personnel duties assigned to it in the rules and procedures adopted by the joint committee, as well as other duties delegated to it by the joint committee. The executive committee shall recommend applicants for the position of the legislative auditor to the membership of the joint committee. The legislative auditor shall be hired with the approval of a majority of the membership of the joint committee. Subject to RCW 44.04.260, the executive committee shall set the salary of the legislative auditor.

The joint committee shall adopt rules and procedures for its orderly operation. The joint committee may create subcommittees to perform duties under this chapter. [2001 c 259 s 3; 1996 c 288 s 7; 1975 1st ex.s. c 293 s 13; 1951 c 43 s 2.]

RCW 44.28.065 Legislative auditor—Duties. The legislative auditor shall:

(1) Establish and manage the office of the joint legislative audit and review committee to carry out the functions of this chapter;

(2) Direct the audit and review functions described in this chapter and ensure that performance audits are performed in accordance with the "Government Auditing Standards" published by the comptroller general of the United States as applicable to the scope of the audit;

(3) Make findings and recommendations to the joint committee and under its direction to the committees of the state legislature concerning the organization and operation of state agencies and the expenditure of state funds by units of local government;

(4) Subject to RCW 44.04.260, in consultation with and with the approval of the executive committee, hire staff necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter. Subject to RCW 44.04.260, employee salaries, other than the legislative auditor, shall be set by the legislative auditor with the approval of the executive committee;

(5) Assist the several standing committees of the house and senate in consideration of legislation affecting state departments and their efficiency; appear before other legislative committees; and assist any other legislative committee upon instruction by the joint legislative audit and review committee;

(6) Provide the legislature with information obtained under the direction of the joint legislative audit and review committee;

(7) Maintain a record of all work performed by the legislative auditor under the direction of the joint legislative audit and review committee and keep and make available all documents, data, and reports submitted to the legislative auditor by any legislative committee. [2001 c 259 s 4; 1996 c 288 s 8; 1975 1st ex.s. c 293 s 17; 1955 c 206 s 9; 1951 c 43 s 11. Formerly RCW 44.28.140.]

RCW 44.28.071 Conduct of performance audits. (1) In conducting performance audits and other reviews, the legislative auditor shall work closely with the chairs and staff of standing committees of the senate and house of representatives, and may work in consultation with the state auditor and the director of financial management.

(2) The legislative auditor may contract with and consult with public and private independent professional and technical experts as necessary in conducting the performance audits. The legislative auditor should also involve frontline employees and internal auditors in the performance audit process to the highest possible degree.

(3) The legislative auditor shall work with the legislative evaluation and accountability program committee and the office of financial management to develop information system capabilities necessary for the performance audit requirements of this chapter.

(4) The legislative auditor shall work with the legislative office of performance review and the office of financial management to facilitate the implementation of effective performance measures throughout state government. In agencies and programs where effective systems for performance measurement exist, the measurements incorporated into those systems should be a basis for performance audits conducted under this chapter. [1996 c 288 s 9.]

RCW 44.28.075 Performance audits—Scope. (1) Subject to the requirements of the performance audit work plan approved by the joint committee under RCW 44.28.083, performance audits may, in addition to the determinations that may be made in such an audit as specified in RCW 44.28.005, include the following:

(a) An examination of the costs and benefits of agency programs, functions, and activities;

(b) Identification of viable alternatives for reducing costs or improving service delivery;

(c) Identification of gaps and overlaps in service delivery, along with corrective action; and

(d) Comparison with other states whose agencies perform similar functions, as well as their relative funding levels and performance.

(2) As part of a performance audit, the legislative auditor may review the costs of programs recently implemented by the legislature to compare actual agency costs with the appropriations provided and the cost estimates that were included in the fiscal note for the program at the time the program was enacted. [1996 c 288 s 10.]

RCW 44.28.076 Racial equity analysis. The joint committee shall incorporate a racial equity analysis into performance audits, sunset reviews, and other audits or reports conducted by the joint committee. The joint committee shall note in its audits, reviews, and reports if a racial equity analysis is not necessary or appropriate. The joint committee may work with the office of equity, the governor's office of Indian affairs, the LGBTQ commission, the Washington state women's commission, and the ethnic commissions to design the racial equity analysis required under this section. [2021 c 310 s 1.]

