

HJR

15

# HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(7)

Date Referred: February 11, 1993

FURTHER REFERRALS:

NUMBER REFINANCE

Date of Committee Action: 2-22-93

The JUDICIARY Committee considered:

SSHJR 15

SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15 100 DAY SESSION LIMIT

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Alaska relating to the duration of a regular session.

RECOMMENDATIONS:  the same title  
 be replaced with \_\_\_\_\_  a new title

have attached amendments(s)

do pass

do not pass

no recommendations

individual recommendations

additional referral to the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

ADOPTS: \_\_\_\_\_ letter of Intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S): (Dept) \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Dept/Date)

fiscal impact \_\_\_\_\_

fiscal note(s) LAA 2/11/93 Governor 2/11/93

zero fiscal note \_\_\_\_\_

zero fiscal note(s) \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNING DO PASS	DP	OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS	DNP	NR	AM
<i>Brian Porter</i>		→		✓	
<i>Gail Phillips</i>	✓				
<i>Pete East</i>	✓	<i>Jim Bondlund</i>		✓	
		<i>Jaunette James</i>		✓	

*Brian Porter*  
 CHAIRMAN'S SIGNATURE

Alaska State Legislature  
House of Representatives

COMMITTEES:  
HEALTH, EDUCATION  
& SOCIAL SERVICES  
JUDICIARY  
STATE AFFAIRS

SPECIAL COMMITTEES:  
MILITARY & VETERANS AFFAIRS  
OIL & GAS

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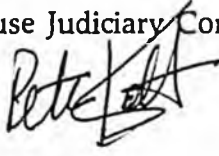
DURING SESSION:  
STATE CAPITOL  
JUNEAU, AK 99811  
PHONE (907) 465-3777

Representative Pete Kott

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 11, 1993

TO: Rep. Brian Porter  
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Rep. Pete Kott 

RE: Request for hearing  
SSHJR 15, 100 Day Session Limit

Please schedule SSHJR 15 for a hearing before the House Judiciary Committee as soon as possible.

SSHJR 15 proposes a constitutional amendment establishing a 100 day limit on the regular session of the legislature. This amendment will reduce the legislative budget and demonstrate the 18th Legislature's commitment to fiscal restraint.

As you requested, the following items are attached:

Sponsor statement  
Fiscal note from Legislative Affairs  
Fiscal note from Division of Elections  
Sectional analysis  
Background material

If you have any questions on this issue, please call me or my Legislative Assistant, Jack Phelps, at 465-3777.



REQUEST FOR SCHEDULING

## SECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF SSHJR 15

### SECTION 1:

Section 1 of SSHJR 15 consists of a proposed amendment to Article II, Section 8 of the Alaska Constitution. The principal substantive change is to reduce the length of the regular legislative session from 120 days to 100 days.

All other changes proposed in SSHJR 15 have the effect of making it clear that the regular session will last a total of 100 days and not 101 days. Thus, SSHJR 15 would supplant the reasoning expressed in *Alaska Christian Bible Institute v. State*, 772 P.2d 1079 (Alaska 1989). In that case, the Alaska Supreme Court held that the first day of a regular session is not counted towards the 120 days that the constitution presently permits. SSHJR 15 makes it clear that the first day of the regular session is to be counted toward the 100 day limit now proposed.

Except as noted above, no other substantive changes are made to Article II, Section 8 by SSHJR 15. Those provisions contained in Article II, Section 8 which address extensions to the regular session remain unaltered.

### SECTION 2:

Section 2 reaffirms that, if approved by the legislature, the proposed amendment will go before the voters in accordance with Article XIII, Section 1 of the Alaska Constitution.

## SPONSOR STATEMENT

### SSHJR 15 — 100 DAY SESSION LIMIT

#### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of SSHJR 15 is to help reduce the cost of doing state business without impinging severely upon the ability of the legislature to address matters of importance to the state of Alaska. Currently there is widespread popular belief that it should not take the legislature 120 days to finish its business. The legislature, by placing time constraints on its own activities, can demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the prudent use of state funds. This body has already taken a positive step in that direction by establishing an early calendar goal for the first session of the 18th Legislature. House Joint Resolution 15 would give the voters of our state the opportunity to ratify this commitment by amending the state constitution to limit each legislative session to 100 days.

#### A REASONABLE REDUCTION

A major obstacle to this kind of legislative reform has been the legitimate concern that a shorter session would not allow the legislature adequate time for reasoned debate on the merits of a given issue. This difficulty was taken into consideration in the drafting of SSHJR 15, and contributed to the decision to call for a twenty day session reduction rather than the more common thirty day reduction. SSHJR 15 is an attempt to address the issue of a reduced session while allowing some flexibility for exigencies which may require more time to resolve in some years than in others. Certainly nothing in this act nor in the Constitution itself requires the legislature to remain in session for the maximum allowable time.

The present 120 day limit resulted from Legislative Resolve No. 23 passed by the 13th Legislature, and was approved by the voters on November 6, 1984. Prior to that time, there was no constitutional limitation on the length of a session.

During the second session of the 15th Legislature, the National Conference of State Legislatures, at the request of the Alaska House of Representatives, conducted a review of House rules and procedures. In its final report, NCSL identified the session limitation as one element in a comprehensive approach to improving the efficiency of the legislative process.

