

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY
JK2490 .C57x 1973
Citizens Confer - The sometime governments: a critic



3 0307 00036 9374

Some Sometime Governments



A Critical Study of the 50 American Legislatures

JK
2490
.C57x
1973

by
Citizens Conference
on State Legislatures

"...anyone interested in
American government should read this book."
John W. Gardner

5. *Record and publish proceedings of committees.* (General Recommendation #18.) At present, only the roll calls are published from committee proceedings.
6. *Committee bill reports.* (See General Recommendation #17.)
7. *Legislative power to call special sessions.* (See General Recommendation #3.)
8. *Power to expand special session agenda.* (See General Recommendation #4.)
9. *Strengthen minority party role.* (General Recommendation #43.) Minority representation on the Committee on Rules and/or management committees of the respective houses should approximate the proportion of minority representation in each house. Minority party members on committees should be appointed by the minority leader in each house. Although this has been done in the Senate, the requirement should be incorporated in the rules of both houses.
10. *Establish Washington, D.C., office for the Legislature.* (See General Recommendation #59.)
11. *Support of district offices.* (See General Recommendation #30.)
12. *Strengthen staff (rank-and-file members).* (General Recommendation #57.)
13. *Require interim committees to file formal reports.* (General Recommendation #24.) Although the rules in Michigan's Legislature presently require interim committee reports, too often practice fails to conform. This requirement should be enforced and committees which fail to file reports should not be provided budgets for further investigations.
14. *Improve physical facilities.* Although the renovation of the Michigan Capitol Building has resulted in improved physical facilities, it will not be long before these facilities become inadequate due to pressures

of growth. Plans for a new capitol building have long been under consideration. Because the proposed building would require a number of years to complete, it is important that these or similar plans be implemented and that construction begin as soon as possible.

15. *Reestablish deadlines.* (General Recommendation #36.) These deadlines have been used in the past, but the rules have fallen into disuse. They should be reestablished and observed.
16. *Electric roll-call record.* (General Recommendation #53.) An electric roll-call recorder should be installed in the Senate, as in the House.
17. *Statement of intent by bill author.* (See General Recommendation #50.)

Minnesota (10)

Functional 27; Accountable 7; Informed 13;
Independent 23; Representative 12

GENERAL: The Minnesota Legislature ranks 10th in its overall characteristics. Its outstanding feature is the general openness and accessibility of its processes and activities as shown by its rank (7th) in accountability.

Constitutional session limitations, low salaries, and limited supporting services for members (staff, information resources, etc.) account for some of the weaknesses of the Minnesota Legislature.

Areas of potential improvement are spelled out in the following RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. *Reduce the overall size of the Legislature.* (General Recommendation #1.) With 135 members of the House and 67 members of the Senate, for a total number of 202, Minnesota has the largest Senate and the 8th largest legislature in the United States. (New Hampshire, 424; Massachusetts, 280; Pennsylvania, 253; Georgia, 251; Illinois, 235; Connecticut, 213;

New York, 207.) The size of either one or both of the houses should be reduced to a combined number between 100 and 150.

2. *Reduce the number of committees.* (General Recommendation #8.) There are 28 committees in the House and 18 in the Senate. Ideally, there should be from 10 to 15 committees in each house, parallel in jurisdiction.
3. *Reduce the number of committee assignments.* (See General Recommendation #9.)
4. *Remove constitutional restrictions on session and interim time.* (General Recommendation #2.) A more modest but significant improvement can be achieved by amending the Constitution to provide that the current limitation of 120 legislative days may be distributed throughout the biennial period rather than just the odd years.
5. *Pre-session activities.* (See General Recommendations #6 and #7.)
6. *Increase legislative compensation.* (General Recommendation #27.) Salaries of members of the Legislature are far too low in comparison to states of similar size and development. Current salaries of \$4,800 per year should be doubled immediately and increased again within the next few years as other improvements in the Legislature are made.
7. *Strengthen minority party role.* (See General Recommendations #43 and #44.)
8. *Minority party members on committees.* (General Recommendation #45.) Minority party members in the Senate should be formally appointed to committees by the Minority Leader in consultation with the Minority Caucus, as is done in the House.
9. *Committee bill reports.* (See General Recommendation #17.)
10. *Interim committees.* (General Recommendation #23.) Presently 21 of the 28 House standing com-

mittees have interim status. In the Senate, committees must request interim status. All standing committees should automatically become interim committees at the end of the session.

11. *Strengthen staff support (leaders and members).* (See General Recommendations #56 and #57.)
12. *Travel expenses.* Members of the Legislature should be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred while carrying out their legislative duties.
13. *Provide individual offices for all members.* (See General Recommendation #60.)
14. *Washington, D.C., office for the Legislature.* (See General Recommendation #59.)

Mississippi (42)

Functional 46; Accountable 43; Informed 45;
Independent 20; Representative 28

GENERAL: The Mississippi Legislature recently employed the Eagleton Institute of Politics to review in depth its internal operations and procedures and to make recommendations for their improvement. Eagleton's final report has been submitted to the Legislature, which is considering implementation of the various recommendations.

In June 1968, voters approved a constitutional amendment providing for annual sessions of 125 days of the first year of the Legislature's four-year term and of 90 days for the second, third, and fourth years of that term (both representatives and senators serve four-year terms in Mississippi).

During the 1970 session the House created a House Management Committee which has the authority to schedule, upon request, interim meetings of the standing committees and also to provide staff for the standing committees during the session as well as the interim. The additional duties of the Management Committee relate to internal