RCW 44.28.080 Powers—Appropriations, expenses, revenues. The joint committee has the following powers:

(1) To make examinations and reports concerning whether or not appropriations are being expended for the purposes and within the statutory restrictions provided by the legislature; and concerning the organization and operation of procedures necessary or desirable to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in state government, its officers, boards, committees, commissions, institutions, and other state agencies, and to make recommendations and reports to the legislature.

(2) To make such other studies and examinations of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of state government and its state agencies as it may find advisable, and to hear complaints, hold hearings, gather information, and make findings of fact with respect thereto.

(3) To conduct program and fiscal reviews of any state agency or program scheduled for termination under the process provided under chapter 43.131 RCW.

(4) To perform other legislative staff studies of state government or the use of state funds.

(5) To conduct performance audits in accordance with the work plan adopted by the joint committee under *RCW 44.28.180.

(6) To receive a copy of each report of examination or audit issued by the state auditor for examinations or audits that were conducted at the request of the joint committee and to make recommendations as it deems appropriate as a separate addendum to the report or audit.

(7) To develop internal tracking procedures that will allow the legislature to measure the effectiveness of performance audits conducted by the joint committee including, where appropriate,

measurements of cost-savings and increases in efficiency and effectiveness in how state agencies deliver their services.

(8) To receive messages and reports in person or in writing from the governor or any other state officials and to study generally any and all business relating to economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in state government and state agencies. [1996 c 288 s 11; 1975 1st ex.s. c 293 s 14; 1955 c 206 s 10; 1951 c 43 s 4.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 44.28.180 was recodified as RCW 44.28.083 pursuant to 1996 c 288 s 55.

RCW 44.28.083 Performance audit work plans. (1) At the conclusion of the regular legislative session of each odd-numbered year, the joint legislative audit and review committee shall develop and approve a performance audit work plan for the ensuing biennium. The biennial work plan may be modified, as necessary, at the conclusion of other legislative sessions to reflect actions taken by the legislature and the joint committee. The work plan shall include a description of each performance audit, and the cost of completing the audits on the work plan shall be limited to the funds appropriated to the joint committee. Approved performance audit work plans shall be transmitted to the entire legislature by July 1st following the conclusion of each regular session of an odd-numbered year and as soon as practical following other legislative sessions.

(2) Among the factors to be considered in preparing the work plans are:

(a) Whether a program newly created or significantly altered by the legislature warrants continued oversight because (i) the fiscal impact of the program is significant, or (ii) the program represents a relatively high degree of risk in terms of reaching the stated goals and objectives for that program;

(b) Whether implementation of an existing program has failed to meet its goals and objectives by any significant degree;

(c) Whether a follow-up audit would help ensure that previously identified recommendations for improvements were being implemented;

(d) Whether legislative changes to the program require delaying the review until sufficient data is available;

(e) Whether an assignment for the joint committee to conduct a performance audit has been mandated in legislation; and

(f) Whether a planned review that is part of a mandated, recurring study would provide the legislature with new or additional information.

(3) The legislative auditor may consult with the chairs and staff of appropriate legislative committees, the state auditor, and the director of financial management in developing the performance audit work plan. [2025 c 198 s 4; 2010 c 26 s 3; 1996 c 288 s 12; 1993 c 406 s 5. Formerly RCW 44.28.180.]

Short title—1993 c 406: See note following RCW 43.88.020.

RCW 44.28.088 Performance audit reports—Preliminary, final. (1) When the legislative auditor has completed a performance audit authorized in the performance audit work plan, the legislative auditor shall transmit the preliminary performance audit report to the affected state agency or local government and the office of financial

management for comment. The agency or local government and the office of financial management shall provide any response to the legislative auditor within thirty days after receipt of the preliminary performance audit report unless a different time period is approved by the joint committee. The legislative auditor shall incorporate the response of the agency or local government and the office of financial management into the final performance audit report.

