OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CLERK

Duties of the Chief Clerk

- Keeping all the bills, papers, and records of the proceedings and actions of the Assembly.
- Publishing the official documents of the House, including the Daily Journal (the minutes of each floor session), the Daily File (the agenda), and the Assembly History (list of all actions taken on every bill).
- The Chief Clerk is the Parliamentarian of the Assembly, whereby he advises the presiding officer on parliamentary procedure.
- Performing the actual amending of legislation.
- Providing Members an analysis, prepared by committee staff, of every bill and amendment on the Floor.
- Engrossing legislative measures (proofreading amended bills against the officially adopted amendment).
- Enrolling passed measures, and transmitting them to the Governor or Secretary of State.

Overview of the Chief Clerk's Office

The Chief Clerk is one of three nonmember, nonpartisan officers elected by the Assembly at the beginning of each two-year session. The position of the Chief Clerk was created by California's first State Assembly, which convened in San Jose in December 17, 1849. The duties of the office have expanded greatly since the early days of our state.

The Chief Clerk and his staff now engage in a wide variety of tasks, from publishing the Assembly's official documents to amending and proofreading all legislation considered by the House. Senior staffers provide Members and staff advice on parliamentary procedure relative to floor sessions and committee hearings. The office also produces several key publications on legislative procedures, state government, and history.. Additionally, the Office of the Chief Clerk plays an important role in official orientation for newly-elected Members of the Assembly following every general election.

The current Chief Clerk, E. Dotson Wilson, was first elected in January 1992, and has been unanimously reelected by the Members of the Assembly for each session since 1992. He serves as the Parliamentarian of the House, and is in charge of a 30 member staff of legislative clerks.

The base of operations for the Chief Clerk and his staff is the Assembly Chamber. A long desk spans the width of the Chamber, and serves as the permanent work station for a dozen clerks, who process the thousands of bills and publish thousands of pages of information for the public record. Information compiled by this staff is made available to millions of computer users via the Internet. The "Office of the Chief Clerk" is a suite located on the third floor of the Capitol Annex, adjacent to the Assembly Chamber. Several staff members work in this office as well, including the Floor Analysis Unit, Amending Clerks, and administrative personnel all of whom play important roles in the procession of legislative information.

The Engrossing and Enrolling Office is stationed in the basement of the Capitol, and is the processing center for all bills amended in the Assembly. A team of eight proofreaders and two administrative staffers proof every word and punctuation mark to ensure that they match the official language adopted by the House, as well as conforming to specific grammar and style guidelines. When legislation has passed both Houses, the Engrossing and Enrolling Unit prepares and delivers the bill to the Governor for consideration.