
State Government & Tribal Relations Committee

SB 5196

Brief Description: Describing how the legislature may convene a special session.

Sponsors: Senators Billig, Braun, Fortunato, Holy, Hunt, Van De Wege, Wagoner and Wilson, C..

Brief Summary of Bill

- Sets procedures for the Legislature to call a special session by resolution.
- Requires a two-thirds vote in each chamber to approve a resolution calling a special session.

Hearing Date: 2/16/22

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

The Washington State Legislature meets every year in regular session, beginning on the second Monday in January. The regular session lasts up to 105 consecutive days in odd-numbered years, and up to 60 consecutive days in even-numbered years.

Under the Constitution, the Legislature may also meet in a special session for up to 30 consecutive days. The special session may be called by proclamation of the Governor, or it may be convened by a resolution adopted by the Legislature. Such a resolution must be approved by at least two-thirds of the members in each the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Legislature is authorized to adopt procedures to govern a vote to convene a special session during interim.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The resolution convening the special session must specify the purposes for the special session, and the Legislature may consider only measures germane to the purposes expressed in the resolution. However, the Legislature may consider additional purposes if it passes a subsequent resolution by a two-thirds vote in each chamber. If the special session is called by the Governor, the proclamation must state the purposes for the session, but it is not binding on the Legislature.

Under Joint Rules adopted by the House of Representatives and the Senate at the beginning of the biennium, a resolution calling for a special session may be presented by a member to the Rules Committees of the two chambers. The resolution must include the date, time, and purposes for convening the special session. If a majority of each of the two Rules Committees approves of the resolution, the entire Legislature then votes on whether to convene a special session. A special session is called if two-thirds of the members of each chamber vote in favor of the resolution.

Summary of Bill:

The language of the Joint Rules regarding the procedures for calling special sessions is codified into statute.

As such, a resolution calling for a special session may be presented by a member to the Rules Committees of the two chambers. The resolution must include the date, time, and purposes for convening the special session. If a majority of each of the two Rules Committees approves of the resolution, the entire Legislature then votes on whether to convene a special session. A special session is called if two-thirds of the members of each chamber vote in favor of the resolution.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.