



General Assembly

**Senate Joint  
Resolution No. 71**

January Session, 2009

LCO No. 4999

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Referred to Committee on Government Administration and  
Elections

Introduced by:  
(GAE)

**RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE  
CONSTITUTION TO ESTABLISH A UNICAMERAL LEGISLATURE.**

Resolved by this Assembly:

1 That the following be proposed as an amendment to the  
2 Constitution of the State, which, when approved and adopted in the  
3 manner provided by the Constitution, shall, to all intents and  
4 purposes, become a part thereof:

5 Section 1. Article third of the constitution is amended to read as  
6 follows:

7 Sec. 1. The legislative power of the state shall be vested in [two  
8 distinct houses or branches; the one to be styled the senate, the other  
9 the house of representatives, and both together] one house to be called  
10 the general assembly. The style of [their] its laws shall be: Be it enacted  
11 by the [Senate and House of Representatives in] General Assembly.  
12 [convened.]

13 Sec. 2. There shall be a regular session of the general assembly on

14 the Wednesday following the first Monday of January in the odd-  
15 numbered years and on the Wednesday following the first Monday of  
16 February in the even-numbered years, and at such other times as the  
17 general assembly shall judge necessary; but the person administering  
18 the office of governor may, on special emergencies, convene the  
19 general assembly at any other time. All regular and special sessions of  
20 the general assembly shall be held at Hartford, but the person  
21 administering the office of governor may, in case of special emergency,  
22 convene the assembly at any other place in the state. The general  
23 assembly shall adjourn each regular session in the odd-numbered  
24 years not later than the first Wednesday after the first Monday in June  
25 and in the even-numbered years not later than the first Wednesday  
26 after the first Monday in May and shall adjourn each special session  
27 upon completion of its business. If any bill passed by any regular or  
28 special session or any appropriation item described in Section 16 of  
29 Article Fourth has been disapproved by the governor prior to its  
30 adjournment, and has not been reconsidered by the assembly, or is so  
31 disapproved after such adjournment, the secretary of the state shall  
32 reconvene the general assembly on the second Monday after the last  
33 day on which the governor is authorized to transmit or has transmitted  
34 every bill to the secretary with his objections pursuant to Section 15 of  
35 Article Fourth of this constitution, whichever occurs first; provided if  
36 such Monday falls on a legal holiday the general assembly shall be  
37 reconvened on the next following day. The reconvened session shall be  
38 for the sole purpose of reconsidering and, if the assembly so desires,  
39 repassing such bills. The general assembly shall adjourn sine die not  
40 later than three days following its reconvening. In the even year  
41 session the general assembly shall consider no business other than  
42 budgetary, revenue and financial matters, bills and resolutions raised  
43 by committees of the general assembly and those matters certified in  
44 writing by the [speaker of the house of representatives and president  
45 pro tempore of the senate] president of the general assembly to be of  
46 an emergency nature.

47 Sec. 3. The [senate] general assembly shall consist of [not less than

48 thirty and not more than fifty] sixty members, each of whom shall have  
49 attained the age of eighteen years and be an elector residing in the  
50 [senatorial] general assembly district from which he is elected. Each  
51 [senatorial] general assembly district shall be contiguous as to territory  
52 and shall elect no more than one [senator] general assembly member.

53 Sec. 4. [The house of representatives shall consist of not less than  
54 one hundred twenty-five and not more than two hundred twenty-five  
55 members, each of whom shall have attained the age of eighteen years  
56 and be an elector residing in the assembly district from which he is  
57 elected. Each assembly district shall be contiguous as to territory and  
58 shall elect no more than one representative. For the purpose of forming  
59 assembly districts no town shall be divided except for the purpose of  
60 forming assembly districts wholly within the town.]

61 Sec. 5. The establishment of congressional districts and of districts in  
62 the general assembly shall be consistent with federal constitutional  
63 standards.

