

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJR 8203

As of January 13, 1997

Brief Description: Amending the Constitution to revise the schedule for legislative sessions.

Sponsors: Senator McCaslin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 1/17/97.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Staff: Eugene Green (786-7405)

Background: Until 1980, the Constitution provided that the Legislature hold regular biennial sessions, convening in January of each odd-numbered year. In addition, special sessions could be convened by the Governor for any purpose, or by a two-thirds affirmative vote of both houses of the Legislature, for a session not exceeding five days, solely to reconsider bills vetoed by the Governor. Regular sessions could not last more than 60 days, but there was no time limit on the length of any special session called by the Governor.

In November 1979, the voters approved SJR 110, which amended the Constitution and provides the present basis for regular annual sessions and special legislative sessions. The regular session during each odd-numbered year may not last longer than 105 consecutive days, and, in even-numbered years, not more than 60 consecutive days. The Governor, by proclamation, may convene a special legislative session, which is limited to 30 consecutive days. The Governor may specify a purpose for convening the special session, but this specification is not binding on the Legislature. Special sessions may also be convened by legislative resolution upon a two-thirds affirmative vote by each house. Any special session (except for reconsideration of vetoed bills) convened by the Legislature is limited to the purposes set forth in the resolution convening the Legislature, unless additional purposes are approved by a two-thirds affirmative vote of each house during the special session.

Summary of Bill: The odd-numbered regular session is lengthened from not more than 105 consecutive days to not more than 120 consecutive days.

The even-numbered year regular session is eliminated. Special legislative sessions which could be convened for a period of not more than 30 consecutive days are shortened to a period of not more than 15 consecutive days.

If the Governor convenes a special session, he or she may limit the special session to fiscal matters only.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Upon voter approval at November 1997 general election.