

1999 SENATE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

SB 2380


1999 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB 2380

Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date 2/4/99

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	X		3,477-5708
Committee Clerk Signature 			

Minutes:

Senator Krebsbach opened the hearing on SB 2380, which relates to regular sessions of the legislative assembly in even numbered years; to provide for budget section review of annual sessions; to provide for transition; and to provide an effective date.

Senator Vern Thompson, District 12, primary sponsor of the legislation introduced the bill to the committee. The reason he introduced SB 2380, he believes we need to have discussion on we can improve state government. It has always troubled him that our legislative sessions start right after legislators and state officials are elected in November. We get elected in November, we come down in January and start acting on legislation. Quite frankly, those that are newly elected, their feet are put to the fire right off the bat. I think it creates some problems for some. I have concerns for those new legislators that they've not had the opportunity to study many of the issues during the interim process from the previous session. We also have many legislators who

are not running for reelection or who are defeated in November take part in the 18 month interim process and after the election their valuable insight is lost because they no longer participate in the legislative process. And according to figures from the legislative council library over the past ten years, the legislature has turned over anywhere from 20 to 30 and even 40 percent at times. We see new faces coming forward election after election and the time and the financial investment made on legislators who do not return to the capital after November election is basically lost. If legislators were elected in November and then can start studying ideas through the interim process come January the odd numbered years, I believe we can better represent the people through the process. By having legislators go to sessions in even numbered years the actions that legislators take will be on the public's mind and it will be fresh and they will be able to tell where we are at on the issues come November of the even numbered year. So, I think as legislators we can be more accountable to the citizens of the state by doing it this way. Right now, many voters don't remember how we voted on issues in the last session because it took place basically a year and a half ago. I did some research on the state elected officials and over the past ten years we've had twenty-two different state elected officials. If candidates for state elected officials when they are out campaigning they've got ideas and vision for that particular office and again come November if they are successful and get elected, they start the session in January of that odd numbered year and they end up carrying out the previous budget from their predecessor. Sometimes it takes the next legislative session before these elected state officials can actually implement their ideas and visions that they campaigned on during the campaign process. What we are basically looking at doing is your elected, you have your general election in November, then after we make the change there will actually be, the first change that would be

made is that come January when we normally meet in the odd numbered years. That first year we will hear a state of the state from the governor and so on and so forth and then be able to start the process of the interim hearings after we deal with budgetary matters that have to take place during that process. The problem is getting there. How do we implement getting to the even numbered districts and legislative council has assured me that SB 2380 will do those things that we are going to try and do to get to have sessions be on the even numbered years instead of the traditional odd numbered years. At this time he offered to answer questions. Senator Krebsbach: Would you suggest we have a session next year or wait 3 years?

Senator Thompson: I believe the transition is for 2001- 2002 budget. If you look under section 10 of the bill. Section 11 shows the effective date of the act.

Senator DeMers: If I run in the year 2000 I am going to have to serve in both 2001 and 2002 before this kicks into every other year again? Which is a dreaded scenario in my mind.

Senator Thompson: If you look at section 9, that is the transition period. During the 1999 and 2000 interim, the budget section shall review the impact to the even numbered year session. Then we'll examine the statutory provision to determine what additional changes if any need to take place and then that transition is for 2001 and 2002.

Senator Wardner: How about right after the session until the election, would there be interim committees? I don't see any here. I guess what I'm asking is would there be interim committees?

Senator Thompson: The interim process would continue to take place until we get over to the transition time.

Senator Wardner: After we make the transition then interim committees would basically meet the year before, that's they do their work, the year before the session and right after their election.

Senator Thompson: That's correct.

Senator Krebsbach: I failed to indicate to the committee, there is a fiscal note on this bill, Mr. Clerk would you please read it to the committee.

Senator Thompson: By constitution, we have 80 days that we can deal with legislative matters in the 2 year process. We would take that first transition period and deal with the budgetary matters to get us over that time. If there were other issues that needed to take place that first even numbered year which I know that there will be your still limited as to your time so in general I don't envision this as being a fiscal negative impact. Your just moving some of the, you are saving on the end, but you're moving it to at a closer time.

Senator Krebsbach: Is the date and the session provided for in the constitution in any place whereby stated that it is in odd number years? So that this would have to go to a vote of the people in any way?

Senator Thompson: I'll ask John Walstad to address that. The constitution states that the governor has to have a state of the state, he can do that in the three day period. Everything in the bill meets the constitution, it's just a matter of that transition.

Senator DeMers: The state of the state is given every year is it not, why couldn't we do that the same way we do that in the years we are off? Which is he invites us down but many of us listen to it on public radio.

Senator Thompson: That's a good question. By constitution he either has to give a state of the budget or a state of the state address on those odd number years.

Senator DeMers: I have been here when we have switched from a Republican to a Democrat governor and again when we changed from a Democrat, Sinner to a Republican, Schaeffer, it seemed to me that not only did they have trouble in terms of getting legislation for the bill for their ideas there were a lot of residual bills that came out of the executive office that weren't particularly supported by that new political philosophy, I would think that that would be another reason we would want to look at this pretty seriously.

Senator Thompson: You hit the nail on the head.

