

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Subject: Council to Establish Legislative Salaries

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Overview

Sections 1 and 2 propose a constitutional amendment under which salaries for legislators would be prescribed by a council, instead of by law. The remaining sections make changes in the composition and duties of the existing compensation council that recommends certain salaries to the legislature.

Section

1 **Constitutional amendment proposed.** Currently, the Minnesota Constitution provides that compensation of legislators shall be prescribed by law. This section proposes to amend the Constitution so that salaries of legislators would be prescribed by a council consisting of the following members:

- One person who is not a judge from each congressional district, appointed by the chief justice of the Supreme Court;
- One member from each congressional district, appointed by the governor.

If Minnesota has an odd-number of congressional districts, the governor and chief justice each will appoint an additional, at-large member.

Requires that half of the members appointed by the governor and half appointed by the chief justice must belong to the political party that has the most members in the legislature, and that the other half of the members must belong to the political party that has the second-most members in the legislature. Provides that current and former legislators and lobbyists may not be members of the council. Provides for membership terms, removal, and compensation of members to be provided by law.

Requires that the council prescribe salaries by March 31 of each odd-numbered year, with

Section

any changes to take effect in July of that year.

- 2** **Schedule and question.** Requires the proposed constitutional amendment to be submitted to the people at the 2014 general election.
- 3** **Creation.** Under current law, a compensation council recommends salaries for constitutional officers, judges, agency heads, and legislators. This section strikes the duty to recommend legislator salaries from the duties of this council. Provides that this compensation council is created in odd-numbered years (January, according to the next section of this bill), rather than in October of even-numbered years.
- 4** **Membership.** Strikes legislators from the membership of the current compensation council. Provides that this council will be composed of 8 nonjudges appointed by the chief justice of the Supreme Court and (as under current law) one member from each congressional district appointed by the governor. Provides for appointments to be made in January of odd-numbered years.
- 5** **Submission of recommendations.** Requires compensation council recommendations to be submitted by April 1, instead of May 1, each odd-numbered year. Strikes legislators from the groups of officials for whom the commission recommends salaries.
- 6** **Effective date.** Sections 3 to 5 are effective January 1, 2015 if the constitutional amendment is adopted by the voters.