

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to the Arkansas Constitution.

State of Arkansas
92nd General Assembly
Regular Session, 2019

SJR 7

By: Senator T. Garner

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

AN AMENDMENT TO THE ARKANSAS CONSTITUTION PROVIDING THAT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEET EACH YEAR FOR A REGULAR SESSION NOT TO EXCEED THIRTY (30) DAYS IN DURATION UNLESS EXTENDED TO NO LONGER THAN SIXTY (60) DAYS BY A TWO-THIRDS (2/3) VOTE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY; AND AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO CONVENE ITSELF IN SPECIAL SESSION TO CONSIDER SPECIFIC ISSUES.

Subtitle

A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROVIDING FOR ANNUAL REGULAR SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY; AND AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO CONVENE ITSELF IN SPECIAL SESSION.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS, AND BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, A MAJORITY OF ALL MEMBERS ELECTED TO EACH HOUSE AGREEING THERETO:

THAT the following is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Arkansas, and upon being submitted to the electors of the state for approval or rejection at the next general election for Representatives and Senators, if a majority of the electors voting thereon at the election adopt the amendment, the amendment shall become a part of the Constitution of the State of Arkansas, to wit:



SECTION 1. Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, § 5, is amended to read as follows:

§ 5. Regular and ~~fiscal~~ special sessions.

(a) The General Assembly shall meet at the seat of government every year.

(b)(1) The General Assembly shall meet in regular session on the second Monday in January of each ~~odd-numbered~~ year to consider any bill or resolution.

(2) The General Assembly may alter the time at which the regular session begins.

~~(c)(1) Beginning in 2010, the General Assembly shall meet in fiscal session on the second Monday in February of each even-numbered year to consider only appropriation bills. The General Assembly may alter the time at which the fiscal session begins.~~

~~(2) A bill other than an appropriation bill may be considered in a fiscal session if two-thirds (2/3) of the members of each house of the General Assembly approve consideration of the bill.~~

~~(d) The General Assembly, by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members elected to each house of the General Assembly, may alter the dates of the regular session and fiscal session so that regular sessions occur in even-numbered years and the fiscal sessions occur in odd-numbered years.~~

(c)(1) The General Assembly may convene in special session upon the submission of a petition containing:

(A) The written signatures of a majority of the members of the House of Representatives to the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives; and

(B) The written signatures of a majority of the members of the Senate to the Secretary of the Senate.

(2) The petition shall state the specific issue or issues which shall be considered at the special session.

(3)(A) If the petitions under subdivision (c)(1) of this section are found to contain the signatures of a majority of the members of each house, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall convene a special session of the General Assembly within thirty (30) days of the determination that the requirements of subdivision (c)(1) have been met for convening a special session.

(B)(i) Except as provided in subdivision (c)(3)(B)(ii) of this section, no business other than consideration of the specific issue or issues stated in the petition for the special session under subdivision (c)(2) of this section shall be transacted at the special session.

(ii) The General Assembly may add one (1) or more specific issues for consideration at a special session by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of each house. Each specific issue to be added shall require a three-fourths (3/4) vote.

(C) A special session under this subdivision (c) is not limited in duration.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, § 17, is amended to read as follows:

§ 17. Duration of sessions.

(a)(1) A regular ~~biennial~~ session shall not exceed ~~sixty (60)~~ thirty (30) calendar days in duration, unless extended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members elected to each house of the General Assembly. ~~The regular biennial session shall not exceed seventy five (75) calendar days in duration, unless extended by a vote of three-fourths (¾) of the members elected to each house of the General Assembly.~~

(2) In no event shall a regular session exceed sixty (60) calendar days in duration.

~~(b) A fiscal session shall not exceed thirty (30) calendar days in duration, except that by a vote of three-fourths (¾) of the members elected to each house of the General Assembly a fiscal session may be extended one (1) time by no more than fifteen (15) calendar days.~~

~~(e)(b) Provided, that this section shall not apply when impeachments are pending.~~

SECTION 3. Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, § 18, is amended to read as follows:

§ 18. Presiding officers.

Each house, at the beginning of every regular session of the General Assembly following a general election, and whenever a vacancy may occur, shall elect from its members a presiding officer, to be styled, respectively, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

and whenever, at the close of any session, it may appear that the term of the member elected President of the Senate will expire before the next regular session, the Senate shall elect another President from those members whose terms of office continue over, who shall qualify and remain President of the Senate until his successor may be elected and qualified; and who, in the case of a vacancy in the office of Governor, shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of Governor as elsewhere herein provided.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, § 34, is amended to read as follows:

§ 34. Introduction of bills – Time limit.

No new bill shall be introduced into either house during the last three days of a regular ~~or fiscal~~ session.

SECTION 5. Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, § 42(b), concerning the review and approval of administrative rules by a legislative committee, is amended to read as follows:

(b) The review and approval by a legislative committee under subsection (a) of this section may occur during the interim or during a regular, or special, ~~or fiscal~~ session of the General Assembly.

SECTION 6. Nothing in this amendment shall be construed to alter the Governor's authority to call a special session of the General Assembly.

SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE. This amendment is effective on and after January 1, 2021.

SECTION 8. BALLOT TITLE AND POPULAR NAME. When this proposed amendment is submitted to the electors of this state on the general election ballot:

(1) The title of this Joint Resolution shall be the ballot title; and

(2) The popular name shall be "An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Providing for Annual Regular Sessions of the General Assembly Not to Exceed Thirty (30) Days in Duration Unless Extended to No Longer than Sixty (60) Days and Authorizing the General Assembly to Convene Itself in

Special Session to Consider Specific Issues".