64 Sec. 6. a. The [assembly and senatorial districts and] congressional  
65 districts as now established by law shall continue until the regular  
66 session of the general assembly next after the completion of the taking  
67 of the next census of the United States. On or before the fifteenth day  
68 of February next following the year in which the decennial census of  
69 the United States is taken, the general assembly shall appoint a  
70 reapportionment committee consisting of [four] eight members, [of the  
71 senate, two] four who shall be designated by the president [pro  
72 tempore of the senate] of the general assembly and [two] four who  
73 shall be designated by the minority leader, [of the senate, and four  
74 members of the house of representatives, two who shall be designated  
75 by the speaker of the house of representatives and two who shall be  
76 designated by the minority leader of the house of representatives,  
77 provided there are members of no more than two political parties in  
78 either the senate or the house of representatives.] In the event that  
79 there are members of more than two political parties in [a house of] the

80 general assembly, all members of [that house] the general assembly  
81 belonging to the parties other than that of the president [pro tempore  
82 of the senate or the speaker of the house of representatives, as the case  
83 may be,] of the general assembly shall select one of their number, who  
84 shall designate two members of the committee in lieu of the  
85 designation by the minority leader. [of that house.] Such committee  
86 shall advise the general assembly on matters of apportionment. Upon  
87 the filing of a report of such committee with the clerk of the [house of  
88 representatives and the clerk of the senate, the speaker of the house of  
89 representatives and the president pro tempore of the senate] general  
90 assembly, the president of the general assembly shall, if the general  
91 assembly is not in regular session, convene the general assembly in  
92 special session for the sole purpose of adopting a plan of districting.  
93 Upon the request of the [speaker of the house of representatives and  
94 the president pro tempore of the senate] president of the general  
95 assembly, the secretary of the state shall give notice of such special  
96 session by mailing a true copy of the call of such special session, by  
97 registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to each member  
98 of the [house of representatives and of the senate] general assembly at  
99 his or her address as it appears upon the records of said secretary not  
100 less than ten nor more than fifteen days prior to the date of convening  
101 of such special session or by causing a true copy of the call to be  
102 delivered to each member by a constable, state policeman or  
103 indifferent person at least twenty-four hours prior to the time of  
104 convening of such special session. Such general assembly shall, upon  
105 roll call, by a yea vote of at least two-thirds of the membership, [of  
106 each house,] adopt such plan of districting as is necessary to preserve a  
107 proper apportionment of representation in accordance with the  
108 principles recited in this article. Thereafter the general assembly shall  
109 decennially at its next regular session or special session called for the  
110 purpose of adopting a plan of districting following the completion of  
111 the taking of the census of the United States, upon roll call, by a yea  
112 vote of at least two-thirds of the membership, [of each house,] adopt  
113 such plan of districting as is necessary in accordance with the

114 provisions of this article.

115       b. If the general assembly fails to adopt a plan of districting by the  
116 fifteenth day of the September next following the year in which the  
117 decennial census of the United States is taken, the governor shall  
118 forthwith appoint a commission designated by the [president pro  
119 tempore of the senate, the speaker of the house of representatives, the  
120 minority leader of the senate and the minority leader of the house of  
121 representatives,] president of the general assembly and the minority  
122 leader each of whom shall designate [two] four members of the  
123 commission, provided that there are members of no more than two  
124 political parties. [in either the senate or the house of representatives.]  
125 In the event that there are members of more than two political parties  
126 in [a house of] the general assembly, all members [of that house]  
127 belonging to the parties other than that of the president [pro tempore  
128 of the senate or the speaker of the house of representatives, as the case  
129 may be,] of the general assembly shall select one of their number, who  
130 shall designate two members of the commission in lieu of the  
131 designation by the minority leader. [of that house.] The eight members  
132 of the commission so designated shall within thirty days select an  
133 elector of the state as a ninth member.

134       c. The commission shall proceed to consider the alteration of  
135 districts in accordance with the principles recited in this article and it  
136 shall submit a plan of districting to the secretary of the state by the  
137 thirtieth day of the November next succeeding the appointment of its  
138 members. No plan shall be submitted to the secretary unless it is  
139 certified by at least five members of the commission. Upon receiving  
140 such plan the secretary shall publish the same forthwith, and, upon  
141 publication, such plan of districting shall have the full force of law. If  
142 the commission shall fail to submit such a plan by the thirtieth day of  
143 November, the secretary of the state shall forthwith so notify the chief  
144 justice of the supreme court.

