



North Dakota House of Representatives

STATE CAPITOL
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Representative Landon Bahl

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COMMITTEES:

Industry, Business and Labor
Government and Veterans Affairs

Madam Chair Roers and members of the Senate State and Local Government Committee, For the record, my name is Landon Bahl, and I have the honor of representing the citizens of District 17 in the North Dakota House of Representatives.

I stand before you today to introduce House Bill 1408, which proposes transitioning the North Dakota Legislature to annual sessions beginning in 2027. This bill takes a proactive approach to modernizing our legislative process while preserving the integrity of our existing framework.

Key Provisions of House Bill 1408:

- Maintains the 80-day legislative limit, this bill does not increase total session days but instead distributes them more effectively over two years.
- Shifts the legislature to annual sessions starting in 2027.
- Limits each year's session to 70 calendar days, with adjournment likely by early March.
- Provides flexibility in structuring sessions under the jurisdiction of legislative management per the amendment passed out with my testimony.
- Results in a fiscal note reduction for the biennium.

Broader Positive Impacts of House Bill 1408:

- Enhances fiscal and economic responsiveness by allowing more timely decision-making.
- Addresses the challenges of term limits by helping legislators gain experience more efficiently, ensuring continuity of governance.
- Strengthens the legislative branch to ensure it remains an equal branch of government, which would further preserve institutional knowledge and improve policymaking.
- Improves interim committee effectiveness through enhanced research, analysis, and public engagement, leading to more well-developed and thoroughly vetted policies.
- Attracts high-quality legislative candidates by making public service more accessible. Annual sessions would allow more North Dakotans, especially those unable to commit to four months at a time to serve, fostering a more experienced, diverse, and representative legislature.

Madam Chair Roers and members of the committee, House Bill 1408 strengthens our legislative process, improves decision-making, and ensures long-term efficiency in government. I urge you to support this effort to build a more effective and accountable legislature for the people of North Dakota.

Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions.

Regards,
Landon Bahl

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

HOUSE BILL NO. 1408

Introduced by

Representatives Bahl, Lefor, Louser, D. Ruby, Schauer, Weisz, Hagert

Senators Bekkedahl, Roers, Schaible, Sickler, Davison

1 A BILL ~~for an Act to amend and reenact section 54-03-02 of the North Dakota Century Code,~~
2 ~~relating to annually reconvened sessions of the legislative assembly; and to provide an effective~~
3 ~~date.~~ for an Act to amend and reenact section 54-03-02 of the North Dakota Century Code,
4 relating to annually reconvened sessions of the legislative assembly; and to provide an effective
5 date.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

7 ~~SECTION 1. AMENDMENT. Section 54-03-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is~~
8 ~~amended and reenacted as follows:~~

9 ~~54-03-02. When legislative assembly meets.~~

10 ~~1. The legislative assembly shall meet at the seat of government in the month of~~
11 ~~December following the election of the its members thereof for organizational and~~
12 ~~orientation purposes and shall thereafter recess until the time provided in~~
13 ~~subsection 2.~~

14 ~~2. The legislative assembly shall reconvene at twelve noon annually for a number of days~~
15 ~~to be determined by the legislative assembly, but the number of days must be~~
16 ~~scheduled within a seventy calendar day period each year, subject to subsection 3.~~

17 ~~a. Each year, the legislative assembly shall convene on the first TuesdayMonday~~
18 ~~after the third day in January of the year following the organizational session as~~
19 ~~provided in subsection 1 or at twelve noon on a date selected by the legislative~~
20 ~~management but not earlier than January second nor later than January eleventh~~

of the year following the organizational session and, following. ~~At the close of business of the regular session, the legislative assembly shall adjourn recess subject to subsection 3.~~

~~b. The first week of each year the legislative assembly is convened, it shall convene on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Thereafter, the legislative assembly shall primarily convene on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The legislative assembly shall convene on Friday only as determined by the legislative management with prior notice to the legislative assembly. A standing committee of the legislative assembly may meet on a Friday with prior notice to the presiding officer of the chamber.~~

~~3. Notwithstanding a motion to adjourn sine die, the legislative assembly shall reconvene as determined by the legislative management. The number of natural days used may not exceed the number of natural days available under the constitution which have not been previously used by that legislative assembly in regular session under subsection 2.~~

~~4. The legislative management shall determine the structure and logistics of the legislative session.~~

~~**SECTION 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This Act becomes effective on January 1, 2027.~~

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54-03-02. When legislative assembly meets.

1. The legislative assembly shall meet at the seat of government in the month of December following the election of ~~the~~its members ~~thereof~~ for organizational and orientation purposes and shall ~~thereafter~~ recess until the time provided in subsection 2.
2. The legislative assembly shall ~~reconvene at twelve noon on the first Tuesday after the third day in January of the year following the organizational session as provided in subsection 1 or at twelve noon on a date selected by the legislative management but not earlier than January second nor~~reconvene annually at a date and time determined by the legislative management, but not later than January eleventh of ~~the~~each year

~~following the organizational session and, following the close of business of the regular session, shall adjourn.~~ subject to subsection 3.

3. Notwithstanding a motion to adjourn sine die, the legislative assembly shall reconvene as determined by the legislative management. The number of natural days used may not exceed the number of natural days available under the constitution which have not been previously used by that legislative assembly in regular session under subsection 2.

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