

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.J.R. 59
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State Affairs
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Texas Legislature has a constitutional time stipulation of convening 140 days every odd year. Additionally, the first 60 days is limited to specific items, further constraining the Legislature's time and ability to consider important legislation. The first 30 days are devoted to emergency appropriations, confirming governor appointees, and emergency items submitted by the governor. The remaining 30 days the various committees should hold hearings for pending business and the governor's emergency items. Either chamber can determine its order of business and forgo the 60-day stipulation with an affirmative four-fifths vote of its membership.

With Texas being a part-time Legislature, convening only 140 days every other year, the Legislature already faces a major time constraint to consider and pass legislation. The 60-day preclusionary period further limits the period of time in which legislation may be considered. Realistically, the Legislature has 80 days to act on legislation every other year. Eliminating this provision would allow the Legislature more time to consider and pass legislation for the citizens of Texas.

S.J.R. 59 would propose a constitutional amendment to eliminate the 60-day preclusionary period at the start of every legislative session allowing the Legislature to consider and act on legislation when first convened. Additionally, this amendment would repeal Section 5(c), Article III, which would require an affirmative four-fifths vote to determine its order of business.

S.J.R. 59 proposes a constitutional amendment regarding the time during which the Legislature may act on bills or resolutions during a regular session.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 5(b), Article III, Texas Constitution, as follows:

(b) Authorizes the Legislature, when convened in regular session, to introduce bills and resolutions and hold hearings and act on bills and resolutions and on emergency matters as may be submitted by the governor in special messages to the Legislature. Deletes existing text requiring that, when convened in regular session, the first thirty days thereof be devoted to the introduction of bills and resolutions, acting upon emergency appropriations, passing upon the confirmation of the recess appointees of the governor and such emergency matters as may be submitted by the governor in special messages to the Legislature. Deletes existing text requiring the various committees of each House, during the succeeding thirty days of the regular session of the Legislature, to hold hearings to consider all bills and resolutions and other matters then pending; and such emergency matters as may be submitted by the governor. Deletes existing text requiring the Legislature, during the remainder of the session, to act upon such bills and resolutions as may be then pending and upon such emergency matters as may be submitted by the governor in special messages to the Legislature.

SECTION 2. Repealer: Section 5(c) (relating to authorizing either House to determine its order of business by an affirmative vote of four-fifths of its membership), Article III (Legislative Department), Texas Constitution.

SECTION 3. Requires that the proposed constitutional amendment be submitted to the voters at an election to be held November 7, 2023. Sets forth the required language of the ballot.