

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5994

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections, January 31, 2018

**Title:** An act relating to modifying the start date of regular legislative sessions.

**Brief Description:** Modifying the start date of regular legislative sessions.

**Sponsors:** Senators Hawkins, Kuderer, Miloscia, Fortunato, Bailey, Hunt, Padden, Palumbo, Walsh and Braun.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections: 1/17/18, 1/31/18 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Moves the start date of the regular legislative session to the first Monday in February.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hunt, Chair; Kuderer, Vice Chair; Miloscia, Ranking Member; Saldaña and Zeiger.

**Staff:** Samuel Brown (786-7470)

**Background:** After passage of a constitutional amendment in 1979, the Legislature is required to meet in regular session every year. The regular session is limited to 105 days in odd-numbered years and 60 days in even-numbered years. The Governor may call the Legislature into an extraordinary or special legislative session of not more than 30 days by proclamation. An extraordinary or special session may also be called by the vote of two-thirds of the members of each house.

The Legislature sets the regular session start date by statute. Under current law, regular sessions start on the second Monday in January.

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

**Summary of Bill:** The start date of regular legislative sessions is moved to the first Monday in February.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This would allow time for pre-session budget development in January and provide more session days after the spring revenue forecast and reduce the need for at least one special session in budget years. This would reduce three weeks of bad weather for legislators and constituents who travel to Olympia for advocacy. Leadership, staff, and newly-elected members would have more transition time before the start of session. Stakeholders and constituents would have more time to connect with their legislators after the holidays. The current session start date developed in the agrarian economy when legislators needed to get back to the farm, and is outdated.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Brad Hawkins, Prime Sponsor.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.