145       d. Original jurisdiction is vested in the supreme court to be

146 exercised on the petition of any registered voter whereby said court  
147 may compel the commission, by mandamus or otherwise, to perform  
148 its duty or to correct any error made in its plan of districting, or said  
149 court may take such other action to effectuate the purposes of this  
150 article, including the establishing of a plan of districting if the  
151 commission fails to file its plan of districting by the thirtieth day of  
152 November as said court may deem appropriate. Any such petition  
153 shall be filed within thirty days of the date specified for any duty or  
154 within thirty days after the filing of a plan of districting. The supreme  
155 court shall render its decision not later than forty-five days following  
156 the filing of such petition or shall file its plan with the secretary of the  
157 state not later than the fifteenth day of February next following the  
158 time for submission of a plan of districting by the commission. Upon  
159 receiving such plan the secretary shall publish the same forthwith,  
160 and, upon publication, such plan of districting shall have the full force  
161 of law.

162 (e) The general assembly, by law, shall establish a commission to  
163 create general assembly districts.

164 Sec. 7. The treasurer, secretary of the state, and comptroller shall  
165 canvass publicly the votes for [senators and representatives] members  
166 of the general assembly. The person in each [senatorial] general  
167 assembly district having the greatest number of votes [for senator]  
168 shall be declared to be duly elected for such district. [, and the person  
169 in each assembly district having the greatest number of votes for  
170 representative shall be declared to be duly elected for such district.]  
171 The general assembly shall provide by law the manner in which an  
172 equal and the greatest number of votes for two or more persons so  
173 voted for [senator or representative] the general assembly shall be  
174 resolved. The return of votes, and the result of the canvass, shall be  
175 submitted to the [house of representatives and to the senate] general  
176 assembly on the first day of the session of the general assembly. [Each  
177 house] The general assembly shall be the final judge of the election  
178 returns and qualifications of its [own] members.

179       Sec. 8. A general election for members of the general assembly shall  
180 be held on the Tuesday after the first Monday of November,  
181 [biennially] quadrennially, in the even-numbered years. The general  
182 assembly shall have power to enact laws regulating and prescribing  
183 the order and manner of voting for such members, for filling vacancies  
184 [in either the house of representatives or the senate,] and providing for  
185 the election of [representatives or senators] members at some time  
186 subsequent to the Tuesday after the first Monday of November in all  
187 cases when it shall so happen that the electors in any district shall fail  
188 on that day to elect a [representative or senator] member.

189       Sec. 9. At all elections for members of the general assembly the  
190 presiding officers in the several towns shall receive the votes of the  
191 electors, and count and declare them in open meeting. The presiding  
192 officers shall make and certify duplicate lists of the persons voted for,  
193 and of the number of votes for each. One list shall be delivered within  
194 three days to the town clerk, and within ten days after such meeting,  
195 the other shall be delivered under seal to the secretary of the state.

196       Sec. 10. The members of the general assembly shall hold their offices  
197 from the Wednesday following the first Monday of the January next  
198 succeeding their election until the Wednesday after the first Monday of  
199 the [third] fifth January next succeeding their election, and until their  
200 successors are duly qualified.

201       Sec. 11. No member of the general assembly shall, during the term  
202 for which he is elected, hold or accept any appointive position or office  
203 in the judicial or executive department of the state government, or in  
204 the courts of the political subdivisions of the state, or in the  
205 government of any county. No member of congress, no person holding  
206 any office under the authority of the United States and no person  
207 holding any office in the judicial or executive department of the state  
208 government or in the government of any county shall be a member of  
209 the general assembly during his continuance in such office.