At the time the NCSL study was done, the 120 day session limit was relatively new and many members of the 15th Legislature had served long enough to evaluate the difference. The report indicated that "the 120 day limit has been an overwhelming success. Few respondents connected the limit to logjam problems or any other negative consequences." Furthermore, during the interviews, "[m]ost respondents called the limit

'great' or 'very positive' and several suggested that the legislature could conduct its business within an even shorter time frame."

#### A STRICT 100 DAY LIMIT

Article II, Section 8, as amended by Legislative Resolve No. 23, SLA 1983, requires adjournment 120 days from the date the legislature convenes in regular session. In 1989, the Alaska Supreme Court interpreted the language of Article II, Section 8 to mean that the total session length was 121 days since the day the legislature convenes is not counted for purposes of the constitutional limitation. *Alaska Christian Bible Institute v. State*, 772 P. 2d 1079 (Alaska 1989). It is the intent of SSHJR 15 to specify clearly a 100 day maximum duration for the regular legislative session.

#### DATE FOR CONVENING FIXED BY STATUTE

The Alaska Constitution fixes the date for convening the regular session as the fourth Monday in January except as provided by law. This allows the legislature the flexibility to establish a different date as it deems appropriate. The legislature has, in fact, taken advantage of that flexibility, and presently Sec. 24.05.090 requires the legislature to convene on the second Monday in January except on the years following a gubernatorial election, in which years the legislature is to convene on the third Monday in January.

SSHJR 15 is silent regarding the constitutionally mandated starting point because the sponsor believes that the flexibility currently provided by Article II, Section 8 already allows the legislature to adjust by statute the date the legislature convenes. If there are compelling reasons now to convene the legislature later than present law provides, the statute can be changed without proposing a constitutional amendment. Perhaps within a few years, it may be expedient to convene the legislature at an earlier date. A change in statute can accommodate that need as well. In short, there is no compelling reason to amend the constitution on this point.

Furthermore, there are legitimate practical reasons for keeping the start of the legislative session in January. First, the budget process is placed under no unmanageable constraints by the present calendar. It is true that the revenue projections do not normally appear until April. But there is much preliminary work that can be done in advance of those projections. Indeed, Title 37 requires the governor's proposed budget to be delivered to the legislature by the fourth day of the legislative session. The governor must submit requests for supplemental appropriations before the end of the 30th day of session. The governor must also submit requests for budget amendments to agency budgets before the 60th day. In short, there is sufficient work which can be done before revenue projections arrive to justify a January starting date.

Additional arguments for retaining a January startup date may be adduced from the practical implications of a citizen legislature. The livelihood of many Alaskans depends upon the fishing and tourism industries. Legislative adjournment before the end of April each year will provide additional relief for those legislators whose primary source of income lies in one of these vital industries. For those legislators who must move their families to Juneau at the beginning of each session, a later starting date could pose a hardship since the common school semester break now falls reasonably close to the beginning of session.

Reducing the length of session while retaining a January start date will lend itself well to the ideas of forward and early funding. In any case, the longer period of time between the end of legislative activity and the beginning of the fiscal year can assist agencies in making adjustments for changes in funding levels.

# HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

2/11

(7)  
Date Referred: January 20, 1993

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Judiciary  
Finance

Date of Committee Action: 2-11-93

The STATE AFFAIRS Committee considered:

SSHJR 15

SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15

100 DAY SESSION LIMIT

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Alaska relating to the duration of a regular session.

RECOMMENDATIONS:  the same title  
be replaced with \_\_\_\_\_  a new title

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do pass

do not pass

no recommendations

individual recommendations

additional referral to the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

ADOPTS: \_\_\_\_\_ letter of Intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S): (Dept)

APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Dept/Date)

(2)  fiscal impact LAA - GOV

fiscal note(s) \_\_\_\_\_

zero fiscal note \_\_\_\_\_

zero fiscal note(s) \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNING DO PASS	DP	OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS	DNP	NR	AM
<i>M. Vezev</i> Vezev	X	<i>J. Ulmer</i> Ulmer		X	
<i>H. Olberg</i> Olberg	✓	<i>B. Davis</i> B. Davis		X	
<i>G. Sanders</i> Sanders	✓	<i>G. Davis</i> G. Davis		X	
<i>Kott</i> Kott	/				

*M. Vezev* Vezev  
\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRMAN'S SIGNATURE

January 18, 1993

To: Representative Pete Kott  
Representative Terry Martin  
State Capitol Room 409  
Juneau, AK 99811

From: Roger E. Henderson

Re: House Joint Resolutions Nos. 3 and 15

I wholeheartedly support both of the above referenced resolutions, particularly in view of the fact that the proposal in the last general election for a constitutional convention was defeated. Based upon my contact with voters during campaigns before the election, I am convinced that both of the proposed resolutions are favored by a majority of Alaskans.

Roger E. Henderson

## LEGISLATURES

REP KOTT  
1-21-93  
SSHR 15

### Legislative Operations, Organization, and Procedures

The increase in the capacity and willingness of legislatures to deal with modern societal problems has involved more than changes in patterns of representation. Legislative organi-

zation and procedures are constantly evolving. Many legislatures regularly review their structures and procedures, often through a Rules Committee or an interim study. Many procedural changes in recent years have had the objective either of opening and formalizing the process and providing more information to both the public and members of the legislative body, or of more effectively using legislative time.

