

# HOUSE RESEARCH

## Bill Summary

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**Version:** As introduced

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**Subject:** Constitutional Amendment on Legislative Organization

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### Overview

Contains a constitutional amendment prohibiting the legislature from creating any small group of legislators with the power to prevent any piece of legislation from being voted on by the entire body.

#### Section

- 1** **Constitutional Amendment Proposed.** Amends two sections of the constitution. Article IV, section 7 is amended to require the rules of legislative proceedings to distribute powers in such a manner to ensure that final decisions are available to all of the members of each house, and not to any subgroups. Article IV, Section 22 is amended to prevent subgroups from prohibiting votes on any given piece of legislation.
- 2** **Submission to Voters.** Proposes a question to be submitted to voters: "Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to prohibit the legislature from creating any small group of members that can control the legislative process and permanently prevent legislation from being voted on?"
- 3** Rules of Proceedings.

**Subd. 1.** Application. Requires all rules of each house and joint rules to conform to the provisions of this section.

**Subd. 2.** Defines terms, including "governmental organization", "legislative group", "majority group", "minority group".

**Subd. 3. Approval of Appointments.** Requires the membership of each house to

## Section

approve all appointments to legislative groups and governmental organizations.

**Subd. 4. Representation on majority and minority groups.** Requires members of each house to be represented on all legislative groups and governmental organizations in proportion to the majority and minority political groups in that house. To the extent possible, requires individual groups to be so proportioned. Allows majority or minority groups to decline such a membership.

**Subd. 5. Bill and Resolution Referral; Return to floor.** Requires the rules committees of each house to establish bill deadlines, to be ratified by the entire membership. Specifies requirements for bills as follows: (1) after the last deadline, all bills or resolutions must be returned to the floor of each house for 14 days, on the general ledger or calendar, for possible floor action; (2) legislative subgroups (committees) must report all actions and recommendations, if any; (3) conference committees have 14 days to return a joint recommendation, and may be dissolved at any time by a vote of one house; (4) conference committees must cease all activity and disband 4 days prior to the end of session, unless a majority of both houses suspend this rule; and (5) during special sessions, all groups of any sort must be formally appointed by both houses for a specified working period, after which they must disband.

**Subd. 6. Bill hearing prioritization process for committees or other subgroups.** States that bill hearing prioritization, if not specified by the rules of a house, are to be determined by the members of each respective committee or subgroup.

**4 Application .** If the constitutional amendments adopted, the requirements of section three are effective for the legislature beginning in 2007, and thereafter.