

SUMMARY OF NO. 23-37

This proposed constitutional amendment would amend the Massachusetts Constitution to provide that for the purpose of transparency, the internal rules and proceedings of the Legislature would be set by each respective branch, except for certain rules and proceedings that would be set by law.

The Senate and House of Representatives would be required to establish bill subject committees that would operate as joint committees to review legislative bills. All committees crucial to the joint legislative process would be joint committees, including the subject committees, the committee for bills in the third reading, and the committee for ways and means.

Joint committee assignments would be equally distributed with a minimum of 5 members of the Senate and 9 members of the House on a committee. Committee assignments could be traded in the first two weeks of the legislative session among legislative members of the same branch. The Committee for Ways and Means and the Committee for Bills in the Third Reading would additionally require a minimum of eleven percent of each legislative body on each committee.

The vote for Speaker of the House and for Senate President would be by majority vote on secret paper ballots at the start of each legislative session. The committees, not House or

Senate leadership, would select chairpersons by majority vote on secret paper ballots; and the committees, not leadership, could also change the chairperson by majority vote upon the request of the chairperson or of any two committee members. Committee members could only be removed by: request of the member with the committee's agreement; evidence of relevant corruption; or a call by a majority of the respective legislative branch to remove the member alongside a majority vote by secret paper ballot.

Bills and amendments would not be voted upon in consolidated bundles. Any bill cosponsored by a majority of legislators in either the House or Senate would receive a floor vote. Except for bills addressing emergencies, all bills in the Ways and Means Committee and Bills in the Third Reading would emerge from those committees in the order received before other bills could be addressed. Four members of the Legislature could demand a roll call vote. There would be a public record of committee roll call votes and of floor votes on all bills. The Senate and House clerks would post all recorded votes of each legislative committee member on the Legislature's website as soon as practicable, generally no later than 48 hours of the vote. Bills would be available for a minimum of 72 hours before a vote occurs on a bill.

All members of the Legislature would earn the same salary regardless of seniority or position, but could reasonably be docked salary for leaving the position. Additionally, any office funds, assistance, and staffing would be the same for all members of the Legislature. No payment of additional funds or assistance could be made as influence for votes. All members of the Senate and House would have the same number and type of staff, and each staff member would be chosen by the member employing that staff member, and could not be removed by another member.