Concern about legislative use of time has been motivated by at least two issues: How much time should a legislature spend in session, and should it be considered "full-time" or "part-time" in nature? And, how can the legislature most effectively use the time available and avoid the end-of-session logjam that occurs in many states?

### Length of Legislative Sessions

Twelve states place no limit on session length, while 32 operate with constitutional limits (two of these, Colorado and Kansas, limit only the second year), and six states (Arizona, Iowa, Nevada, Rhode Island, Tennessee and Vermont) have statutory or indirect limitations based on cutoffs in legislator's salaries or per diem expense payments.

The argument about session limitations often is couched in terms of preserving the "citizen" nature of state legislatures, as opposed to developing "professional" or full-time legislatures on the congressional model. There is no question that the amount of time spent in session and the level of compensation affect the composition of the membership of the legislative bodies. Many argue it is desirable that the predominant occupation of members of the legislature not be that of "legislator," but that legislative bodies represent a broad spectrum of vocations. However, the growing demands on state legislatures and the greater legislative role in policy initiation, budgeting and program oversight have increased the pressure on legislative time.

The 1960s and 1970s were a time of elimination or relaxation of the limits on legislative sessions. More recently, however, there has been a mixed response to the question of session length. In 1984, Alaska adopted a 120-day limit, replacing its previously unlimited sessions. In 1982, Colorado adopted a limit of 140 days for the second year of the session, and in 1981, Washington included session limitations when it moved from biennial to annual sessions. In 1984, Utah lengthened its sessions by

ten days per biennium when it changed from a 60-day (first year) 20-day (second year) system to 45 days per session. New Hampshire adopted annual sessions effective in 1986. Several legislatures, notably Arizona and Iowa, have limited their sessions by legislative rule or statute. Movements to adopt more restrictive session limits surface periodically. Michigan has experienced several attempts to limit sessions. Montana held annual sessions for one biennium in the 1970s, then returned to a biennial schedule. Colorado is considering further limitations on session days and there is a serious proposal in New Hampshire to return to biennial sessions.

### "Full-time" Legislatures and Legislators

Whether a legislature is full-time in nature generally can be measured by factors such as time spent in session, level of compensation and occupational self-definition of members. Moreover, full-time legislatures are likely to have a pattern of considerable legislator time spent in district offices and a high priority placed on constituent service functions.

The legislatures of California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin have lengthy sessions, relatively high legislator salaries and many members whose primary occupation is "legislator." None of these states have constitutionally-imposed session limitations, although both California and Wisconsin adopt a systematic schedule of committee and floor activity, as well as recess periods at the beginning of each biennium. Many of the legislatures which have longer sessions meet only two or three days per week, while in other states with more restricted sessions, five- and six-day work weeks are common. Several of the medium-sized states spend as many actual days in session as do the full-time legislatures. Twenty-nine legislatures today have the authority to convene themselves in special session without being dependent on the governor.

The number of legislators who define their occupation as "legislator" is increasing. An occupational survey of state legislators conducted by the National Conference of State Legislatures in 1986 found that more than 60 percent of the legislators in New York and Pennsylvania define their occupation as "legislator," and more than half the legislators in the Middle Atlantic states are full-time. The study also indicated that in larger states the number of

"business owners" who are members of the legislature is much smaller than it is in the states with more limited session lengths. Lawyer legislators exist in greatest numbers in the South, with Virginia having the largest number (45 percent). In a number of states, members engaged in "education" outnumber those coming from any other professional background. Individuals engaged in "agriculture" still are found in every legislature but are in greatest number in the rural Midwestern and mountain states. In rank order, the largest occupational categories are "attorney" (16 percent), "business owner" (14 percent), "full-time legislator" (11 percent), "agricultural occupations" (10 percent) and "educator" (8 percent).

The category of full-time legislator would exceed 20 percent if those who list themselves as "retired," "homemaker" or "student" were included. The increased time demands and complexity of legislative activity as well as stringent conflict of interest and disclosure laws have likely contributed to the continuing decline in lawyer legislators. The number of women and minorities in the legislatures continues to increase each biennium. In 1987, 1,157 of the 7,461 state legislators were female (15.5 percent). The number of women legislators is highest in New Hampshire, Colorado, Maine, Washington and Vermont. Female representation is smallest in Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi and Pennsylvania. Minority membership in state legislatures now exceeds 400 (5.4 percent).

