

HJR

22



## SPONSOR'S STATEMENT

The primary reason for offering this resolution is to give the voters the option of having smaller legislative districts. This has the effect of bring legislators closer to the people that they represent. While this is less important in the urban areas, it is extremely important in rural areas. In my own case, the house district is several hundred miles long and represents very diverse interests.

One advantage of smaller districts is that campaigning would be easier and less expensive for persons who may otherwise might not be able to finance a campaign. It would also make it possible for more people to participate in the political system as legislators. Another advantage is that residents would be more likely to know their legislators and as a result cast an informed ballot.

This legislation would result in more rural and urban district but would not change the rural and urban proportions of the legislature since that is governed by federal law.

There are two fiscal notes. The first deals with the cost of reapportionment. The projected cost of \$682.5 could be significantly reduced if the plan was implemented after the 2000 census as a part of the required redistricting needed to meet federal reapportionment requirements.

The second fiscal note is the more interesting since the Legislative Affairs Agency has projected the increased annual cost as \$3,667,700. This figure seems excessive when one considers that the FY 94 House proposed budget for LAA is \$5,489,400. If one makes the assumption that a 25% increase would inflate the budget by 125% the expected increase in cost would be \$1,372,350 which is \$2,295,350 less than Legislative Affairs has projected.

Since increase membership does not increase the number of committees within the body, staff should not be expected to also rise by 25%. Also we are looking at attempting to shorten the legeslative sessions and this would also affect the cost that would be incurred.

# Alaska State Legislature

Legislative Research Agency



130 Seward Street, Suite 218  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-2196

Phone: (907) 465-3991  
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January 22, 1993

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Representative Richard Foster

FROM: Gordon S. Harrison, Director *gsh*

RE: **Cost and Other Effects of Enlarging the Alaska Legislature**  
Research Request 93.083

You asked for an assessment of the cost and other effects of increasing the Alaska Senate to 30 members and the Alaska House of Representatives to 60 members (i.e., adding 10 senators and 20 representatives), particularly the effects on representation. You also asked for information about the size of other state legislatures.

This memorandum will provide a brief historical account of the evolution of the size of the Alaska legislature, a comparison with other state legislatures, a discussion of the impact on representation, and an assessment of the cost of the change.

### Evolution of the Alaska Legislature to a 60-Member Body

The Alaska territorial legislature was created in 1912. With only 24 members--8 senators and 16 representatives--it must surely have been among the smallest of such legislative bodies in American history. Many in Congress at the time were skeptical that the sparse and transient population of the territory of Alaska justified the expense of an elected legislature, and the diminutive body probably reflected a concern for costs.

In 1942 Congress enlarged the territorial legislature to 40 members: from 8 to 16 senators, and from 16 to 24 representatives. This change (which took effect in 1944) was the result of efforts by Delegate Anthony Dimond, who believed strongly that the territorial senate of 8 was too small to be an effective legislative body. He was particularly incensed that as few as four senators could--and regularly did--thwart the will of the 24-member institution. Delegate Dimond initially campaigned for a unicameral body. When a territorial-wide referendum in 1937 rejected that option, he introduced a bill in Congress to increase both

houses to 18 members and to apportion them both on the basis of population.<sup>1</sup> Congress eventually consented to an enlargement of the senate to 16 and the house to 24, with only the house apportioned on the basis of population.

The Alaska Constitutional Convention set the present size of the state legislature at 60 members. The question of the optimum size of the two houses was not debated on the floor of the convention. In general, the delegates wanted to increase representation, particularly of rural areas, over that afforded by a 40-member body, but they were also determined to have a small legislature. The cost of operating the prospective government was never far from the minds of the delegates, and concern for the expense of the legislature doubtless contributed much to the pressure to keep it comparatively small.

Some convention delegates thought a senate of 20 members was too small. Doubts about so small a body have been expressed from time to time since statehood. Although the state senate has more members, it is proportionally the same size as the original territorial senate. One complaint about so few senators is the fact that they have too many committee assignments. In his book *Legislative Life*, Alan Rosenthal writes: "It is difficult to imagine a body of 40 members (not to mention those with fewer) really maintaining a committee system."

Despite this lingering concern about the size of the senate, only two resolutions have been introduced over the years to enlarge the legislature: HJR 71 in 1978 proposed to increase the senate to 25 members and the house to 51 members, and HJR 48 in 1981 proposed to increase the senate to 30 members and the house to 60. In addition, two resolutions have been introduced to increase by one the membership of both the senate and house, but these measures were concerned with another problem, that of partisan deadlocks of 10-10 and 20-20.

