

Sixty-first
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO.

Introduced by

Representative Conrad

1 A concurrent resolution directing the Legislative Council to study the legislative process,
2 especially with respect to session length, workweeks, committee structure, and procedures that
3 would increase the timeliness of legislative action and effectiveness of legislators.

4 **WHEREAS**, the original Constitution of North Dakota, adopted in 1889, provided for a
5 biennial regular legislative session limited to 60 days; and

6 **WHEREAS**, until the 1943 regular session, the Legislative Assembly met on Saturdays,
7 and Saturdays and Sundays were included within the 60-day limitation; and

8 **WHEREAS**, beginning with the 1943 regular session, Sundays were no longer included
9 in the 60-day limitation, but the Legislative Assembly continued to meet on Saturdays; and

10 **WHEREAS**, in 1968 the constitution was amended to replace the 60-day limit with a
11 60-legislative-day limit; and

12 **WHEREAS**, beginning with 1971 regular session, the Legislative Assembly
13 discontinued regular sessions on Saturdays and no longer included Saturdays as within the
14 60-legislative-day limit; and

15 **WHEREAS**, although in 1976 the constitution was amended to allow the Legislative
16 Assembly to meet 80 natural days during the biennium, the Legislative Assembly has met in
17 reconvened session only once since 1976; and

18 **WHEREAS**, in 1945 the Legislative Assembly created the Legislative Research
19 Committee, which reviewed legislative proposals during the interim between legislative
20 sessions; and

21 **WHEREAS**, beginning with the 1953-54 interim, the Legislative Research Committee
22 established an interim committee structure that included legislators other than members of the
23 Legislative Research Committee to assist in reviewing legislative proposals during the interim;
24 and

1 **WHEREAS**, in 1969 the Legislative Research Committee was designated as the
2 Legislative Council in recognition of the fact that its duties had expanded from merely reviewing
3 proposals presented by outside entities to providing legislators the information, assistance,
4 tools, and resources essential to fulfill the demands placed upon legislators; and

5 **WHEREAS**, the current standing committee structure of five committees meeting
6 Monday through Wednesday and five committees meeting Thursday and Friday has not
7 changed since it was implemented during the 1971 legislative session; and

8 **WHEREAS**, there may be a more efficient process than a 5-day, 3-day, and 2-day
9 committee structure for referral of legislative measures, scheduling of hearings, and making
10 recommendations on over 900 legislative proposals during a hectic and intense legislative
11 session compressed into a 14-week period once every two years; and

12 **WHEREAS**, there may be a more effective use of legislative days rather than imposing
13 an extreme hardship on employers and businesses in this state by taking valued employees or
14 business partners away while they serve as legislators and attend a four-month legislative
15 session every two years; and

16 **WHEREAS**, the executive budget process begins in February of even-numbered years
17 to prepare a budget that takes effect for a two-year period beginning in July of the following
18 year;

19 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**
20 **OF NORTH DAKOTA, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN:**

21 That the Legislative Council study the legislative process, especially with respect to
22 session length, workweeks, committee structure, and procedures that would increase the
23 timeliness of legislative action and effectiveness of legislators; and

24 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Legislative Council report its findings and
25 recommendations, together with any legislation or legislative rules changes required to
26 implement the recommendations, to the Sixty-second Legislative Assembly.