## 1989 LEGISLATIVE SESSION DATES

	Scheduled to Convene	Time Limit (Days)	
		Regular Session	Special Session
Alabama	Feb. 7	30	12
Alaska	Jan. 9	120a	30
Arizona	Jan. 9	None	None
Arkansas	Jan. 9	60a	b
California	Jan. 2	None	None
Colorado	Jan. 4	None	None
Connecticut	Jan. 4	June 7	None
Delaware	Jan. 10	June 30	None
Florida	Apr. 4	60a	20a
Georgia	Jan. 9	40	40c
Hawaii	Jan. 18	60a	30a
Idaho	Jan. 9	60	20
Illinois	Jan. 11	None	None
Indiana	Jan. 3	61	30
Iowa	Jan. 9	None	None
Kansas	Jan. 9	90a	None
Kentucky	No regular session		
Louisiana	Apr. 17	60d	30
Maine	Dec. 7, 1988	June 21a	None
Maryland	Jan. 11	90a	30
Massachusetts	Jan. 4	None	None
Michigan	Jan. 11	None	None
Minnesota	Jan. 3	120e	None
Mississippi	Jan. 3	90	None
Missouri	Jan. 4	June 30	None
Montana	Jan. 2	90a	None
Nebraska	Jan. 4	90a	None
Nevada	Jan. 16	60	20
New Hampshire	Jan. 4	45	15
New Jersey	Jan. 10	None	None
New Mexico	Jan. 17	60	30c
New York	Jan. 4	None	None
North Carolina	Jan. 11	None	None
North Dakota	Jan. 10	80f	None
Ohio	Jan. 2	None	None
Oklahoma	Jan. 3	90	None
Oregon	Jan. 9	None	None
Pennsylvania	Jan. 3	None	None
Puerto Rico	Jan. 9	Apr. 30a	20
Rhode Island	Jan. 3	60	60
South Carolina	Jan. 10	40	40
South Dakota	Jan. 10	40	None
Tennessee	Jan. 10	90	30
Texas	Jan. 10	140	30
Utah	Jan. 9	45	30
Vermont	Jan. 4	None	None
Virginia	Jan. 11	60a.g	30
Washington	Jan. 9	105	30h
West Virginia	Jan. 11	60a	None
Wisconsin	undetermined	None	None
Wyoming	Jan. 10	40	None

(a) May be extended.

(b) 15 days after disposal of subjects on governor's call.

(c) Legislature convening itself — 30 day limit.

(d) 60 legislative days within 85 calendar days.

(e) Limited to 120 legislative days during 2-year period. Must adjourn by May 22, 1989.

(f) Preliminary session convenes in Dec. following election of members for organizational purposes. Bill introduction permitted.

(g) Limited to 30 days.

(h) Legislature may convene itself with unlimited subject agenda.

# The Anchorage Times

"Believing in Alaskans, putting Alaska first"

Publisher: BILL J. ALLEN

Editors: DENNIS FRADLEY, PAUL JENKINS, WILLIAM J. TOBIN

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## A shorter session?

**T**HE NEW LEGISLATURE that Alaskans elected this past Tuesday will be meeting in Juneau in just a matter of another 10 weeks. Will it be business as usual — four months of unproductive frustration and unlimited spending?

Or will the 1993 session, at long last, be one marked by diligent attention to work and a commitment to do the job in no more than 90 days, if not less?

Many of those who campaigned and won last Tuesday expressed a firm resolve to help reduce state spending and to attend to legislative business in a workmanlike fashion.

We'd like to wish they meant it, and can actually make such things happen.

**UNFORTUNATELY**, we've been disappointed before when other legislators have made similar pledges, only to fail when the session opened and everybody slipped all too easily back into the Juneau routine.



The routine, as you'll have no trouble remembering, means looking busy but really doing nothing for the first three months — all the while stashing away pieces of legislation that can be used as trading blocks when the pressure finally comes to bring the session to an end.

Budget action is always delayed, under this tired scenario, until appropriation dollars have been allocated for pet projects all over the state. Supplemental appropriations, however, are always approved — to cover budget overruns by the Juneau bureaucracy since the last session adjourned.

**WE REPEAT: THERE** is no earthly reason why the business of Alaska's Legislature cannot be completed in 60 days, and even under the most grave of circumstances within 90 days.

There will be grave matters on the table in '93, as a matter of fact — centered around the need to close the fiscal gap between the state's fattened spending habits and its declining revenue base. But 90 days — three full months — is more than enough time to deal with the matter, if only the legislators have the courage and the will to do so. Among other things that Alaskans can no longer afford is a Legislature that stays in session for one-third of the entire year.

# The Anchorage Times

"Putting Alaska first"

BILL J. ALLEN *Publisher* GENE AREHART *President*  
WILLIAM J. TOBIN *Asst. Publisher* JAMES H. SLACK *General Manager*

J. RANDOLPH MURRAY *Editor*  
PAUL JENKINS *Managing Editor*  
DENNIS FRADLEY *Editor, Editorial Pages*

Robert B. Atwood, *Publisher Emeritus*

## WHOLE LOT OF NOTHING

### The halfway mark

✓ **T**HE LEGISLATURE last Thursday passed the halfway mark in its 121-day session. You're concerned about having missed the celebration, don't worry. There wasn't anything to celebrate. Other than collecting their \$100 per day, per diem checks on top of their salaries and expenses, lawmakers haven't accomplished very much so far. They never do during the first half of a session.

Sure, they've introduced bills and resolutions, scads of them. They've mailed out their surveys and newsletters to constituents. They huddle with lobbyist to concoct strategies, and they summon administrative department heads to be at their beck and call.

But the legislators haven't tackled any of the hard problems yet. It's a good chance they will avoid altogether the sticky issues like subsistence, ethics and spending reform. They would rather just wait for the March predictions about next year's oil revenue so they can horse trade with one another on how to spend those dwindling dollars.