### **Comparison with Other States**

Attached is a table that shows the size of legislative chambers in each of the 50 states. Alaska has the smallest bicameral legislature, although Delaware with 62 members, and Nevada, with 63, are close. The average number of members in the upper houses is about

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<sup>1</sup>With regard to apportioning both houses on the basis of population, Dimond was ahead of his time. He argued eloquently for the inherent fairness and democratic logic of the idea, but Congress turned a deaf ear. Apportionment of both houses of state legislatures on the basis of population was imposed on the states by a series of U.S. Supreme Court cases in the early 1960s.

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38, and the average number of members of the lower houses is about 110. There does not appear to be any correlation between the population of a state and the size of its legislature. New Hampshire is one of the least populated states yet has a lower house of 400; California is one of the most populous states, and it has a legislature of 120. One of the few generalizations that may be possible is that western states tend to have smaller legislatures than the older, New England states.

In all states the senate is smaller than the house. This is a matter of political custom rather than law or logic (Delegate Dimond argued this point, unsuccessfully, in his effort enlarge both chambers of the Alaska territorial legislature to 18 members).

Several states have decreased the size of their legislatures in recent years. However, these reductions have occurred in states with comparatively large legislatures, and the resulting bodies remain substantially larger than Alaska's.

### **Effects Of Enlargement on Representation**

Enlarging Alaska's legislature would result in more legislators from smaller districts. This would have the effect of bringing elected representatives "closer to the people," and it would result in more rural districts as well as urban districts, but it would not alter the current proportion of urban and rural legislators.

Both houses of state legislatures must be, as a matter of federal law, apportioned on the basis of population. There are currently 40 election districts in Alaska. One house member is elected from each. Senate districts are a combination of two election districts; one senator is elected from each. If the number of house members were increased from 40 to 60, there would be 20 additional districts from which a representative would be elected (assuming the continuation of single-member districts). The 60 house members would, in the short run at least, each represent substantially fewer constituents than the 40 members currently represent, and the mega-districts which we now have in Alaska would be reduced in size to some extent. Senators would likewise represent smaller constituencies. While there would be more rural and urban districts, the urban and rural areas of the state would continue to have the same proportion of total members.

There may be several advantages to smaller election districts in Alaska. One is that campaigning for office would be easier and less expensive. Another is that residents would be more likely to know their legislators and be able to cast an informed ballot on election day. Greater familiarity could improve communication with and access to elected representatives. Also, there would be opportunity for more people to participate in the political system as legislators.

### **Fiscal Impacts**

Increasing the membership of the legislature from 60 to 90 would create higher annual operating expenses of about \$6 million. It would also involve a substantial one-time capital expense because the existing legislative chambers, committee rooms and office space would have to be expanded to accommodate the new members. While we have estimated the annual recurring cost, we have not attempted to estimate the one-time capital cost.

#### **Annual Recurring Cost**

Annual recurring costs would fall into four general categories: compensation, travel, contractual, and staff. We obtained estimates of these items, based on the current average cost per legislator, from the Division of Administrative Services, Legislative Affairs Agency. The total cost would be approximately \$6,102,540, as shown below. This estimate assumes that central support staff (employees of Legislative Affairs Agency, for example) would remain unchanged.

Compensation for legislators is currently \$33,000 each (including benefits). Thus, 30 additional legislators would increase compensation \$990,000 annually.

Travel expense, including moving, session per diem, and long-term per diem, averages approximately \$20,933 per legislator. Thus, the new members would increase travel expense by \$627,990 per year.

Contractual expense includes a \$4,000 allowance per member, plus an additional approximately \$7,000 each for phones, supplies, and equipment. Thus, contractual expenses associated with the additional members would be an additional \$330,000 per year.

Staff expenses average \$21,465 per staff member during session; they average \$37,045 per staff during the interim. If we assume that on average each legislator has three session staff and two interim staff, the additional staff expense per legislator is \$138,485. Thus, staff expense caused by the expansion would be \$4,154,550.

The foregoing incremental costs total \$6,102,540.

#### **One-time Capital Costs**

We have not attempted to estimate the capital cost required to accommodate the new legislators, but we presume it would be several million dollars. The existing capitol

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building would have to be remodeled to make space available to the new members. In all likelihood, the executive branch would vacate the capitol building and it would become a legislative hall. The existing house and senate chambers would have to be enlarged, several of the meeting rooms would have to be expanded, and more office space would have to be found. The reshuffle of office space could push some employees into leased space, which would increase the foregoing estimate of annual recurring costs.

I hope this information is useful. If you have any questions, please contact this agency.

