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**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 8404**

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**State of Washington                      59th Legislature                      2005 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Kohl-Welles, Brown, Finkbeiner, Kastama and Jacobsen

Read first time 01/24/2005.      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, functionally, operationally, and  
6 procedurally satisfactory for resolving today's complex and divisive  
7 issues; and

8            WHEREAS, The time demands have expanded significantly for  
9 legislators as a result of increasing numbers of constituents,  
10 constituent and public access to legislators, and state operating,  
11 capital, and transportation budgets; and

12            WHEREAS, Legislators tend to regard their own legislature as  
13 somehow incomparable, without regard to how the Washington state  
14 legislature compares with other state legislatures;

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

19            Structure and Function (e.g., restrictions on frequency, duration,

1 length, and agendas of sessions, general purpose and size of staff,  
2 facilities, provisions for management and coordination);

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

5 Informedness (e.g., sufficient time, standing committees, interim  
6 activities, professional staff resources, fiscal review capabilities);

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

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

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That:

12 (1) The commission consist of fifteen members appointed by the  
13 legislature. Four members of the senate, two from each of the two  
14 major political parties, appointed by the president of the senate, and  
15 four members of the house of representatives, two from each of the two  
16 major political parties, appointed by the speaker of the house of  
17 representatives, shall serve as members. The legislative members shall  
18 appoint seven citizen members, one of whom shall be the chair. The  
19 legislative members shall consider nominations for citizen membership  
20 based upon maintaining a balanced and diverse distribution of  
21 philosophical perspectives on the proper roles of government, society,  
22 and the individual;

23 (2) All commission members serve at the pleasure of the  
24 legislature. The position of any legislative member shall be deemed  
25 vacated whenever such member ceases to be a member of the house from  
26 which he or she was appointed. Any vacancies occurring in the  
27 membership of the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the  
28 original appointments;

29 (3)(a) Nonlegislative members be reimbursed for expenses incurred  
30 in the performance of their duties in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and  
31 43.03.060;

32 (b) Legislative members be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the  
33 performance of their duties in accordance with RCW 44.04.120;

34 (4) A simple majority of the membership constitute a quorum for the  
35 purpose of conducting business;

36 (5) In carrying out its duties, the commission may establish such  
37 relationships with public and private institutions, local governments,

1 private industry, community organizations, other state legislatures,  
2 and other segments of the general public as may be needed to evaluate  
3 the Washington state legislature; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Washington state commission on the  
5 evaluation of the legislature report to the legislature its findings  
6 and recommendations by December 1, 2006; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the commission terminate on December  
8 31, 2006.

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