**WHAT HAVE** they accomplished so far this session? A handful of resolutions and one bill are all that has cleared the Legislature. Things like passing resolutions declaring salmon to be St. Valentine's Day food, congratulating Hilary Lindh for her Olympic silver medal, and supporting on-shore fish allocations. The one bill has to do with providing education employees with collective bargaining rights.

And that's it.

A whole bunch of bills and resolutions have been introduced in this, the 17th Legislature. At last count there were 558 House bills, 447 Senate bills, and more than 240 different types of resolutions. Don't worry about too many of them going anywhere — 90 percent never do.

**FOUR MONTHS** in legislative session in Juneau, more than half of which is dead time, and eight more months back home in their districts with full-time staffs and offices. That's what legislators do — all courtesy of the state's limited tax revenue.

It's hardly the kind of citizen Legislature envisioned at statehood. Rather, it is a full-time, year-round government bureaucracy. Sixty lawmakers and staffs on the payroll year-round for a state with the population of a half a million people. It's a disgrace.

Gov. Walter Hickel wants to limit the Legislature to 75-day sessions. Other people, we're among them, believe 60 days are enough. Public surveys have shown more than three-fourths of the public wants to put limits on both terms of office for lawmakers and length of legislative sessions.

But it doesn't appear to make much difference to the 60 sitting down in Juneau right now. They kind of like it the way it is.

It will take a voter revolt to change things. That revolt should take place in the election ballot booths later this year.

## ✓ Legislative excess

REPORTS FROM precinct meetings held in recent days indicate the folks back home are getting fed up with legislative flim-flam, the likes of which were discussed in the editorial above.

In this election year, there is at least a glimmer of hope that there will be an outcry telling the legislators:

- The people want a limit set on the number of consecutive terms anyone can serve in either the House or the Senate.

- The people are fed up with legislative sessions that last four months a year and want a 90-day limit imposed on lawmaking activities.

Five weeks have now transpired since the 1990 legislature began work.

One veteran member of the House, in a telephone call from Juneau yesterday, said he had never see a

slower start to any second-term session. There is, he reported, no sense of any kind of urgency to get on with the work at hand.

But why should there be?

THEY HAVE until May 7 before they have to adjourn, and this is just the second weekend in February.

There's no rush to do anything — and certainly no thought even given to the possibility they could attend to all the important matters at hand and simply adjourn, thereby saving millions of dollars in staff salaries and other related costs.

The Alaska legislative process has become an embarrassing and costly annual exercise in governmental excess.

And at the precinct level, at least, the public is beginning to speak up.

AT  
9 Feb 1990  
BY

# Editorials

Robert B. Atwood  
President and Publisher

Elaine Atwood  
Assistant Publisher

William J. Tobin  
Vice-President, Editor-in-Chief

## The 90-day dream

THE BEST thing about the dismal legislative session now unraveling in Juneau was the introduction of a proposed constitutional amendment by freshman Republican Rep. Loren Leman of Anchorage.

God bless him, he's asking his fellow legislators to put on the ballot for the vote of the people a constitutional change that would limit the state's annual lawmaking sessions to 90 days.

Such a plan would pass at the polls by a landslide vote — no question about it.

But the trouble is, of course, that Mr. Leman's resolution hasn't a snowball's chance in hell of being passed by the legislators themselves.

It will never get on the ballot. As a matter of fact, it probably will never see the light of day from whatever committee was given the first chance to quietly murder it.

THE LAST thing the legislative establishment wants is another curtailment on its right to sit in Juneau and waste time and money.

Many of the legislators now publicly plead that they hardly have time enough to meet their heavy obligations — ever since the people were so stupid as to put a 120-day limit on the length of the session.

Privately they'll say something else — the honest ones, anyway.

They'll tell you that 90 days is more than enough time to do the annual law-making job, if it is done with diligence.

But that isn't the way things work in Juneau.

This horrible session is a case in point.

It very likely has been the worst in the state's history.

It spent the first 90 days doing absolutely nothing, un-

less you consider the frittering away of time and money to be important. We're now in the 112th day of the session, little still has been done, and the final frenzy of pell-mell legislation is about to begin.

Rep. Leman introduced his resolution on the 100th day of this sad and depressing session.

Here's what he had to say about it:

"WHY CAN'T we arrive, establish priorities, set schedules and get to work? Here we are at 100 days and we could have been finished 25 days ago. My resolution would require a vote of the people. If they approve the 90-day limit, we will cut the length of the session by 25 percent. There is substantial savings to the treasury right there."

But of course that's not what most of the legislators want to achieve. They give lip service to the idea of cutting state costs — while at the same time running one of the most costly operations of state government, one loaded with four-star benefits and extras.

Mr. Leman was even so bold as to suggest that a 90-day session would "make it easier for the average citizen to serve in the legislature."

Spoken like a true freshman. He should know by now that the professional legislators we have in the legislature don't want average, working-class Alaskans having any part of their elite, full-time lifestyle.

But the people of Alaska would buy this proposal in a minute, given the chance. But the hard, sad and realistic truth is their elected legislators will never give them a chance to vote on this proposal.

Bill J. Allen  
Publisher and Chairman

Hugh Cunningham  
Editor

William J. Tobin  
Editor, Editorial Page

Paul Jenkins  
Managing Editor

## 60th legislative day

THE ALASKA Legislature is at the midway point today of its 120-day journey in Juneau.

