

An Act Relating to Requiring a 72-Hour Budget “Timeout” Prior to Hearings or Votes on Appropriation and Revenue Bills

Model Language

Intent Section

The Legislature finds that public participation in the legislative process improves the quality of proposed legislation by allowing the opportunity for its detailed review by interested parties. The opportunity for a detailed review by the public prior to hearings or votes on legislation helps increase public trust in government and enhances respect for the Legislature by ensuring that its operation is conducted with the openness, order, and dignity befitting [insert state]. It is the intent of the Legislature, therefore, to prohibit hearings or votes on appropriation and/or revenue related bills until 72 hours after the bill’s public introduction.

Short Title

This Act shall be known and may be cited as the “72-Hour Budget Review Act.”

Definitions

- (1) “Appropriation related bill” means any bill authorizing an appropriation of funds for state operating, capital or transportation expenses.
- (2) “Revenue related bill” means any bill raising revenue for operating, capital or transportation expenses.
- (3) “Amendment” means any proposed change in a bill.
- (4) “Striking amendment” means any amendment removing everything after the title of a bill and inserting a whole new bill.
- (5) “Publicly available” means posting a bill on the Legislature’s website and its publication in a bill report, committee report, and/or conference report.
- (6) “Shall” means the obligation or duty to perform; no discretion is granted.

Hearings or votes prohibited for 72 hours

Hearings or votes on appropriation and/or revenue related bills shall be prohibited until 72 hours after the bill is made publicly available. The 72-hour time period excludes Saturdays, Sundays and holidays except when the legislative body considering the bill is in session on such a day.

Amendments

Amendments offered to appropriation and/or revenue related bills shall not be considered in order unless made publicly available 24 hours prior to any vote. The 24-hour time period excludes Saturdays, Sundays and holidays except when the legislative body considering the bill is in session on such a day.

Striking amendments shall not be considered in order unless made publicly available 48 hours prior to any vote. The 48-hour time period excludes Saturdays, Sundays and holidays except when the legislative body considering the bill is in session on such a day.

Act’s applicability to multiple stages of bill consideration

The time sensitive prohibitions of this Act shall apply each time a new version of an appropriation and/or revenue related bill is considered. This includes consideration of conference recommendations.

Exemptions

The time sensitive prohibitions of this Act for hearings or votes shall be waived upon a two-thirds vote of the full committee or legislative body considering the appropriation and/or revenue related bill. For bills adopted utilizing this exemption, the following section shall be added to the text of the bill and the bill report:

“The (insert legislative body/committee) has waived the people’s right for a detailed review of this bill as required by the ‘72-Hour Budget Review Act.’”

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