



Provisions from the Tennessee Constitution

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the MTAS website ([mtas.tennessee.edu](https://www.mtas.tennessee.edu)). This website is maintained daily by MTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee municipal government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Provisions from the Tennessee Constitution

Reference Number: MTAS-996

From Article 2

Sec. 8. Legislative sessions — governor's inauguration. The General Assembly shall meet in organizational session on the second Tuesday in January next succeeding the election of the members of the House of Representatives, at which session, if in order, the governor shall be inaugurated. The General Assembly shall remain in session for organizational purposes not longer than 15 consecutive calendar days, during which session no legislation shall be passed on third and final consideration. Thereafter, the General Assembly shall meet on the first Tuesday next following the conclusion of the organizational session unless the General Assembly by joint resolution of both houses sets an earlier date.

The General Assembly may by joint resolution recess or adjourn until such time or times as it shall determine. It shall be convened at other times by the governor as provided in Article III, Section 9, or by the presiding officers of both houses at the written request of two-thirds of the members of each House.

Sec. 17. Origin and frame of bills. Bills may originate in either House; but may be amended, altered or rejected by the other. No bill shall become a law which embraces more than one subject, that subject to be expressed in the title. All acts which repeal, revive or amend former laws, shall recite in their caption, or otherwise, the title or substance of the law repealed, revived or amended.

Sec. 18. Passage of bills. A bill shall become law when it has been considered and passed on three different days in each House and on third and final consideration has received the assent of a majority of all the members to which each House is entitled under this constitution, when the respective speakers have signed the bill with the date of such signing appearing in the journal, and when the bill has been approved by the governor or otherwise passed under the provisions of the constitution.

Sec. 19. Rejection of bill. After a bill has been rejected, no bill containing the same substance shall be passed into a law during the same session.

Sec. 20. Style of laws — effective date. The style of the laws of this state shall be, "Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee." No law of a general nature shall take effect until 40 days after its passage unless the same or the caption thereof shall state that the public welfare requires that it should take effect sooner.

From Article 3

Sec. 18. Bills to be approved by the governor — governor's veto — bills passed over governor's veto. Every bill which may pass both houses of the General Assembly shall, before it becomes a law, be presented to the governor for his signature. If he approves, he shall sign it, and the same shall become a law; but if he refuses to sign it, he shall return it with his objections thereto, in writing, to the House in which it originated; and said House shall cause said objections to be entered at large upon its journal and proceed to reconsider the bill. If after such reconsideration, a majority of all members elected to that House shall agree to pass the bill, notwithstanding the objections of the executive, it shall be sent, with said objections, to the other House, by which it shall be likewise reconsidered. If approved by a majority of the whole number elected to that House, it shall become a law. The votes of both houses shall be determined by yeas and nays, and the names of all members voting for or against the bill shall be entered upon the journals of their respective houses.

If the governor shall fail to return any bill with his objections in writing within 10 calendar days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the same shall become a law without his signature. If the General Assembly by its adjournment prevents the return of any bill within said 10-day period, the bill shall become a law, unless disapproved by the governor and filed by him with his objections in writing in the office of the secretary of state within said 10-day period.

Every joint resolution or order (except on question of adjournment and proposals of specific amendments to the constitution) shall likewise be presented to the governor for his signature, and on being disapproved by him shall in like manner, be returned with his objections; and the same before it shall take effect shall be repassed by a majority of all the members elected to both houses in the manner and according to the rules prescribed in case of a bill.

The governor may reduce or disapprove the sum of money appropriated by any one or more parts of items in any bill appropriating money, while approving other portions of the bill. The portions so approved shall become law, and the items or parts of items disapproved or reduced shall be void to the extent that they have been disapproved or reduced unless repassed as hereinafter provided. The governor, within 10 calendar days (Sundays excepted) after the bill shall have been presented to him, shall report the items or parts of items disapproved or reduced with his objections in writing to the House in which the bill originated, or if the General Assembly shall have adjourned, to the office of the secretary of state. Any such items or parts of items so disapproved or reduced shall be restored to the bill in original amount and become law if repassed by the General Assembly according to the rules and limitations prescribed for the passage of other bills over the executive veto.

DISCLAIMER: The letters and publications written by the MTAS consultants were written based upon the law at the time and/or a specific sets of facts. The laws referenced in the letters and publications may have changed and/or the technical advice provided may not be applicable to your city or circumstances. Always consult with your city attorney or an MTAS consultant before taking any action based on information contained in this website.

Source URL (retrieved on 09/21/2021 - 3:42am): <https://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/reference/provisions-tennessee-constitution>



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