

SESSION STRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS REPORTS

1968 – Oregon’s Legislative Future – Report to the Fifty-fifth Legislative Assembly

The Advisory Committee on the Oregon Legislature recommended that the legislature meet biennially in odd-numbered years by constitutional mandate and in even-numbered years by legislative action. It was recommended that the second session be limited to fiscal issues and other matters deemed important by the Legislature.

1974 – Report of the Legislative Improvements Committee – Report to the Fifty-eighth Legislative Assembly

The Legislative Improvements Committee recommended that the constitution be amended to require annual sessions. The odd-year would not have had a time limit whereas the even-year would have been limited to 30 days. The purpose of the 30-day session was to allow time to consider material studied during the interim and reexamine budgets. The budget review would decrease the responsibility carried by the Emergency Board. Ballot Measure 6, which would have allowed the legislature to call itself into session, failed during the May 1974 Primary Election. Although the committee preferred the ballot measure, they approved an alternative of recommending a limited annual session. The committee stated that the changes would preserve the citizen-legislator tradition and allow legislators to plan to be in the capitol for specific periods of time.

1981 – Report on Structure of the Oregon Legislative Assembly – Report to the City Club of Portland

The Standing Committee on State and Local Government recommended annual sessions. The first session would have been limited to 120 days and addressed all legislative business. The second session, the following year, would have been limited to 60 days and addressed: budget revisions; Governor’s executive appointments; amendments to legislation passed in the first session; public crises during the interim; and other topics as approved by 2/3 of members. The odd-year session would have run mid-February to mid-June with the weeks between the election and session to be used for orientation, training and program development. The even-year session would have started in mid-January and ended in mid-March. The committee also recommended that the Emergency Board be abolished.

1990 – Report on Annual Legislative Sessions (Ballot Measure 3) – Report to the City Club of Portland

The committee reviewed arguments from proponents and opponents of the measure and stated that they “found no pressing problems with biennial sessions that warrant a move to annual sessions.” They suggested that annual sessions could lead to elimination of biennial budgeting or legislative intrusion into the management of state agencies. They also stated that they found “no public demand for changing to annual legislative sessions.”

1997 – Structure and Process of the Oregon Legislature – Report to the City Club of Portland

A study committee of the City Club of Portland recommended that the legislature meet in limited annual sessions. The intent was not to increase the total time in session, but structure the calendar to allow more time for the public to be heard and for the thoughtful deliberation of issues. It was recommended that the odd-year be limited to a maximum of 120 days and convene in January. The even-year would have been limited to a maximum of 60 days and it too would have convened in January. The legislature would have addressed budget and policy issues during the odd and even years.