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LEGISLATIVE SESSION LENGTH

Legislative session length may be unrestricted, or it may be limited. Session length limitations are set in a variety of ways. The limits may be found in constitution, statute or chamber rule. They also may set indirectly by restricting the number of days for which a legislator receives compensation, per diem or mileage reimbursement.

In the early 1960s, 17 states did not place restrictions on the length of their legislative sessions. In another 10 states, the limits were indirect. Several states increased their session length. These were Colorado (from 120 to 160); Georgia (from 80 to 85); Kansas (from 90 to 120); Minnesota (from 90 to 120); and South Dakota (from 60 to 75).

Throughout the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s, session limitations became more defined. Fewer states had unrestricted sessions, and the number of states with indirect session limits declined.

Since the late 1980s, several session lengths were shortened. Colorado's session was cut to 120 days in 1988. In 1992, Louisiana changed its constitution to shorten and limit the scope of its even-year session. In 1998, the citizens of Nevada adopted a constitutional amendment that restricts the legislative session to 120 days. In 2002, an amendment to the Louisiana Constitution changed the timing of its general and fiscal sessions and adjusted the length of the fiscal session; the changes went into effect January 2004. In 2006, Alaska voters passed an initiative establishing a 90 day session in statute, which took effect in 2008.

In November 2008, however, South Dakota voters approved a constitutional amendment that lengthened legislative sessions. The amendment equalized the length of session at 40 legislative days each year. Previously, session length was 40 legislative days in odd-numbered years, and 35 legislative days in even-numbered years.

Currently, only 11 states do not place a limit on the length of regular session. In the remaining 39, the limits are set by constitution, statute, chamber rule or indirect method.

State	Current Session Length Limit	Method of Setting
Alabama	30 L in 105 C	Statute
Alaska	90 C	Statute
Arizona	Sat of week in which 100th C falls	Chamber rule
Arkansas	Odd-60 C Even-30 C	Constitution
California	Odd-None Even-Nov 30 Odd-Sept 12 Even-Aug 31	Constitution Chamber Rule
Colorado	120 C	Constitution
Connecticut	Odd-Wed after 1st Mon in June Even- Wed after 1st Mon in May	Constitution
Delaware	June 30	Constitution
Florida	60 C	Constitution
Georgia	40 L	Constitution
Hawaii	60 L	Constitution
Idaho	None	Not applicable
Illinois	None	Not applicable
Indiana	Odd-Apr 29 Even-Mar 14	Statute
Iowa	Odd-110 C Even-100 C	Indirect
Kansas	Odd-None Even-90 C	Constitution
Kentucky	Odd: 30 L or Mar 30 Even:60 L or Apr 15	Constitution
Louisiana	Odd-45 L in 60 C Even-60 L in 85 C	Constitution

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Maine	Odd-3rd Wed in June Even-3rd Wed in Apr	Statute
Maryland	90 C	Constitution
Massachusetts	Formal sessions: Odd-3rd Wed in November Even-July 31 Informal sessions: None	Chamber rule
Michigan	None	Not applicable
Minnesota	120 L total within biennium or 1st Mon after 3rd Sat in May each year	Constitution
Mississippi	90 C except year after gubernatorial election, then 125 C	Constitution
Missouri	May 30	Constitution
Montana	Biennial session; 90 L	Constitution
Nebraska	Odd-90 L Even-60 L	Constitution
Nevada	Biennial session ; 120 C	Constitution
New Hampshire	45 L or July 1	Indirect
New Jersey	None	Not applicable
New Mexico	Odd-60 C Even-30 C	Constitution
New York	None	Not applicable
North Carolina	None	Not applicable
North Dakota	Biennial session ; 80 L	Constitution
Ohio	None	Not applicable
Oklahoma	Last Fri in May	Constitution
Oregon	Odd-160C Even-35C	Constitution
Pennsylvania	None	Not applicable
Rhode Island	None	Not applicable
South Carolina	1st Thurs in June	Statute
South Dakota	40 L	Constitution
Tennessee	90 L	Indirect
Texas	Biennial session ; 140 C	Constitution
Utah	45 C	Constitution
Vermont	None	
Virginia	Odd-30 C Even-60 C	Constitution
Washington	Odd-105 C Even-60 C	Constitution
West Virginia	60 C	Constitution
Wisconsin	None	Not applicable
Wyoming	Odd-40 L Even-20 L	Constitution



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Key:

C = calendar day

L = legislative day (that is, a day on which a floor session is held)

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