

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2724

As Reported By House Committee On:
State Government

Title: An act relating to the legislature and terms of state officials and members of the legislature.

Brief Description: Delaying the start of odd-year legislative sessions.

Sponsors: Representatives Pruitt, Anderson, Reams, Silver, Campbell, Brown, R. Johnson, Holm, Roland, Jones, King and Springer.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
State Government, February 2, 1994, DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Anderson, Chair; Veloria, Vice Chair; Reams, Ranking Minority Member; L. Thomas, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Campbell; Conway; Dyer; King and Pruitt.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: Regular sessions of the Legislature are held annually starting on the second Monday of January. During even-numbered years regular sessions are 60 days in length, while in odd-numbered years regular sessions are 105 days.

During its first session following the election of state officers, the Legislature meets to canvass the votes for elected officers as provided in the state's constitution. The state officers include the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Auditor, Attorney General, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Commissioner of Public Lands, and Insurance Commissioner. Their terms of office are four years and start on the Wednesday after the second Monday of January following the election.

Each house also meets to judge the election, returns and qualifications of its newly elected members, as provided for in the constitution.

Summary of Bill: Regular sessions of the Legislature held in odd-numbered years commence on the second Monday of February. On the second Monday of January of each odd-numbered year, the Legislature is required to meet to: canvass the votes for elected state officers; judge the election, returns and qualifications of its members; and administer the oath of office to state officers and members of the Legislature. The Legislature may elect its officers and adopt rules of procedure at this meeting, but it may not pass legislation unless it is convened in regular or special session as provided for in the state's constitution.

The terms of the elected officers of the legislative and executive branches of state government begin on the second Monday of January following their election.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Delaying the start of session for one month in an odd-numbered year would permit the Legislature and the executive branch to become organized before the session begins. It would also allow pertinent revenue forecasts to be available relatively earlier in the session. It would make the session more manageable.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Representative Pruitt, prime sponsor (in favor); and Chuck Sauvage, Common Cause (in favor).