http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/wi-senate-swearing-in-s5.jpg

New State Senator Jeff Smith from western Wisconsin reports on the committee creation process, his appointments, and his experience working on each committee's issues.

MADISON - Senate committees aren't exactly the hottest topic to write about in state government, but it's incredibly important for our work as legislators. Most Senate committee names seem like someone pulled the topics out of a hat and randomly strung them together to create a committee.

Strange as some committee names may appear, committee creation is more an exercise in compromise and collaboration than blind luck.

Every two years, the Majority Party Leader meets with his or her Majority Party colleagues. He or she shuffles through the requests and interests of his or her Majority Party senators. Then he or she appoints committee chairs and assigns other Majority Party senators to the committees.

After the Majority Party organizes the committees, the Senate Minority Leader works with Minority Party Senators to fill the committees. Though seemingly monotonous, this cascade of events can be a great opportunity for legislators to work together.

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