
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 8403

State of Washington 58th Legislature 2003 Regular Session

By Senators Kohl-Welles, Schmidt, Kastama, Esser, Keiser, Jacobsen and Prentice

Read first time 02/03/2003. Referred to Committee on Government Operations & Elections.

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, In 1970 each legislator represented approximately sixty-
8 nine thousand constituents and today each legislator represents over
9 one hundred twenty thousand constituents; and
10 WHEREAS, Legislators tend to regard their own legislature as
11 somehow incomparable, without regard to how the Washington state
12 legislature compares with other state legislatures;
13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, By the Senate of the state of
14 Washington, the House of Representatives concurring, That the Joint
15 Select Committee on the Evaluation of the Legislature be established to
16 evaluate the legislature's decision-making capabilities based on the
17 following categories:
18 Functionality, for example, restrictions on frequency, length, and
19 agendas of sessions, general purpose of staff, facilities, provisions
20 for management and coordination;

1 Accountability, for example, explicit rules and procedures,
2 adequacy of information and public access to it, internal
3 accountability;

4 Informedness, for example, enough time, standing committees,
5 interim activities, professional staff resources, fiscal review
6 capabilities;

7 Independence, for example, frequency and duration of sessions,
8 legislative independence of executive branch, capability for effective
9 oversight of executive operations, interest groups, conflicts of
10 interest; and

11 Representativeness, for example, diversity, compensation, number
12 and size of districts; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee consist of sixteen
14 members, four members from each major caucus of the Senate, appointed
15 by the President of the Senate, and four members from each major caucus
16 of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House
17 of Representatives; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee shall be cochaired by a
19 member of the committee from the Senate, selected by the members of the
20 committee from the Senate, and a member of the committee from the House
21 of Representatives, selected by the members of the committee from the
22 House of Representatives; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Joint Select Committee on the
24 Evaluation of the Legislature report to the legislature its preliminary
25 findings by December 31, 2003; and

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Joint Select Committee on the
27 Evaluation of the Legislature report its final findings and
28 recommendations by December 1, 2004; and

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Joint Select Committee terminate
30 January 31, 2005.

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