210       Sec. 12. [The house of representatives, when assembled, shall choose

211 a speaker, clerk and other officers. The senate shall choose a president  
212 pro tempore, clerk and other officers, except the president. A majority  
213 of each house shall constitute a quorum to do business; but a smaller  
214 number may adjourn from day to day, and compel the attendance of  
215 absent members in such manner and under such penalties as each  
216 house may prescribe.] The general assembly, when assembled, shall  
217 choose a president, clerk and other officers. A majority of the general  
218 assembly shall constitute a quorum.

219 Sec. 13. [Each house] The members of the general assembly shall  
220 determine the rules of its own proceedings, and punish members for  
221 disorderly conduct, and, with the consent of two-thirds, expel a  
222 member, but not a second time for the same cause; and shall have all  
223 other powers necessary for a [branch of the] legislature of a free and  
224 independent state.

225 Sec. 14. [Each house] The general assembly shall keep a journal of its  
226 proceedings, and publish the same when required by one-fifth of its  
227 members, except such parts as in the judgment of a majority require  
228 secrecy. The yeas and nays of the members [of either house] shall, at  
229 the desire of one-fifth of those present, be entered on the journals.

230 Sec. 15. The [senators and representatives] members of the general  
231 assembly shall, in all cases of civil process, be privileged from arrest,  
232 during any session of the general assembly, and for four days before  
233 the commencement and after the termination of any session thereof.  
234 And for any speech or debate [in either house,] they shall not be  
235 questioned in any other place.

236 Sec. 16. The debates of [each house] the general assembly shall be  
237 public, except on such occasions as in the opinion of the [house]  
238 general assembly may require secrecy.

239 Sec. 17. The salary of the members of the general assembly and the  
240 transportation expenses of its members in the performance of their  
241 legislative duties shall be determined by law.

242 Sec. 18. a. The amount of general budget expenditures authorized  
243 for any fiscal year shall not exceed the estimated amount of revenue  
244 for such fiscal year.

245 b. The general assembly shall not authorize an increase in general  
246 budget expenditures for any fiscal year above the amount of general  
247 budget expenditures authorized for the previous fiscal year by a  
248 percentage which exceeds the greater of the percentage increase in  
249 personal income or the percentage increase in inflation, unless the  
250 governor declares an emergency or the existence of extraordinary  
251 circumstances and at least three-fifths of the members of [each house  
252 of] the general assembly vote to exceed such limit for the purposes of  
253 such emergency or extraordinary circumstances. The general assembly  
254 shall by law define "increase in personal income", "increase in  
255 inflation" and "general budget expenditures" for the purposes of this  
256 section and may amend such definitions, from time to time, provided  
257 general budget expenditures shall not include expenditures for the  
258 payment of bonds, notes or other evidences of indebtedness. The  
259 enactment or amendment of such definitions shall require the vote of  
260 three-fifths of the members of [each house of] the general assembly.

261 c. Any unappropriated surplus shall be used to fund a budget  
262 reserve fund or for the reduction of bonded indebtedness; or for any  
263 other purpose authorized by at least three-fifths of the members of  
264 [each house of] the general assembly.

265 Sec. 2. Sections 19 and 20 of Article fourth of the constitution are  
266 amended to read as follows:

267 Sec. 19. If the lieutenant-governor succeeds to the office of governor,  
268 or if the lieutenant-governor dies, resigns, refuses to serve or is  
269 removed from office, the president [pro tempore of the senate] of the  
270 general assembly shall, upon taking the oath of office of lieutenant-  
271 governor, be lieutenant-governor of the state until another is chosen at  
272 the next regular election for lieutenant-governor and is duly qualified.  
273 Within fifteen days of the administration of such oath the [senate, if

274 the] general assembly [is in session,] shall elect one of its members  
275 president [pro tempore] of the general assembly. In case of the inability  
276 of the lieutenant-governor to exercise the powers and perform the  
277 duties of his office or in case of his impeachment or absence from the  
278 state, the president [pro tempore of the senate] of the general assembly  
279 shall exercise the powers and authority and perform the duties  
280 appertaining to the office of lieutenant-governor until the disability is  
281 removed or, if the lieutenant-governor has been impeached, he is  
282 acquitted or, if absent, he has returned.