A number of state legislatures only meet for 60 days a year — or every other year, in some cases. But in Alaska, where the lawmaking job has been transformed by the legislators themselves into virtually a full-time occupation, the legislative sessions last for four full months every year.

It's a terrible waste of time and money.

The job could be done annually in half the time. Most of the legislators will privately admit that, even if they won't say it publicly.

We have sung this same song many times over the years in these columns, and it's worth echoing the refrain one more time just as a reminder that there is a better way to do things.

FIRST OF all, of course, there needs to be a commitment on the part of the legislative leadership to settle down to a disciplined work schedule from the very first day of the session.

This legislature convened last Jan. 8.

And in all kindness, not much has been accomplished.

Sure, there have been floor sessions and committee meetings and roll calls and bills and resolutions introduced by the score. There has been no end of political posturing and rags-of-war between the majority and the minority caucuses and between Republicans and Democrats.

But there has been little in the way of productive accomplishment.

Nothing, really, worthy of two months of very, very expensive operations.

In the old days — and we acknowledge that issues of the territorial past cannot be likened to the challenges of

today — Alaska's lawmakers handled the legislative function in just 60 days, and then only every other year.

We acknowledge, too, that biennial sessions probably make no realistic sense.

But shorter annual sessions certainly do — 90 days at the maximum, and probably 60 days every other year or so. There are, after all, only a few more than 500,000 people in Alaska — and they require only so much lawmaking every year. And the governor and the administration do need time to try to run the state, without the legislature demanding their constant attention.

WHAT IS going to happen now is what happens every other year in Juneau.

The legislators are going to do everything they have to do in the next 60 days.

And the point is perfectly clear to just about everybody but the legislators themselves.

They could have skipped the first 60 days and started at what now is the midpoint of the session. And the results would be exactly the same — without millions of dollars being spent on staff, travel, tons of paper grinding through the legislative print shop and all the other items that make the legislative process one of the state's most expensive operations.

The real fact is that most of the work will be done in the last 45 to 30 days of the session — ignoring the mad frenzy that will turn the legislative chambers and offices into a mini asylum on the final two or three days.

But let's thank heaven for small favors. Before the voters finally rose up in outrage and anger and forced lawmakers to accept a 120-day limit on the length of the sessions, legislatures were running beyond the 160-day mark.

Robert B. Atwood  
President and Publisher

Elaine Atwood  
Assistant Publisher

William J. Tobin  
Vice-President, Editor-in-Chief

## Aloha, legislators

**FOR SOME** weekend food for thought, we offer a tidbit of information about the legislative process.

Not Alaska's legislative process.

Hawaii's.

Down in the 50th State, where prosperity blooms, there is a 60-day limit on the length of the annual legislative session.

And the system works very well.

This year, the Hawaiian legislature convened on Jan. 21, a Wednesday, and will adjourn — no ifs, ands or buts — on April 27, a Monday.

And midway through the session — if you can believe such radical stuff — the legislators of Hawaii took a mandatory five-day recess. It extended from March 17 to March 23, and took all the lawmakers back to their home districts and out of the pressure cooker for a little exposure once again to the reality of life.

**HOW'S IT** work? Just fine, say legislative leaders.

Because of the deadlines imposed to meet the 60-day requirement, one influential senator from Honolulu says, members of the Hawaii House and Senate are forced to concentrate on priority issues.

They aren't inundated by hundreds and hundreds of pieces of legislation, because the members know the practice of papering the record

with campaign bills is counterproductive to an effective session.

At the start of each session, the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House — this year, the respective posts are held by Sen. Richard S.H. Wong and Rep. Richard A. Kawakami — sign off on a schedule that everybody abides by until adjournment comes.

**AMONG OTHER** things, these rules provide that no new bill can be introduced after the 22nd day of the session. Period. End of discussion. In other words, just a little more than one-third of the session can be used for bill introduction — and just about a full two-thirds for consideration of the legislation that has been put on the table.

And not all of those bills hang around until the very end.

Throughout the 60-day period, there are checkpoints along the way. If bills don't clear those hurdles, they're dead ducks.

That's how the major, priority items get handled in due order, with time for deliberation and thoughtful consideration.

Why can't Alaska legislators get the message that there is a better way to do business — and they don't have to reinvent the wheel to get there?

# The Anchorage Times

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ALASKAN OWNED AND OPERATED SINCE 1915

## SHORTENING THE LEGISLATURE

# Put lid on at 75 days

**W**HEN IT COMES to reforms that would improve the way the state of Alaska functions, put high on the list a reduction in the length of time the Legislature stays in session every year.

The new suggestion is for a 75-day limit.

Let's endorse that, and urge all Alaskans to think in that time frame.

Clearly it will take a voter revolt to reduce the length of legislative session, because lawmakers themselves will never do so on their own. They like being in session for four months each year, and they cultivate the appearance of working full time — complete with full-time staffs and offices — the other eight months of the year.

And before the people of the state brought enough pressure to bear to force a 120-day limit on the annual sessions, the legislators were delighted to stay in Juneau for much longer periods of time — more than 160 days on three occasions, in fact.

**THAT KIND OF** time spent legislating each year for a half a million people is a frightful disgrace.

So, too, is 120 days each year.

