**Fiscal Facts: Legislative action on budget focuses mainly on one committee**

Once the governor’s budget bill is introduced in the Legislature, it goes to a single legislative committee, the Joint Committee on Finance, for action. The JCF, which includes members from both legislative houses, is considered one of the most powerful budget committees in the country because it acts on the budget, as well as specific taxes and spending items. Those duties are usually split among several committees in other states and Congress. Typically, the JCF holds public hearings on the bill in early spring, then begins amending it in May.

When JCF’s work is done, the bill moves to each legislative house for further amendments and approval. If the Assembly and Senate do not agree on a final version, a conference committee made up of leaders from both houses works out a compromise. In years when control of the Legislature has been split, conference committees have taken months to reach a final deal. This year both houses are controlled by Republicans, who may be able to reach an agreement among themselves more quickly. However, timely passage in the Legislature may not guarantee a deal with the governor, whose vetoes could also delay enactment.

The final bill then heads to the governor, who may sign it; let it take effect without signing it; veto it entirely; or use his powerful partial veto to reduce spending or strike out words or phrases in the bill. Although lawmakers may override the governor’s vetoes by a two-thirds vote, they have not done so since 1985.

*This information is a service of the Wisconsin Policy Forum, the state’s leading resource for nonpartisan state and local government research and civic education. Learn more at wispolicyforum.org.*