

STATE LEGISLATURES

TABLE 3.2
Legislative Sessions: Legal Provisions

State or other jurisdiction	Regular sessions			
	Year	Legislature convenes		Limitation on length of session (a)
		Month	Day	
Alabama	Annual	Jan.; Mar.; Feb.	2nd Tues. (b); 1st Tues. (c); 1st Tues. (d)(e)	30 L in 105 C
Alaska	Annual	Jan.	3rd Tues. (g)	121 C; 90 Statutory (g)
Arizona	Annual	Jan.	2nd Mon.	(h)
Arkansas	Annual	Jan.	2nd Mon.; 2nd Mon.	60 C (i); 30 C (i)
California	Biennium (k)	Jan.	1st Mon. (d)	None
Colorado	Annual	Jan.	No later than 2nd Wed.	120 C
Connecticut	Annual	Jan. (odd-yrs.); Feb. (even-yrs.)	Wed. after 1st Mon.	(m)
Delaware	Biennium	Jan.	2nd Tues.	June 30
Florida	Annual	Mar.	1st Tues. after 1st Mon. (o)	60 C (i)
Georgia	Annual	Jan.	2nd Mon.	40 L
Hawaii	Annual	Jan.	3rd Wed.	60 L (i)
Idaho	Annual	Jan.	Mon. on or nearest 9th day	None
Illinois	Biennium	Jan.	2nd Wed.	None (q)
Indiana	Annual	Jan.	2nd Mon. (r)	odd-61 C or Apr. 29; even-30 C or Mar. 14
Iowa	Annual	Jan.	2nd Mon.	None (bbb)
Kansas	Annual	Jan.	2nd Mon.	odd-None; even-90 C (i)
Kentucky	Annual	Jan.	1st Tues. after 1st Mon.	even-60 L; odd-30 L (s)
Louisiana	Annual	Mar. (even-years); Apr. (odd-years)	2nd Mon. (even- and odd-years)	even-60 L in 85 C; odd-45 L in 60 C
Maine	(t)	Dec. (even-years); Jan. (subsequent even-year)	1st Wed. (quadrennial election year); Wed. after 1st Tues.	Calendar days set by statute (u)
Maryland	Annual	Jan.	2nd Wed.	90 C
Massachusetts	Biennium	Jan.	1st Wed.	(v)
Michigan	Annual	Jan.	2nd Wed.	None
Minnesota	Biennium	Jan.	1st Tues. after 1st Mon. (odd-years)	120 L
Mississippi	Annual	Jan.	Tues. after 1st Mon.	125 C (y); 90 C (y)
Missouri	Annual	Jan.	Wed. after 1st Mon.	May 30
Montana	Biennial	Jan.	1st Mon. (vv)	90 L
Nebraska	Annual	Jan.	Wed. after 1st Mon.	odd-90 L; even-60 L
Nevada	Biennial	Feb.	1st Mon.	120 C
New Hampshire	Annual	Jan.	Wed. after 1st Tues.	45 L
New Jersey	Biennium	Jan.	2nd Tues. of even year	None
New Mexico	Annual	Jan.	3rd Tues.	odd-60 C; even-30 C
New York	Annual	Jan. (dd)	Wed. after 1st Mon.	None
North Carolina	(ee)	Jan.	3rd Wed. after 2nd Mon. (odd-years)	None
North Dakota	Biennial-odd year	Jan.	First Tues. after the third day in Jan.	80 L in the biennium
Ohio	Biennium	Jan.	1st Mon. (gg)	None
Oklahoma	Annual	Feb.	1st Mon.	last Fri. in May
Oregon	Annual	Feb.	1st Mon.	(ff)
Pennsylvania	Biennium (hh)	Jan.	1st Tues.	None
Rhode Island	Annual	Jan.	1st Tues.	None
South Carolina	Biennium	Jan.	2nd Tues.	(ii)
South Dakota	Annual	Jan.	2nd Tues.	odd-40 L; even-40 L
Tennessee	Biennium (kk)	Jan.	2nd Tues.	90 L (ll)
Texas	Biennial-odd year	Jan.	2nd Tues.	140 C
Utah	Annual	Jan.	4th Mon.	45 C
Vermont	Annual (yy)	Jan.	Wed. after 1st Mon. (yy)	None
Virginia	Annual	Jan.	2nd Wed.	odd-30 C (i); even-60 C (i)
Washington	Annual	Jan.	2nd Mon.	odd-105 C; even-60 C
West Virginia	Annual	Jan.	2nd Wed.	60 C (i)
Wisconsin	Biennium	Jan.	1st Mon.	None
Wyoming	Biennium	Jan. (odd-yrs.); Feb. (even-yrs.)	2nd Tues. (odd-yrs.); 2nd Mon. (even-yrs.)	odd-40 L; even-20 L; biennium-60 L
Dist. of Columbia	(oo)	Jan.	2nd day	None
American Samoa	Annual	Jan.; July	2nd Mon.; 3rd Mon.	45 L; 45 L
Guam	(pp)	Jan.	2nd Mon.	None (pp)
CNMI*	Annual	(rr)	(d)(rr)	90 L (qq)
Puerto Rico	Annual (rr)	Jan.; Aug.	2nd Mon.; 3rd Mon.	5 mo.; 4 mo.
U.S. Virgin Islands	Annual	Jan. (ss)	2nd Mon. (ss)	None