The truth is, and most legislators will privately acknowledge the reality, nothing much is accomplished in the first 30 days of any session — and often not much in 60, besides a great deal of posturing and pandering to each other's egos.

And while the legislators are in Juneau, doing whatever they do to occupy the time, the wheels of government essentially stop turning.

The result is that for three months at the start of every year, the administrative departments of government — which are supposed to be running things — drop everything else and concentrate on being at the beck and call of the lawmakers.

Then once the Legislature has adjourned, the administrative branches of government spend the next three months trying to figure out what happened to them as a result of legislative actions — and changing regulations and whatnot to conform to changes in the law. Not a whole lot of progressive actions are accomplished during this part of the year.

By the time the last three months are at hand, the administrative offices have to start getting ready for the next legislative session — spending three months building their defenses or trying to concoct arguments in favor of some new program or spending plan.

**IT'S NO WONDER** that the state winds up running in circles, accomplishing little for the good of the people — but spending an enormous amount of dollars in the process.

The governor — whoever the governor might be — has little time to develop programs and to effectuate leadership goals. Juneau's whole attention is on the legislators — not on the administration and the governor, charged by the Alaska Constitution to lead and direct the state's welfare and future.

Walter J. Hickel, who now occupies the governor's office, has endorsed the 75-day legislative limit. He recognizes there is much to be done and that huge challenges are out there — with great opportunities awaiting if only the state could focus on the goals.

The one-third-of-year legislative session indeed can be shortened. But it will take action by the voters — speaking loudly and with force — to make it happen.

## Speaking out



Clymer



Lopez



Grabowski

**Q. Should the Alaska Legislature's 120-day session be further reduced to a 75-day limit?**

• "Yes. They need to reduce the length. They're taking too long. I think 75 days is sufficient time for them to legislate."

— Chlora Clymer, Kodiak

• "Yes. It takes them too long to make decisions."

— Nga Lopez, Anchorage

• "Yes. I always feel it takes them too long to make decisions. I think we need to reduce the session."

— Sue Grabowski, Anchorage

## LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS SINCE STATEHOOD

1/21/93  
SSHJR 15

Legislature/Session & Number of Days	Date* Convened	Day/Date Adjourned	Adjournment Time	
			SENATE	HOUSE
1ST LEGISLATURE: 1959 - 1960 1st Session - 81 days 2nd Session - 65 days	1/26/59 1/25/60	Tu 4/16/59 Tu 3/29/60	9:50pm 12:00pm	9:45pm 12:00pm
2ND LEGISLATURE: 1961 - 1962 1st Session - 74 days 2nd Session - 81 days	1/23/61 1/22/62	Th 4/6/61 Th 4/12/62	2:01am 1:22am	2:20am 1:10am
3RD LEGISLATURE: 1963 - 1964 1st Session - 76 days 2nd Session - 85 days* 1st Special Session - 3 days *Formal recess, 40 days	1/28/63 1/27/64 8/31/64	Sa 4/13/63 Sa 5/30/64 We 9/2/64	10:46am 1:00am 11:12am	10:45am 1:00am 11:08am
4TH LEGISLATURE: 1965 - 1966 1st Session - 75 days 2nd Session - 84 days	1/25/65 1/24/66	Fr 4/9/65 Su 4/17/66	4:32am 1:14am	4:35am 1:28am
5TH LEGISLATURE: 1967 - 1968 1st Session - 77 days 1st Special Session - 6 days 2nd Session - 86 days	1/23/67 9/29/67 1/22/68	Su 4/9/67 We 10/4/67 Tu 4/16/68	11:35am 2:37am 8:05am	11:32am 2:35am 8:00am
6TH LEGISLATURE: 1969 - 1970 1st Session - 95 days 2nd Session - 147 days	1/27/69 1/12/70	Th 5/1/69 Su 6/7/70	4:18am 3:33am	4:30am 3:51am
7TH LEGISLATURE: 1971 - 1972 1st Session - 121 days 2nd Session - 161 days	1/11/71 1/10/72	5/11/71 6/18/72	3:23am 12:50am	3:26am 12:59am
8TH LEGISLATURE: 1973 - 1974 1st Session - 90 days 1st Special Session - 27 days 2nd Session - 96 days 2nd Special Session - 4 days	1/8/73 10/17/73 1/21/74 6/17/74	Sa 4/7/73 Mo 11/12/73 Fr 4/27/74 Th 6/20/74	5:45pm 4:35pm 8:21pm 6:17pm	5:50pm 4:35pm 8:25pm 6:12pm
9TH LEGISLATURE: 1975 - 1976 1st Session - 139 days 2nd Session - 142 days	1/20/75 1/12/76	6/7/75 6/1/76	2:30am 8:19am	2:43am 8:14am
10TH LEGISLATURE: 1977 - 1978 1st Session - 141 days 2nd Session - 161 days	1/10/77 1/9/78	Mo 5/30/77 Su 6/18/78	10:41am 9:32pm	12:33pm 11:36pm
11TH LEGISLATURE: 1979 - 1980 1st Session - 112 days 1st Special Session - 3 days 2nd Session - 145 days 2nd Special Session - 3 days	1/15/79 8/6/79 1/14/80 9/22/80	Su 5/6/79 We 8/8/79 Fr 6/6/80 We 9/24/80	12:15pm 2:16pm 8:43pm (6/5) 9:38am	3:00pm 7:26pm (8/7) 1:01am 2:55am (9/23)