(2) Before releasing the results of a performance audit to the legislature or the public, the legislative auditor shall submit the preliminary performance audit report to the joint committee for its review, comments, and final recommendations. Any comments by the joint committee must be included as a separate addendum to the final performance audit report. Upon consideration and incorporation of the review, comments, and recommendations of the joint committee, the legislative auditor shall transmit the final performance audit report to the affected agency or local government, the director of financial management, the leadership of the senate and the house of representatives, and the appropriate standing committees of the house of representatives and the senate and shall publish the results and make the report available to the public. For purposes of this section, "leadership of the senate and the house of representatives" means the speaker of the house, the majority leaders of the senate and the house of representatives, the minority leaders of the senate and the house of representatives, the caucus chairs of both major political parties of the senate and the house of representatives, and the floor leaders of both major political parties of the senate and the house of representatives. [2010 c 26 s 4; 2005 c 319 s 113; 2003 c 362 s 14; 1996 c 288 s 13.]

Findings—Intent—Part headings—Effective dates—2005 c 319: See notes following RCW 43.17.020.

RCW 44.28.091 Compliance reports—Preliminary and final. (1) No later than nine months after the final performance audit has been transmitted by the joint committee to the appropriate standing committees of the house of representatives and the senate, the joint committee in consultation with the standing committees may produce a preliminary compliance report on the agency's or local government's compliance with the final performance audit recommendations. The agency or local government may attach its comments to the joint committee's preliminary compliance report as a separate addendum.

(2) Within three months after the issuance of the preliminary compliance report, the joint committee may hold at least one public hearing and receive public testimony regarding the findings and recommendations contained in the preliminary compliance report. The joint committee may waive the public hearing requirement if the preliminary compliance report demonstrates that the agency or local government is in compliance with the audit recommendations. The joint committee shall issue any final compliance report within four weeks after the public hearing or hearings. The legislative auditor shall transmit the final compliance report in the same manner as a final performance audit is transmitted under RCW 44.28.088. [1996 c 288 s 14.]

RCW 44.28.094 Quality control review of joint committee. Subject to the joint committee's approval, the office of the joint committee shall undergo an external quality control review within three years of June 6, 1996, and at regular intervals thereafter. The review must be conducted by an independent organization that has experience in conducting performance audits. The quality control review must include, at a minimum, an evaluation of the quality of the audits conducted by the joint committee, an assessment of the audit procedures used by the joint committee, and an assessment of the qualifications of the joint committee staff to conduct performance audits. [1996 c 288 s 15.]

RCW 44.28.097 Agency and local government reports furnished to joint committee. All agency and local government reports concerning program performance, including administrative review, quality control, and other internal audit or performance reports, as requested by the joint committee, shall be furnished by the agency or local government requested to provide such report. [2010 c 26 s 5; 1996 c 288 s 18; 1973 1st ex.s. c 197 s 2. Formerly RCW 44.28.087.]

RCW 44.28.100 Reports, minutes. The joint committee may make reports from time to time to the members of the legislature and to the public with respect to any of its findings or recommendations. The joint committee shall keep complete minutes of its meetings. [1996 c 288 s 19; 1987 c 505 s 45; 1975 1st ex.s. c 293 s 16; 1951 c 43 s 6.]

RCW 44.28.110 Examinations—Subpoenas—Depositions—Access to confidential records. (1) In the discharge of any duty herein imposed, the joint committee or any personnel under its authority and its subcommittees shall have the authority to examine and inspect all properties, equipment, facilities, files, records, and accounts of any state office, department, institution, board, committee, commission, agency, or local government, and to administer oaths, issue subpoenas, compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of any papers, books, accounts, documents, and testimony, and to cause the deposition of witnesses, either residing within or without the state, to be taken in the manner prescribed by laws for taking depositions in civil actions in the superior courts.

(2) The authority in this section extends to accessing any confidential records needed to discharge the joint committee's performance audit duties. However, access to confidential records for the purpose of conducting performance audits does not change their confidential nature, and any existing confidentiality requirements shall remain in force and be similarly respected by the joint committee and its staff. [2010 c 26 s 6; 1955 c 206 s 8; 1951 c 43 s 8.]

