
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 8423

State of Washington

56th Legislature

2000 Regular Session

By Senators Kohl-Welles, Jacobsen, Prentice, Gardner, Winsley, Costa, Kline and Long

Read first time . Referred to Committee on .

1 WHEREAS, An independent, creative, and competent legislature
2 distinguishes a democratic system from more authoritarian forms of
3 government; and

4 WHEREAS, Questions arise as to whether the Washington state
5 legislature is structurally, operationally, and procedurally
6 satisfactory for resolving today's complex and divisive issues; and

7 WHEREAS, Legislators tend to regard their own legislature as
8 somehow incomparable, without regard to how the Washington state
9 legislature compares with other state legislatures;

10 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, By the Senate of the state of
11 Washington, the House of Representatives concurring, That a commission
12 be established within the legislature to evaluate its decision-making
13 capabilities based on the following categories:

14 Functionality (e.g., restrictions on frequency, length, and agendas
15 of sessions, general purpose of staff, facilities, provisions for
16 management and coordination);

17 Accountability (e.g., explicit rules and procedures, adequacy of
18 information and public access to it, internal accountability);

19 Informedness (e.g., enough time, standing committees, interim
20 activities, professional staff resources, fiscal review capabilities);

1 Independence (e.g., frequency and duration of sessions, legislative
2 independence of executive branch, capability for effective oversight of
3 executive operations, interest groups, conflicts of interest); and

4 Representativeness (e.g., diversity and compensation); and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That:

6 (1) The commission consist of fifteen members appointed by the
7 legislature. Four members of the senate, two from each of the two
8 major political parties, appointed by the president of the senate, and
9 four members of the house of representatives, two from each of the two
10 major political parties, appointed by the co-speakers of the house of
11 representatives, shall serve as members. The legislative members shall
12 appoint seven citizen members, one of whom shall be the chair. The
13 legislative members shall consider nominations for citizen membership
14 based upon maintaining a balanced and diverse distribution of
15 philosophical perspectives on the proper roles of government, society,
16 and the individual.

17 (2) All commission members serve at the pleasure of the
18 legislature. The position of any legislative member shall be deemed
19 vacated whenever such member ceases to be a member of the house from
20 which he or she was appointed. Any vacancies occurring in the
21 membership of the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the
22 original appointments.

23 (3)(a) Nonlegislative members be reimbursed for expenses incurred
24 in the performance of their duties in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and
25 43.03.060.

26 (b) Legislative members be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the
27 performance of their duties in accordance with RCW 44.04.120.

28 (4) A simple majority of the membership constitute a quorum for the
29 purpose of conducting business.

30 (5) In carrying out its duties, the commission may establish such
31 relationships with public and private institutions, local governments,
32 private industry, community organizations, other state legislatures,
33 and other segments of the general public as may be needed to evaluate
34 the Washington state legislature; and

35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Washington state commission on the
36 evaluation of the legislature report to the legislature its findings
37 and recommendations by December 1, 2001.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the commission terminate on December
2 31, 2001.

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