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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

BILL NUMBER: House Joint Resolution 6

SHORT TITLE: Session Length and Bill Consideration, CA

SPONSOR: McQueen/ Montoya

LAST ORIGINAL
UPDATE: _____ **DATE:** 1/26/26 **ANALYST:** Garcia

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT* (dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
SOS	Up to \$52	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact	Up to \$52.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund
LCS	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact	Recurring	General Fund
Total	Up to \$52	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact	Up to \$52	Recurring	General Fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Relates to House Joint Resolution 7

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency or Agencies Providing Analysis

New Mexico Attorney General

Secretary of State

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Joint Resolution 6

House Joint Resolution 6 (HJR6) proposes an amendment to Article IV, Section 5 of the Constitution of New Mexico that would change the length of legislative sessions, dividing the length of each biennium equally between two sessions each to be no more than 45 days each.

The constitutional amendment also proposes the legislative session begin on the second Tuesday in January, instead of the third Tuesday in January, and the constitutional amendment removes restrictions on bills that may be considered in even-numbered years. The proposed constitutional amendment would also allow the legislature to consider veto overrides for bills of a previous regular, special, or extraordinary session.

The joint resolution provides the amendment be put before the voters at the next general election (November 2026) or a special election called for the purpose of considering the amendment. The amendment would only be effective if approved by voters.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Under Section 1-16-4 NMSA 1978 and the New Mexico Constitution, the Secretary of State (SOS) is required to print samples of the text of each constitutional amendment in both Spanish and English in an amount equal to 10 percent of the registered voters in the state. SOS is required to publish the samples once a week for four weeks preceding the election in newspapers in every county in the state. The number of constitutional amendments on the ballot may impact the ballot page size or cause the ballot to be more than one page, also increasing costs. The estimated cost per constitutional amendment is \$35 thousand to \$50 thousand, depending on the size and number of ballots and if additional ballot stations are needed. In agency analysis, SOS reports the 2024 voter guide cost approximately \$52 thousand to print. These costs would impact the election fund (other state funds), which receives appropriations from the general fund.

Should this proposed constitutional amendment be approved by voters, a move to a 45-day session each fiscal year should result in savings in odd-numbered fiscal years and additional costs in even-numbered fiscal years that overall would balance out.

Assuming costs associated with the legislative sessions become equal, the overall budget impact for the Legislature, Legislative Council Service (LCS), and legislative staff is assumed to net zero.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The amendment eliminates the distinction between even- and odd-numbered year regular sessions and limits them to 45 days. The joint resolution would also remove subject matter restrictions on bills and allow veto override bills from any session within the two-year period.

With some exceptions, Section 2-6-1 NMSA 1978 imposes a time limit within which bills may be introduced during sessions of the Legislature, limiting introduction of most bills to the 30th legislative day in regular sessions held in odd-numbered years and the 15th legislative day in regular sessions held in even-numbered years. This statute would remain in force, which may not give the Legislature enough time in certain fiscal years to consider bills and solicit public input. However, it might give the Legislature and legislative staff more time to finalize the General Appropriation Act than the time afforded now during the current short session length of 30 days.

SOS analysis notes HJR6 would impact the duration of the prohibitive periods for fundraising, established in Section 1-19-34.1 NMSA 1978. During the period beginning January 1 prior to any regular session of the legislature, and ending on adjournment of the regular session, it is unlawful for a state legislator, the attorney general, the secretary of state, the state treasurer, the commissioner of public lands or the state auditor or a candidate for state legislator, attorney general, secretary of state, state treasurer, commissioner of public lands or state auditor, or any agent on behalf of the attorney general, the secretary of state, the state treasurer, the commissioner of public lands or the state auditor or a candidate for attorney general, the secretary of state, state treasurer, commissioner of public lands or state auditor, to knowingly solicit a contribution governed by the Campaign Reporting Act. It is also unlawful during the prohibited period for the governor or the lieutenant governor, or any agent on the governor's or the lieutenant governor's behalf, to knowingly solicit a contribution governed by the Campaign

Reporting Act during the period beginning January 1 prior to any regular session of the legislature and ending on the twentieth day following the adjournment of the regular or special session.

In addition, it is unlawful during the prohibited period for any lobbyist or lobbyist's employer to contribute to or act as an agent or intermediary for political contributions to or arrange for the making of political contributions to the campaign funds of any statewide elected official or legislator or any candidate for those offices.

HJR6 may also reduce the amount of time to pre-file bills before the official start of the session; changing this date for that purpose likely requires a rule change from the LCS. In addition, If the legislative session begins on the second Tuesday of January, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a federal and state holiday, will fall during the legislative session.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

If HJR6 is ratified by voters, and until the proposed change is fully adopted, there will be additional work for the Legislative Council Service while they update rules and procedures for the Legislature. Existing staff and budget resources should be sufficient to accomplish this effort.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

This joint resolution relates to House Joint Resolution 7 (HJR 7), which also proposes a constitutional amendment to remove restrictions on bills that may be considered in even-numbered years. The constitutional amendment proposed in HJR7 would also allow the legislature to consider veto overrides for bills of a previous regular, special, or extraordinary session.

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