See footnotes at end of table

TABLE 3.2
Legislative Sessions: Legal Provisions (continued)

<i>State or other jurisdiction</i>	<i>Special sessions</i>		
	<i>Legislature may call</i>	<i>Legislature may determine subject</i>	<i>Limitation on length of session</i>
Alabama	No	Yes (f)	12 L in 30 C
Alaska	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes	30 C
Arizona	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes	None
Arkansas	No	No	None (j)
California	No	No	None
Colorado	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes (l)	None
Connecticut	By petition, majority, each house (n)	Yes	None
Delaware	Joint call, presiding officers, both houses	Yes	None
Florida	Joint call, presiding officers, both houses or by petition	Yes	20 C (zz)
Georgia	By petition, 3/5 members, each house	No (p)	40 L
Hawaii	By petition, 2/3 members, each house (uu)	Yes	30 L (i)
Idaho	No	No	20 C
Illinois	Joint call, presiding officers, both houses; Governor also may call	Yes	None
Indiana	No	Yes	30 L or 40 C
Iowa	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes	None
Kansas	Petition to governor of 2/3 members, each house	Yes	None
Kentucky	No	No	None
Louisiana	By petition, majority, each house	Yes	30 C
Maine	Joint call, presiding officers of both houses with the consent of a majority of the members of each political party	Yes	None
Maryland	By petition, majority, each house	Yes	30 C
Massachusetts	By petition (w)	Yes	None
Michigan	No	No	None
Minnesota	No (x)	Yes	None
Mississippi	No	No	None
Missouri	By petition, 3/4 members, each house	Yes (l)	30 C (z)
Montana	By petition, majority, each house (ww)	Yes	None
Nebraska	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes	None
Nevada	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes (aa)	20 C (aa)
New Hampshire	By petition, (xx)	Yes	15 L (bb)
New Jersey	By petition, majority, each house (cc)	Yes	None
New Mexico	By petition, 3/5 members, each house (l)	Yes (l)	30 C
New York	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes (l)	None
North Carolina	By petition, 3/5 members, each house	Yes	None
North Dakota	No	Yes	None
Ohio	Joint call, presiding officers, both houses	Yes	None
Oklahoma	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes	None
Oregon	By petition, majority, each house	Yes	None
Pennsylvania	Governor may call	No	None
Rhode Island	Joint call, presiding officers, both houses	Yes	None
South Carolina	By vote, 2/3 members, each house	Yes	None
South Dakota	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes (jj)	None
Tennessee	By petition, 2/3 members, each house	Yes	30 L (ll)
Texas	No	No	30 C
Utah	No	No	30 C
Vermont	No	Yes	None
Virginia	(tt)	Yes	None (mm)
Washington	By vote, 2/3 members, each house	Yes	30 C
West Virginia	By petition, 3/5 members, each house	Yes (l)	None
Wisconsin	(nn)	No	None
Wyoming	By petition, majority members, each house	Yes	20 L (aaa)
Dist. of Columbia
American Samoa	No	No	None
Guam	Only the governor may call	No	None (pp)
CNMI*	Upon request of presiding officers, both houses	Yes (j)	10 C
Puerto Rico	No	No	20 C
U.S. Virgin Islands	No, governor calls	No	None

See footnotes at end of table

STATE LEGISLATURES

TABLE 3.2

Legislative Sessions: Legal Provisions (continued)

Source: The Council of State Governments survey January 2019.

*Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands

Key:

Annual—holds legislative sessions every year.

Biennial-odd year—holds legislative sessions every other year.

Biennium—holds legislative sessions in a two-year term of activity.

C—Calendar day

L—Legislative day (in some states called a session day or workday; definition may vary slightly, however, generally refers to any day on which either house of legislature is in session).

(a) Applies to each year unless otherwise indicated.

(b) General election year (quadrennial election year).

(c) In first year after quadrennial election.

(d) Legal provision for organizational session prior to stated convening date.

Alabama—in the year after quadrennial election, second Tuesday in January for 10 C.

California—in the even-numbered general election year, first Monday in December for an organizational session, recess until the first Monday in January of the odd-numbered year.

Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands—in year after general election, second Monday in January.

(e) In second and third years of quadrennium.

(f) By 2/3 vote each house.

(g) Convening date is statutory. Length of session is 121 calendar days, 90 by statute.

(h) No constitutional or statutory provision; however, by legislative rule regular sessions shall be adjourned sine die no later than Saturday of the week during which the 100th day from the beginning of each regular session falls. The Speaker/President may by declaration authorize the extension of the session for a period not to exceed seven additional days. Thereafter the session can be extended only by a majority vote of the House/Senate.

(i) Session may be extended by vote of members in both houses.

Arkansas—2/3 vote to extend up to 75 days; 3/4 vote to go beyond 75 days. Even-year fiscal session may be extended one-time only by a 3/4 vote, with the extension no more than 15 C days. Florida—3/5 vote, session may be extended by vote of members in each house. Hawaii—petition of 2/3 membership for maximum 15-day extension. Kansas—2/3 vote. Virginia—2/3 vote for 30 C extension. West Virginia—may be extended by the governor.

(j) After governor's business has been disposed of, members may remain in session up to 15 C days by a 2/3 vote of both houses.

(k) Regular sessions begin after general election, in December of even-numbered year. In California, in the even-numbered general election year, first Monday in December for an organizational session, recess until the first Monday in January of the odd-numbered year.

(l) Only if legislature convenes itself. In New York, special sessions may also be called by the governor. Legislature may determine subject only if it has convened itself. In New Mexico, special sessions may only be called by the governor and subjects are limited to issues included in governor's proclamation; extraordinary session may only be called by the legislature and have no limitations on subject.

(m) Odd-numbered years—not later than Wednesday after first Monday in June; even-numbered years— not later than Wednesday after first Monday in May.

(n) Adoption of a joint resolution by a majority of each house.

(o) A regular session of the legislature shall convene on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of each odd-numbered year, and on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March, or such other date as may be fixed by law, of each even-numbered year.

(p) If three-fifths of the General Assembly certifies to governor that an emergency exists, governor must convene a special session for all purposes.

(q) Constitution encourages adjournment by May 31.

(r) Legislators may reconvene at any time after organizational meeting; however, second Monday in January is the final date by which regular session must be in process.

(s) During the odd-year session, the members convene for four days, then break until February.

(t) Regular session begins after general election in even-numbered years. Session which begins in December of general election year runs into the following year (odd-numbered); second session begins in next even-numbered year. The second session is limited to budgetary matters; legislation in the governor's call; emergency legislation; legislation referred to committee for study.

(u) Statutory adjournment for the First Regular Session (beginning in December of even-numbered years and continuing into the following odd-numbered year) is the third Wednesday of June; statutory adjournment for the Second Regular Session (beginning in January of the subsequent even-numbered year) is the third Wednesday in April. The statutes provide for up to two extensions of up to five legislative days each for each session.

(v) Legislative rules say formal business must be concluded by Nov. 15th of the 1st session in the biennium, or by July 31st of the 2nd session for the biennium.

(w) Joint rules provide for the submission of a written statement requesting special session by a specified number of members of each chamber.

(x) Special session is called by the governor.