Depositions: ***Rules of court:*** *CR 26 through 37.*

RCW 44.28.120 Contempt proceedings—Recalcitrant witnesses. In case of the failure on the part of any person to comply with any subpoena issued in behalf of the joint committee, or on the refusal of

any witness to testify to any matters regarding which he or she may be lawfully interrogated, it shall be the duty of the superior court of any county, or of the judge thereof, on application of the joint committee, to compel obedience by proceedings for contempt, as in the case of disobedience of the requirements of a subpoena issued from such court or a refusal to testify therein. [1996 c 288 s 20; 1951 c 43 s 9.]

Contempt: Chapter 7.21 RCW.

Legislative inquiry: Chapter 44.16 RCW.

Witness refusing to attend legislature or committee or to testify: RCW 9.55.020.

RCW 44.28.130 Witness fees and mileage. Each witness who appears before the joint committee by its order, other than a state official or employee, shall receive for his or her attendance the fees and mileage provided for witnesses in civil cases in courts of record, which shall be audited and paid upon the presentation of proper vouchers signed by such witness, verified by the legislative auditor, and approved by the chair and the vice chair of the joint committee. [1996 c 288 s 21; 1951 c 43 s 10.]

Witness fees and mileage: Chapter 2.40 RCW.

RCW 44.28.150 Cooperation with legislative committees and others. The joint committee shall cooperate, act, and function with legislative committees and with the councils or committees of other states similar to this joint committee and with other interstate research organizations. [1996 c 288 s 22; 1975 1st ex.s. c 293 s 18; 1951 c 43 s 7.]

RCW 44.28.155 WorkFirst program evaluation. (1) The joint legislative audit and review committee shall conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the WorkFirst program described in chapter 58, Laws of 1997, including the job opportunities and basic skills training program and any approved private, county, or local government WorkFirst program. The evaluation shall assess the success of the program in assisting clients to become employed and to reduce their use of temporary assistance for needy families. The study shall include but not be limited to the following:

(a) An assessment of employment outcomes, including hourly wages, hours worked, and total earnings, for clients;

(b) A comparison of temporary assistance for needy families outcomes, including grant amounts and program exits, for clients; and

(c) An audit of the performance-based contract for each private nonprofit contractor for job opportunities and basic skills training program services. The joint legislative audit and review committee may contract with the Washington institute for public policy for appropriate portions of the evaluation required by this section.

(2) Administrative data shall be provided by the department of social and health services, the employment security department, the state board for community and technical colleges, local governments,

and private contractors. The department of social and health services shall require contractors to provide administrative and outcome data needed for this study as a condition of contract compliance. [1997 c 58 s 705.]

Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58: See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

RCW 44.28.156 Education performance agreement pilot—Evaluation. The joint committee shall conduct an evaluation of the higher education performance agreement pilot test under *RCW 28B.10.920 through 28B.10.922 and make recommendations regarding changes to the substance or process of creating the agreements, including whether the performance agreement process should be continued and expanded to include additional higher education institutions. The evaluation shall be submitted to the governor and the higher education committees of the senate and house of representatives by November 1, 2014. [2008 c 160 s 5.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 28B.10.920 through 28B.10.922 were repealed by 2011 1st sp.s. c 10 s 26. RCW 28B.10.922 was also repealed by 2011 1st sp.s c 21 s 18.

Findings—Intent—2008 c 160: "(1) The legislature finds that in the last ten years, significant progress has been made to identify and monitor accountability and performance measures in higher education, both internally in institutions and externally in the legislative and state policymaking environment.

(2) However, the legislature further finds that opportunities exist to promote greater visibility of performance measures among policymakers and among the public consumers of higher education. Policy decisions, including decisions about resource allocation, should be made with greater knowledge and a shared understanding about the tradeoffs between resources, flexibility, and desired outcomes. A forum should be created to allow discussion among policymakers and institution leaders about setting outcome-oriented priorities, targeting of investments, linking operating and capital planning, and creating a longer-term view than the biennial budget cycle typically permits.

(3) Therefore, the legislature intends to implement a process for such discussions, agreements, and planning to occur. The process of crafting higher education performance agreements will be pilot-tested over a six-year period with the public four-year institutions of higher education beginning in 2008." [2008 c 160 s 1.]