\* All sessions convened on a Monday, except the First Special Session of the Fifth Legislature, which convened on a Friday, the First Special Session of the Eighth Legislature, which convened on a Wednesday, and the First Special Session of the Seventeenth Legislature, which convened on a Wednesday.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS SINCE STATEHOOD

Legislature/Session & Number of Days	Date* Convened	Day/Date Adjourned	Adjournment Time	
			SENATE	HOUSE
12TH LEGISLATURE: 1981 - 1982 1st Session - 165 days 1st Special Session - 3 days 2nd Session - 144 days	1/12/81 7/13/81 1/11/82	Th 6/25/81 We 7/15/81 We 6/3/82	7:06pm (6/24) 6:11pm (7/14) 5:35pm	12:23am 1:32am 7:23am (6/2)
13TH LEGISLATURE: 1983 - 1984 1st Session - 162 days 2nd Session - 152 days	1/17/83 1/9/84	Mo 6/27/83 Fr 6/8/84	9:39am 4:38pm	9:28pm (6/26) 4:05pm
14TH LEGISLATURE: 1985 - 1986 1st Session - 119 days 1st Special Session - 30 days** 2nd Session - 120 days	1/14/85 7/15/85 1/13/86	Su 5/12/85 Tu 8/13/85 Mo 5/12/86	9:42pm ** 11:54pm	10:52pm ** 11:59pm
15TH LEGISLATURE: 1987 - 1988 1st Session - 122 days*** 1st Special Session - 3 days 2nd Session - 121 days	1/19/87 7/1/87 1/11/88	We 5/20/87 Fr 7/3/87 Mo 5/9/88	11:58pm (5/19) 1:31am 4:12am	1:36am 12:12am 6:04am
16TH LEGISLATURE: 1989 - 1990 1st Session - 121 days 2nd Session - 122 days 1st Special Session - 14 days	1/9/89 1/8/90 6/25/90	Tu 5/9/89 We 5/9/90 Su 7/8/90	11:59pm 11:59pm (5/8) 5:13pm	11:32pm 12:01am 5:00pm
17TH LEGISLATURE: 1991 - 1992 1st Session - 122 days 2nd Session - 122 days 1st Special Session - 4 days 2nd Special Session - 8 days	1/21/91 1/13/92 05/13/92 06/15/92	We 5/22/91 We 5/13/92 Sat 5/16/92 Mon 6/22/92	9:39pm (5/21) 11:59pm (5/12) 4:56pm (5/15) 3:44pm	12:37am 12:06am 5:40am 4:17pm

\* All sessions convened on a Monday, except the First Special Session of the Fifth Legislature, which convened on a Friday, the First Special Session of the Eighth Legislature, which convened on a Wednesday, and the First Special Session of the Seventeenth Legislature, which convened on a Wednesday.

\*\* The First Special Session of the Fourteenth Legislature (considering the question of impeachment of Governor Sheffield) adjourned in 30 days under Article II, Section 9, Constitution of the State of Alaska.

\*\*\* The First Session of the Fifteenth Legislature was extended by a proclamation by the Governor.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
1993 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO: HJR 15

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: Proposing an amending to the  
Constitution...duration of a regular session.  
Sponsor: Rep. Kott  
Requestor: Rep. Kott

Department Affected: Legislative Affairs Agency  
BRU: Legislative Council  
Component: Session Expenses Legal Svcs.,  
Sal & Allow., Public Svcs & Admin Services

COMPONENT SERIAL NO:

Expenditures/Revenues: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97	FY 98	FY 99
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS		<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	0	<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>

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: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	0	<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>
FEDERAL FUNDS	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTHER FUND SOURCE	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	0	<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>	<1,000.0>

POSITIONS:

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

Estimate of current year impact: \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

HJR 15 reduces the length of the legislative session from a 120 day limit to a 100 day limit. The estimated daily cost of the session is \$50,000 a day. If the session is reduced by 20 days, a savings of \$1,000,000 is calculated.

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

*Pamela A. Stoops*

Phone: 465-3850  
Date: 1/18/93

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

*Warren W. Endicott*

Date: 1/18/93

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

FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. HJR 15

STATE OF ALASKA  
93 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: Amendment to the Constitution RE: duration of a regular session  
Sponsor: Representative Kott  
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	0	0	0	0
TRAVEL	0	0	0	0	0	0
CONTRACTUAL	2.2*	0	0	0	0	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	0	0	0	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	0	0	0	0
1005 GF/Program Receipts	0	0	0	0	0	0
1006 GF/MHTIA	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTHER	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	2.2*	0	0	0	0	0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	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 DataVote counting of votes cast on the measure. However, only 4 measures can be printed on a single ballot card. Should this measure require printing and additional ballot card, the fiscal impact would be 53.4.

Prepared by: Charlot E. Thickstun, Director *Charlot E. Thickstun* Phone: 465-4611  
Division: Division of Elections Date: 1/15/93

Approved by Commissioner: Lt. Governor John B. Coghill *J. B. Coghill*  
Agency: Office of the Lt. Governor Date: 1/15/93

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