

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Sponsor Statement SCR 1

Proposing an amendment to the Uniform Rules of the Alaska Legislature relating to the appearance of measures on the daily calendar after the 90th day of the regular session.

The Legislature has a constitutional duty to pass a budget. With this proposed guidance in the Uniform Rules, the legislature can only consider a constitutionally mandated appropriation bill past the 90-day mark.

Legislators will know there is a hard deadline to get their legislation on the calendar for consideration by committees. Focus after 90 days will be directed at passing a constitutionally required budget.

This measure would honor the intent of the voters when they passed an initiative in 2006 to limit the session to 90 days. While the initiative's 90-day limit is currently in statute, it creates tension with the Article II Sec 8 constitutional provision, which provides that the "legislature shall adjourn from regular session no later than one hundred twenty consecutive calendar days from the date it convenes, except the regular session may be extended once for up to ten consecutive calendar days." The legislative practice of late has been to ignore the voter-mandated 90-day limit.

By amending the Uniform Rules of the Alaska Legislature as this resolution proposes to do, no bill other than an appropriation bill may appear on the daily calendar after the 90th day of the regular session. As a result, this may cause work on the floor to cease for any non-appropriation measure unless the Uniform Rules are suspended with a 2/3 majority of the represented house body where the measure resides. However, committee work on legislation would still be permitted at the discretion of the chair. Bills on high profile issues can always be brought to the floor if a super majority of legislators agree.

This measure focuses the legislature's attention on only the budget, if the budget takes longer than 90 days. It also provides a circuit breaker against excessive special sessions by allowing high priority legislation that receives a 2/3 vote to waive the Uniform Rules to come to the floor.