Attachments

NUMBER OF MEMBERS IN THE STATE LEGISLATURES

State	Senate	House	Total
ALABAMA	35	105	140
ALASKA	20	40	60
ARIZONA	30	60	90
ARKANSAS	35	100	135
CALIFORNIA	40	80	120
COLORADO	35	65	100
CONNECTICUT	36	151	187
DELAWARE	21	41	62
FLORIDA	40	120	160
GEORGIA	56	180	236
HAWAII	25	51	76
IDAHO	42	84	126
ILLINOIS	59	118	177
INDIANA	50	100	150
IOWA	50	100	150
KANSAS	40	125	165
KENTUCKY	38	100	138
LOUISIANA	39	105	144
MAINE	35	151	186
MARYLAND	47	141	188
MASSACHUSETTS	40	160	200
MICHIGAN	38	110	148
MINNESOTA	67	134	201
MISSISSIPPI	52	122	174
MISSOURI	34	163	197
MONTANA	50	100	150
NEBRASKA	49		49
NEVADA	21	42	63
NEW HAMPSHIRE	24	400	424
NEW JERSEY	40	80	120
NEW MEXICO	42	70	112
NEW YORK	61	150	211
NORTH CAROLINA	50	120	170
NORTH DAKOTA	53	106	159
OHIO	33	99	132
OKLAHOMA	48	101	149
OREGON	30	60	90
PENNSYLVANIA	50	203	253
RHODE ISLAND	50	100	150
SOUTH CAROLINA	46	124	170
SOUTH DAKOTA	35	70	105
TENNESSEE	33	99	132
TEXAS	31	150	181
UTAH	29	75	104
VERMONT	30	150	180
VIRGINIA	40	100	140
WASHINGTON	49	98	147
WEST VIRGINIA	34	100	134
WISCONSIN	33	99	132
WYOMING	30	64	94

Source: Book of the States, 1992 - 1993, The Council of State Governments

Prepared by the Legislative Research Agency, January 1993 (93.083)

STATE OF ALASKA

**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

DIVISION OF ELECTIONS  
P.O. BOX AF  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-0105  
PHONE (907) 465-4611

RECEIVED MAR 30 1993

March 31, 1993

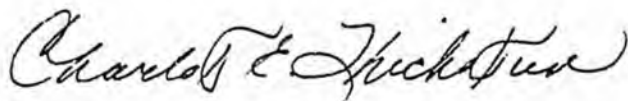
The Honorable Richard Foster  
Representative  
Alaska State Legislature  
Court Building, Room 611  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Foster:

Just a word to let you know we have submitted the attached fiscal note through the normal process. If the effective date could have corresponded with reapportionment in the year 2000 we could have avoided such a high dollar figure.

Your bill is excellent, please give me a call if you would like to discuss this fiscal note.

Sincerely yours,



Charlot E. Thickstun  
Director

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
1993 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HJR22

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: Amendment to the Constitution RE: Legislature  
of 25 Senators and 50 Representatives  
Sponsor: Representative Foster  
Requestor: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Affected: Office of the Governor  
BRU: Division of Elections  
Component: General and Primary Elections  
COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 22

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES:

OPERATING	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97	FY 98	FY 99
PERSONAL SERVICES	0	0	203.8	0	0	0
TRAVEL	0	0	16.7	0	0	0
CONTRACTUAL	2.2*	0	462.0	27.0	0	27.0
SUPPLIES	0	0	0	0	0	0
EQUIPMENT	0	0	0	0	0	0
LAND & STRUCTURES	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRANTS, CLAIMS	0	0	0	0	0	0
MISCELLANEOUS	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL OPERATING	2.2*	0	682.5	27.0	0	27.0

CAPITAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
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REVENUE FUND SOURCE:	0	0	0	0	0	0
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FUNDING:

1002 Federal Receipts	0	0	0	0	0	0
1003 GF Match	0	0	0	0	0	0
1004 GF	2.2*	0	682.5	27.0	0	27.0
1005 GF/Program	0	0	0	0	0	0
1006 GF/MHTIA	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTH.	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	2.2*	0	0	27.0	0	27.0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	1	0	0	0

Estimate of current year (FY93) impact: 0

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary.) \*This figure covers cost of inclusion of information about this issue in the Official Elections Pamphlet as required by AS 15.58, and programming for Data/ote counting of votes cast on the measure. However, only 4 measures can be printed on a single ballot card. Should this measure require printing an additional ballot card, the fiscal impact would be 53.4. See attached for further Analysis

Prepared by: Charlot E. Thickstun, Director *Charlot E. Thickstun* Phone: 65-4611  
Division: Division of Elections Date: 2/23/93  
Approved by Commissioner: Lt. Governor John B. Cobill *John B. Cobill*  
Agency: Office of the Lt. Governor Date: 2/23/93

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FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
 1993 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HJR22

ANALYSIS: (continued)