(y) 90 C sessions every year, except the first year of a gubernatorial administration during which the legislative session runs for 125 C.

(z) 30 C if called by legislature; 60 C if called by governor.

(aa) Legislature may determine the subject if it calls itself into special session. Special sessions are limited to 20 calendar days except in cases of impeachment of state and judicial officers or expulsion of a member of the Legislature.

(bb) Limitation is on legislative pay and mileage.

(cc) Or by joint call, presiding officers, both houses.

(dd) Session officially begins on the first Wednesday following the first Monday of the new legislative term (commencing the first of the year), and lasts until the legislature completes its business and adjourns sine die. However, over the past several years, both houses have adopted the tactic of declaring a recess at the call of the leaders, in order to facilitate easy recall of the legislature to override vetoes, etc. Over time the custom has become to formally adjourn both houses just before the new session opens. This leads to the rather interesting convention that when the governor calls the legislature into session, it is considered "special" or "executive," even though the regular session is ongoing.

TABLE 3.2

Legislative Sessions: Legal Provisions (continued)

- (ee) Legal provision for session in odd-numbered year; however, legislature may divide, and in practice has divided, to meet in even-numbered years as well.
- (ff) The Oregon Constitution establishes a maximum of 160 calendar days for an odd-year regular session and a maximum of 35 calendar days for an even-year regular session. Each regular session may be extended in five-day increments by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of each house.
- (gg) Unless Monday is a legal holiday; in second year, the General Assembly convenes on the same date.
- (hh) Sessions are two years and begin on the 1st Tuesday of January of the odd-numbered year. Session ends on November 30 of the even-numbered year. Each calendar year receives its own legislative number.
- (ii) The regular session ends the first Thursday in June; it can be extended with a two-thirds majority vote.
- (jj) Legislators must address topic for which the special session was called.
- (kk) Each General Assembly convenes for a First and Second Regular Session over a two-year period.
- (ll) 90 legislative days over a two-year period. During special sessions members will be paid up to 30 legislative days; further days will be without pay or per diem.
- (mm) No limitation, but the convening of the new General Assembly following an election would by operation end the special session.
- (nn) The Legislature may call itself into Extraordinary Session on any subject by a majority vote of the organizing committees of each house, by joint resolution, or by a petition of a majority of each house. Only the governor may call a special session.
- (oo) Each Council period begins on January 2 of each odd-numbered year and ends on January 1 of the following odd-numbered year.
- (pp) Legislature meets on the first Monday of each month following its initial session in January. One legislative day or one special session day may become several calendar days. Special sessions may address only one subject.
- (qq) 60 L before April 1 and 30 L after July 31.
- (rr) Legislature meets twice a year. During general election years, the legislature only convenes on the January session.
- (ss) The legislature convenes in January on the second Monday, March, June and September, the third Wednesday.
- (tt) The Constitution provides that the governor must call a special session upon "application" of 2/3 of the members of each house.
- (uu) Governor may call both houses of the legislature or the Senate alone into special session. Also, upon a 2/3 affirmative vote, the Senate may call itself into special session to consider judicial nominations.
- (vv) If the first Monday falls on New Years Day, the Legislature convenes on the first Wednesday.
- (ww) Majority of the total Legislature; i.e., 76 members of the combined 100-member House and 50-member Senate.
- (xx) Petition filed with Secretary of State signed by not less than 50 members of House (not more than 10 from the same county) and not less than eight members of the Senate.
- (yy) Constitutionally the sessions are convened biennially in the odd year. Since the late 1960s a second-year adjourned session has been held. Adjourned session date is legislatively set for a date during the first 10 days of January.
- (zz) Session may be extended by 3/5 vote Per s. 11.011, Florida Statutes, if 20 percent of the members of the Legislature certify in writing that conditions warrant convening a special session, the Department of State shall, within seven days after receiving the required number of certificates, poll the members. Upon affirmative vote of 3/5 of the members of both houses, the Department of State shall fix the day and hour for convening the special session.
- (aaa) Twenty legislative days if Legislature calls themselves. Unlimited if governor calls special session.
- (bbb) No formal limitation, but legislator per diems are limited by statute to 110 calendar days during odd-year sessions and 100 calendar days during even-year sessions.