

SJR 201 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Rules

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Meeting Dates: 3/3

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Proposes amendment to Oregon Constitution to reduce portion of each house that constitutes a quorum to do business from two-thirds to a majority. Refers proposed amendment to voters for their approval or rejection at the next regular general statewide election.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Replaces the measure. Proposes amendment to Oregon Constitution to change duration of legislative sessions from calendar days to session days. Refers proposed amendment to voters for their approval or rejection at the next regular general statewide election.

BACKGROUND:

Section 12, Article IV of the Constitution of the State of Oregon establishes a two-thirds majority of each chamber of the Legislative Assembly as a quorum to do business. The constitutional quorum requirement allows a minority of members to prevent the chamber from undertaking business by not attending floor sessions. Oregon is one of four states that require a two-thirds quorum. 46 states require a majority of legislators for a quorum to do business, and the Vermont House and Wisconsin require a supermajority to consider tax measures. Senate Joint Resolution 201 proposes an amendment to the Oregon Constitution to reduce the portion of each chamber that constitutes a quorum to do business from two-thirds to a majority. If passed, the resolution would be referred to voters for their approval or rejection at the next regular general statewide election.

Section 10, Article IV of the Constitution of the State of Oregon establishes the maximum duration of the legislative session as a 160 calendar days in odd-numbered years, and 35 calendar days in even-numbered years. The duration limits allow a minority of members who choose to prevent a chamber from undertaking business by not attending floor sessions to run out the maximum calendar days of a legislative session. The Rules of the Senate define a "session day" as a day during which the Senate is convened in a floor session with a quorum present. The proposed amendments to Senate Joint Resolution 201 would amend the Oregon Constitution to change the duration of the legislative sessions from calendar days to session days. If passed, the resolution would be referred to voters for their approval or rejection at the next regular general statewide election.