Travel:		
72270	Administrative Travel	16.7
	(2 Supervisor meetings[1 Juneau, 1 Anchorage 7.8; Reapportionment paralegal [2 trips to 4 regions] 5.9; Admin. Officer [1 trip to 3 Regional Offices and Director's Office 3.0])	
Personal Services:		
	Additional Clerk IIIs	203.8
	(17 @ Range 8A, no overtime 6 months)	
Contractual Services:		
73100	Professional Services	
	Mapping	236.3
	Voter ID cards (330,000)	130.0
73300	Communications	
	Postage	95.7
	Printing and Binding	27.0
	Additional Ballots	
Total		709.5

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
1993 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO: HJR 22

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: Proposing amendments to the  
Constitution....relating to membership of the legislature.  
Sponsor: Representative Foster  
Requestor: Representative Foster

Department Affected: Legislative Affairs Agency  
BRU: Legislative Council  
Legislative Operating Budget  
Component: Sal. & Allowances, Gen. Services  
Session Expenses, Leg. Oper. Budget

COMPONENT SERIAL NO:

Expenditures/Revenues: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97	FY 98	FY 99
PERSONAL SERVICES			1523.0	2891.7	2891.7	2891.7
TRAVEL			267.2	318.5	318.5	318.5
CONTRACTUAL			442.5	442.5	442.5	442.5
SUPPLIES			15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
EQUIPMENT			195.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
LAND & STRUCTURES			0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS			0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	2442.7	3667.7	3667.7	3667.7

CAPITAL	0.0	0.0	150.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
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REVENUE FUND SOURCE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	0	0	2442.7	3667.7	3667.7	3667.7
FEDERAL FUNDS	0	0	0.0	0	0	0
OTHER FUND SOURCE	0	0	150.0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	2592.7	3667.7	3667.7	3667.7

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0	0	45	45	45	45
PART-TIME	0	0	34	34	34	34
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	0	0	0

Estimate of current year impact:

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

HJR 22 proposes amendments to the Constitution changing the membership of the Legislature from 20 senators to 25 and from 40 representatives to 50. Total membership would change from 60 to 75. It is estimated there would be increased costs by enlarging the size of the membership of the Legislature. These increases would be additional members and legislative staff, additional sgt-at-arms staff, additional support staff, additional office space, increase in travel, additional annual allowances, increase in supplies, telephone equipment and charges, computer and office equipment, etc. Also a one time cost would be incurred to remodel the existing chambers to accommodate the additional members.

Prepared By: Pamela A. Stoops, Director  
Division: Administrative Services

*Pamela A. Stoops*

Phone: 465-3850  
Date: 3/5/93

Approved By: Warren W. Endicott, Executive Director  
Agency: Legislative Affairs Agency

*Warren W. Endicott*

Date: 3/5/93

Distribution (by preparer): Leg. Finance, Legislative Sponsor, Requestor, OMB, Gov., & Impacted Agency(ies).

CONTINUATION OF FISCAL NOTE: HJR 22

**PERSONAL SERVICES**

It is anticipated the additional members and staff will not occur until FY 96. The FY 96 cost is for six months.

15 additional legislators (75 not 60) - \$519,000	
30 additional full time legislative staff - \$1,699,500	
30 additional permanent part time legislative staff - \$615,000	
2 additional sgt-at-arms staff for House and Senate - \$25,000	
2 additional House and Senate support staff - \$33,200	2891.7

Personal services costs are estimated using FY 94 personal services costs. Support staff costs are conservative. Not sure what impact additional 15 members will have on the Agency.

**TRAVEL**

Travel to and from session, session per diem, relocation costs, interim per diem, travel per diem for 15 additional legislators - \$318,500. FY 96 cost is \$51,300 less for legislator's interim per diem. 318.5

**CONTRACTUAL**

Telephones 70 lines @\$250/yr - \$17,500	
Long distance and local charges - \$90,000	
Annual \$4,000 allowance - \$60,000	
Increased lease space for session and interim - \$275,000	442.5

**SUPPLIES**

Supplies for 79 additional members and staff for session and interim - \$25,000 25.0

**EQUIPMENT**

Equipment for 79 additional members and staff for session interim. This would be a one time cost.

75 Desks or funding for built-ins = \$33,000	
40 Computers @\$1,500 = \$60,000	
45 File cabinets = \$18,000	
40 Printers @\$1,500 = \$60,000	
75 Chairs = 15 @ \$400; 60 @ \$300 = \$24,000	195.0

**MISCELLANEOUS**

A capital appropriation would be requested to remodel the 2nd floor of the Capitol. The Senate and House Chambers would have to be enlarged to accommodate additional members. Offices would need to be moved and additional committee and office space would be required. The Legislative Lounge might also need to be enlarged.

Approximate amount for the 2nd floor renovation is \$150,000. 150.0