RCW 44.28.157 School district health benefits—Review—Recommendations—Performance grants—Report. (1) By December 31, 2015, the joint committee must review the reports on school district health benefits submitted to it by the office of the insurance commissioner and the health care authority and report to the legislature on the progress by school districts and their benefit providers in meeting the following legislative goals to:

(a) Improve the transparency of health benefit plan claims and financial data to assure prudent and efficient use of taxpayers' funds at the state and local levels;

(b) Create greater affordability for full family coverage and greater equity between premium costs for full family coverage and employee only coverage for the same health benefit plan;

(c) Promote health care innovations and cost savings and significantly reduce administrative costs.

(2) The joint committee shall also make a recommendation regarding a specific target to realize the goal in subsection (1)(b) of this section.

(3) The joint committee shall report on the status of individual school districts' progress in achieving the goals in subsection (1) of this section.

(4)(a) In the 2015-2016 school year, the joint committee shall determine which school districts have met the requirements of *RCW 28A.400.350 (5) and (6), and shall rank order these districts from highest to lowest in term of their performance in meeting the requirements.

(b) The joint committee shall then allocate performance grants to the highest performing districts from a performance fund of five million dollars appropriated by the legislature for this purpose. Performance grants shall be used by school districts only to reduce employee health insurance copayments and deductibles. In determining the number of school districts to receive awards, the joint committee must consider the impact of the award on district employee copayments and deductibles in such a manner that the award amounts have a meaningful impact.

(5) If the joint committee determines that districts and their benefit providers have not made adequate progress, in the judgment of the joint committee, in achieving one or more of the legislative goals in subsection (1) of this section, the joint committee report to the legislature must contain advantages, disadvantages, and recommendations on the following:

(a) Why adequate progress has not been made, to the extent the joint committee is able to determine the reason or reasons for the insufficient progress;

(b) What legislative or agency actions would help remove barriers to improvement;

(c) Whether school district health insurance purchasing should be accomplished through a single consolidated school employee health benefits purchasing plan;

(d) Whether school district health insurance purchasing should be accomplished through the public employees' benefits board program, and whether consolidation into the public employees' benefits board program would be preferable to the creation of a consolidated school employee health benefits purchasing plan; and

(e) Whether certificated or classified employees, as separate groups, would be better served by purchasing health insurance through a single consolidated school employee health benefits purchasing plan or through participation in the public employees' benefits board program.

(6) The report shall contain any legislation necessary to implement the recommendations of the joint committee.

(7) The legislature shall take all steps necessary to implement the recommendations of the joint committee unless the legislature

adopts alternative strategies to meet its goals during the 2016 session. [2012 2nd sp.s. c 3 s 7.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 28A.400.350 was amended by 2017 3rd sp.s. c 13 s 816, changing subsections (5) and (6) to subsection (5)(a) and (b).

Findings—Goals—Intent—2012 2nd sp.s. c 3: See note following RCW 28A.400.275.

RCW 44.28.190 Review of increased density bonus for affordable housing located on property owned by a religious organization. The joint committee must review the efficacy of the increased density bonus incentive for affordable housing development located on property owned by a religious organization pursuant to chapter 218, Laws of 2019 and report its findings to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2030. The review must include a recommendation on whether this incentive should be continued without change or should be amended or repealed. [2019 c 218 s 4.]

RCW 44.28.200 Review of the apple health and homes program. The joint committee must review the efficacy of the apple health and homes program established by chapter 216, Laws of 2022 and report its findings to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2027. The review must include a recommendation on whether this program should be continued without change or should be amended or repealed. [2022 c 216 s 9.]

Findings—Intent—Short title—2022 c 216: See notes following RCW 74.09.885.

RCW 44.28.210 Thermal energy network pilot project program—Evaluation of implementation. The joint committee shall conduct an evaluation of the implementation of the thermal energy network pilot project program as outlined in chapter 348, Laws of 2024 and report to the appropriate committees of the legislature on the results of the evaluation no later than three years after June 6, 2024. The report must include an evaluation of how all pilot projects, including those that have been deployed and those that are in the process of deployment, address the considerations outlined in RCW 80.28.460 and 43.31.033. [2024 c 348 s 8.]