283 Sec. 20. If, while the general assembly is not in session, there is a  
284 vacancy in the office of president [pro tempore of the senate] of the  
285 general assembly, the secretary of the state shall within fifteen days  
286 convene the [senate] general assembly for the purpose of electing one  
287 of its members president [pro tempore] of the general assembly.

288 Sec. 3. Sections 1 and 2 of Article ninth of the constitution are  
289 amended to read as follows:

290 Sec. 1. The [house of representatives] general assembly shall have  
291 the sole power of impeaching.

292 Sec. 2. All impeachments shall be tried by the [senate] general  
293 assembly. When sitting for that purpose, they shall be on oath or  
294 affirmation. No person shall be convicted without the concurrence of  
295 at least two-thirds of the members present. When the governor is  
296 impeached, the chief justice shall preside.

297 Sec. 4. Article twelfth of the constitution is amended to read as  
298 follows:

299 Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by any member  
300 of the [senate or house of representatives] general assembly. An  
301 amendment so proposed, approved upon roll call by a yea vote of at  
302 least a majority, but by less than three-fourths, of the total membership  
303 of [each house] the general assembly, shall be published with the laws

304 which may have been passed at the same session and be continued to  
305 the regular session of the general assembly elected at the next general  
306 election to be held on the Tuesday after the first Monday of November  
307 in an even-numbered year. An amendment so proposed, approved  
308 upon roll call by a yea vote of at least three-fourths of the total  
309 membership of [each house] the general assembly, or any amendment  
310 which, having been continued from the previous general assembly, is  
311 again approved upon roll call by a yea vote of at least a majority of the  
312 total membership of [each house] the general assembly, shall, by the  
313 secretary of the state, be transmitted to the town clerk in each town in  
314 the state, whose duty it shall be to present the same to the electors  
315 thereof for their consideration at the next general election to be held on  
316 the Tuesday after the first Monday of November in an even-numbered  
317 year. If it shall appear, in a manner to be provided by law, that a  
318 majority of the electors present and voting on such amendment at such  
319 election shall have approved such amendment, the same shall be valid,  
320 to all intents and purposes, as a part of this constitution. Electors  
321 voting by absentee ballot under the provisions of the statutes shall be  
322 considered to be present and voting.

323       Sec. 5. Section 1 of Article thirteenth of the constitution is amended  
324 to read as follows:

325       Sec. 1. The general assembly may, upon roll call, by a yea vote of at  
326 least two-thirds of the total membership<sub>2</sub> [of each house,] provide for  
327 the convening of a constitutional convention to amend or revise the  
328 constitution of the state not earlier than ten years from the date of  
329 convening any prior convention.

330       Sec. 6. Section 3 of Article thirteenth of the constitution is amended  
331 to read as follows:

332       Sec. 3. In providing for the convening of a constitutional convention  
333 to amend or revise the constitution of the state the general assembly  
334 shall, upon roll call, by a yea vote of at least two-thirds of the total  
335 membership<sub>2</sub> [of each house,] prescribe by law the manner of selection

336 of the membership of such convention, the date of convening of such  
337 convention, which shall be not later than one year from the date of the  
338 roll call vote under Section 1 of this article or one year from the date of  
339 the election under Section 2 of this article, as the case may be, and the  
340 date for final adjournment of such convention.

341 RESOLVED: That the foregoing proposed amendment to the  
342 Constitution be continued to the next session of the General Assembly  
343 elected at the general election to be held on November 2, 2010, and  
344 published with the laws passed at the present session, or be presented  
345 to the electors at the general election to be held on November 2, 2010,  
346 whichever the case may be, according to article sixth of the  
347 amendments to the Constitution. The designation of said proposed  
348 amendment to be used on the voting machine ballot labels and  
349 absentee ballots at such election shall be "Shall the Constitution of the  
350 State be amended to eliminate the two distinct houses of the General  
351 Assembly in order to create a unicameral legislature?"