Senator Kilzer: In drafting this idea have you also considered the fact that there will be redistricting because of the census about the same time.

Senator Thompson: Yes, in fact it was felt that this might be the appropriate time to do this because of that.

Senator Krebsbach: Have you visited with any of the former governors on this concept?

Senator Thompson: Not during this session. There was nothing further at this time.

Senator Krebsbach closed the hearing on SB 2380.

Committee Action-February 11, 1999, Tape 1, Side B, Meter #'s 2600-3505) Senator

Krebsbach spoke with the committee expressing her feelings on SB 2380. She indicated that she wanted to speak with the sponsor of the bill and see if he would perhaps put this bill into the form of a study resolution. Senator Thane indicated he believed this bill has some merit but he doesn't believe we are quite ready for it. I'm not sure saying it was sprung on us, you know what I mean. It kind of takes us by surprise. It's an idea that may very well become a

2-11-99

reality in another session or two. I think we are fast approaching the place where we are going to have to do things differently. We can't keep on doing things the way we are doing them. Not forever. Times are changing and the workload is getting so great that we need to start looking at alternatives. There is one alternative we can look at but I think its perhaps premature so I guess I would have a little problem supporting it at this time. I think he deserves credit for bringing up an idea that is somewhat revolutionary but probably has merit. Senator DeMers indicated she would like to support this idea. I think that it has been around for a while. It just that we haven't voted on it in the last couple of sessions. I think it has a lot of merit in terms of looking at what we do in our interim. When we have a number of people that serve on those committees who aren't back. I think the change is going to be uncomfortable whenever we make a change in whatever we decide to do. I personally wouldn't run again if I had to do two sessions in a row but I want to vote in terms of what I believe is best government not what is best for Judy DeMers. I am going to support it. Senator Kilzer indicated he has three problems with it. The largest being reapportionment which in itself will be tumultuous. Senator Mutzenberger also talked about his concern over the timing of this. It probably would not work real well if we were redistricting. Would there be a way of amending this to make it go into effect after? Is there a date on this? Following the discussion a motion for DO NOT PASS on SB 2380 was made by Senator Wardner, seconded by Senator W. Stenehjem. Roll Call Vote indicated 5 YEAS, 2 NAYS, and 0 ABSENT or NOT VOTING. Senator Kilzer volunteered to carry the bill.

FISCAL NOTE

(Return original and 10 copies)

Bill/Resolution No.: SB 2380 Amendment to: _____

Requested by Legislative Council Date of Request: 1-25-99

1. Please estimate the fiscal impact (in dollar amounts) of the above measure for state general or special funds, counties, cities, and school districts. Please provide breakdowns, if appropriate, showing salaries and wages, operating expenses, equipment, or other details to assist in the budget process. In a word processing format, add lines or space as needed or attach a supplemental sheet to adequately address the fiscal impact of the measure.

Narrative:

The bill provides for the Legislative Assembly to meet in the odd-numbered years to hear messages from the Governor and Chief Justice and to reconvene in the even-numbered years for the regular session.

The amount shown for the 1999-2001 biennium assumes that the 2001 Legislative Assembly will meet for 50 rather than 77 legislative days for which the 1999-2001 biennium budget request is prepared.

The amount shown for the 2001-03 biennium assumes the 2002 regular session would be the same length that would have been budgeted for the 2003 session and that the 2003 legislative session to hear messages from the Governor and Chief Justice would be three legislative days.

2. State fiscal effect in dollar amounts:

	1997-99 Biennium		1999-2001 Biennium		2001-03 Biennium	
	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds	General Fund	Other Funds
Revenues						
Expenditures			(\$1,300,000)		\$150,000	

3. What, if any, is the effect of this measure on the budget for your agency or department:

- a. For rest of 1997-99 biennium:
- b. For the 1999-2001 biennium: \$1,319,166 decrease
- c. For the 2001-03 biennium: \$150,000 increase

4. County, city, and school district fiscal effect in dollar amounts:

1997-99 Biennium			1999-2001 Biennium			2001-03 Biennium		
Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts	Counties	Cities	School Districts

Signed: *Chester E. Nelson, Jr.*
 Typed Name: Chester E. Nelson, Jr.
 Department: Legislative Council
 Phone Number: 328-2916
 Date Prepared: 1-28-99

Date: 2-11-99
Roll Call Vote #: 1

1999 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB.3380

Senate GOVERNMENT AND VETERAN'S AFFAIRS Committee

Subcommittee on _____
or
 Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken Do Not Pass

Motion Made By Wardner Seconded By Stenehjem

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
SENATOR KREBSBACH	X				
SENATOR WARDNER	X				
SENATOR KILZER	X				
SENATOR STENEHJEM	X				
SENATOR THANE	X				
SENATOR DEMERS		X			
SENATOR MUTZENBERGER		X			

Total (Yes) 5 No 2

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Senator Kilzer

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)
February 11, 1999 1:37 p.m.

Module No: SR-28-2591
Carrier: Kilzer
Insert LC: . Title: .

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2380: Government and Veterans Affairs Committee (Sen. Krebsbach, Chairman)
recommends **DO NOT PASS** (5 YEAS, 2 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING).
SB 2380 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.