

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, with
2 respect to session length workweeks, committee structure, and procedures that would increase
3 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 legislative session, Sundays were not
9 longer included in the 60-day limitation but, the Legislative Assembly continued to meet on
10 Saturdays; and

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

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

16 **WHEREAS**, in 1976 the Constitution was amended to replace the 60 legislative day limit
17 with an 80 natural day limit during the biennium and defined a natural day as 24 consecutive
18 hours but the Legislative Assembly had met in reconvened session only once since 1976 ; and

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

22 **WHEREAS**, beginning with 1953-54 interim, the Legislative Research Committee
23 established an interim committee structure that included legislators other than members of the
24 LRC other legislators assist in reviewing legislative proposals during the interim; 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 include providing information sources and assistance
4 to provide legislators with the tools and resources essential to fulfill the demands placed upon
5 them as legislators; and

6 **WHEREAS**, the Governor of North Dakota begins to prepare a budget in March and
7 April of even numbered years to take effect for a two-year period beginning in July of the
8 following year; and

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

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

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

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

23 That the Legislative Council study the legislative process, legislative sessions,
24 legislative work weeks, legislative committee structure, and legislative procedures that would
25 increase the timeliness of legislative action and effective of legislators.

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