RCW 44.28.220 Preventative health services review. *(Expires January 1, 2033.)* (1) The joint legislative audit and review committee shall conduct a postenactment review of the implementation of chapter 13, Laws of 2026 by November 15, 2032, to determine whether the act has preserved access to vaccines and preventive services and whether vaccine purchases have been made in a cost-effective manner, consistent with the intent of the act as of the effective date. To inform the joint legislative audit and review committee's review, the department of health and the office of the insurance commissioner shall submit available data related to the purpose of the

postenactment review to the joint legislative audit and review committee by September 30, 2031.

(2) This section expires January 1, 2033. [2026 c 13 s 6.]

Intent—Effective date—2026 c 13: See notes following RCW 43.70.527.

RCW 44.28.232 Wage recovery program—Program and fiscal review. ***(Expires July 1, 2036.)*** (1) By June 30, 2034, but no sooner than five years from the date the department of labor and industries begins disbursing funds from the wage recovery program, the joint committee must conduct a program and fiscal review of the wage recovery program created in RCW 49.48.230. The committee must evaluate the effectiveness of the program and the extent to which the program helped low-wage employees avoid immediate economic harm.

(2) The committee must report its findings to the appropriate committees of the legislature and the governor by December 1, 2035. The report must be prepared in the manner set forth in RCW 44.28.071 and 44.28.075 and may include surveying employees regarding their direct lived experiences with accessing the wage recovery program.

(3) The committee may make recommendations to improve the effectiveness and feasibility of the program.

(4) This section expires July 1, 2036. [2026 c 53 s 4.]

RCW 44.28.805 Review of distributions to cities and counties—Report. During calendar year 2008, the joint legislative audit and review committee shall review the distributions to cities and counties under RCW 43.08.290 to determine the extent to which the distributions target the needs of cities and counties for which the repeal of the motor vehicle excise tax had the greatest fiscal impact. In conducting the study, the committee shall solicit input from the cities and counties. The department of revenue and the state treasurer shall provide the committee with any data within their purview that the committee considers necessary to conduct the review. The committee shall report to the legislature the results of its findings, and any recommendations for changes to the distribution formulas under RCW 43.08.290, by December 31, 2008. [2005 c 450 s 3.]

Effective date—2005 c 450: See note following RCW 82.45.060.

RCW 44.28.810 Review of governor's interagency coordinating council on health disparities—Report to the legislature. The joint committee shall conduct a review of the governor's interagency coordinating council on health disparities and its functions. The review shall be substantially the same as a sunset review under chapter 43.131 RCW. The joint committee shall present its findings to appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2016. [2006 c 239 s 7.]

RCW 44.28.819 Review of enforcement actions under the Washington my health my data act—Report. ***(Expires June 30, 2031.)*** (1) The joint committee must review enforcement actions, as authorized in RCW

19.373.090, brought by the attorney general and consumers to enforce violations of chapter 191, Laws of 2023.

(2) The report must include, at a minimum:

(a) The number of enforcement actions reported by the attorney general, a consumer, a regulated entity, or a small business that resulted in a settlement, including the average settlement amount;

(b) The number of complaints reported, including categories of complaints and the number of complaints for each category, reported by the attorney general, a consumer, a regulated entity, or a small business;

(c) The number of enforcement actions brought by the attorney general and consumers, including the categories of violations and the number of violations per category;

(e) [(d)] The number of civil actions where a judge determined the position of the nonprevailing party was frivolous, if any;

(f) [(e)] The types of resources, including associated costs, expended by the attorney general, a consumer, a regulated entity, or a small business for enforcement actions; and

(g) [(f)] Recommendations for potential changes to enforcement provisions of chapter 191, Laws of 2023.

(3) The office of the attorney general shall provide the joint committee any data within their purview that the joint committee considers necessary to conduct the review.

(4) The joint committee shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature by September 30, 2030.

(5) This section expires June 30, 2031. [2023 c 191 s 13.]

RCW 44.28.900 Severability—1951 c 43. If any section, subsection, paragraph or provision of this chapter shall be held invalid by any court for any reason, such invalidity shall not in any way affect the validity of the remainder of this chapter. [1951 c 43 s 16.]