

Regular Session, 2010

HOUSE BILL NO. 567

BY REPRESENTATIVE ABRAMSON

CONSTITUTION/AMENDMENT: Provides relative to a constitutional convention

1 AN ACT

2 To provide for the calling of a constitutional convention for the purpose of framing a new
3 constitution; to provide for legislative findings; to fix the time and place for the
4 convention; to provide for the qualifications and election or appointment of delegates
5 thereto; to create a constitutional convention Evaluation and Drafting Committee and
6 provide for preparations and planning for the convention, including a draft proposed
7 constitution; to provide for the organization and staff of the convention; to place
8 restrictions on the convention; to require that the constitution as adopted by such
9 convention, including any alternative provisions, be submitted to the qualified
10 electors for adoption and to provide relative to such submission; to provide for
11 penalties for violations relating to elections; to require appropriation of funds for the
12 convention and provide with respect to convention funds; to fix the effective date of
13 the new constitution if approved by the electorate; and to provide for related matters.

14 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

15 Section 1. Legislative findings. The legislature finds that:

16 (A) It has been almost thirty-six years since the Constitution of Louisiana became
17 effective at twelve midnight on December 31, 1974, and during these years the document
18 which constitutes the state's basic law has been amended some one hundred thirty-five times.

19 (B) The need to address a number of key policy areas that require constitutional
20 change has become apparent, including such matters as the state's tax structure and
21 budgetary practices which hamper the state's economic growth and competitiveness as well

1 as the quality of life of Louisiana residents; the dedication of state revenues and the resulting
2 inability of the legislature to allocate resources where needed, particularly for the needs of
3 health care and higher education; the fiscal restraints on local governments that dramatically
4 limit their authority to meet fiscal and budgetary demands; a postsecondary education
5 structure that is burdened by duplication and competition for scarce resources; the need for
6 further modernization of the civil service system; and other matters.

7 (C) The constitution today contains many provisions that restrict the legislature in
8 effectively addressing state and constituent needs, and the document also includes extensive
9 provisions that are so detailed as to be statutory rather than constitutional in nature and
10 which, as a result, require further constitutional amendment when any change is needed.

11 (D) A serious analysis and revision of the state constitution is needed if the state is
12 to conduct a genuine examination of the state's critical needs, to undertake an in-depth
13 consideration of reform proposals, and to craft provisions that allow for flexibility and
14 innovation in legislative solutions to problems of the present and the future.

15 Section 2. Evaluation and Drafting Committee. (A) The Evaluation and Drafting
16 Committee for the constitutional convention is hereby created. The purpose of the
17 committee shall be to evaluate and determine if a constitutional convention is needed to
18 address the needs of the state and its people and, if it determines that a convention is needed,
19 to develop and propose a plan for the conduct of an effective constitutional convention,
20 including a draft proposed constitution with alternative proposals for provisions on
21 significant policy areas.

22 (B)(1) The Evaluation and Drafting Committee shall be composed of thirteen
23 members as follows:

24 (a) Two members of the Louisiana House of Representatives appointed by the
25 speaker of the House of Representatives.

26 (b) Two members of the Louisiana Senate appointed by the president of the Senate.

27 (c) Two members appointed by the governor.

28 (d) One member appointed by the chief justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court.

29 (e) A representative of the Louisiana State Law Institute appointed by the Louisiana
30 State Law Institute.

1 (f) A representative of the Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center
2 or the Louisiana State University E. J. Ourso College of Business appointed by the joint
3 concurrence of the chancellor of the law center and the dean of the business college.

4 (g) A representative of the Southern University Law Center or the Southern
5 University College of Business appointed by the joint concurrence of the chancellor of the
6 law center and the dean of the business college.

7 (h) A representative of the Tulane University Law School or the Tulane University
8 A.B. Freeman School of Business appointed by the joint concurrence of the dean of the law
9 school and the dean of the business school.

10 (i) A representative of the Loyola University New Orleans College of Law or the
11 Loyola University New Orleans Joseph A. Butt, S.J., College of Business appointed by the
12 joint concurrence of the dean of the college of law and the dean of the business college.

13 (j) A representative of the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana appointed
14 by the council.

15 (2) The appointments required by this Subsection shall be made and shall be
16 submitted to the secretary of state not later than Monday, August 2, 2010. Not later than
17 August 9, 2010, the secretary of state shall provide each member appointed with a list of the
18 membership appointed to the committee. The secretary of state shall issue a commission to
19 each person appointed as provided in this Section.

20 (3) The committee shall hold its organizational meeting not later than Tuesday,
21 September 7, 2010, on the call of the speaker of the House of Representatives and the
22 president of the Senate acting jointly. The committee shall elect a chairman, a vice
23 chairman, and such other officers as it shall find necessary.

24 (4) Any vacancy in the membership of the committee shall be filled in the manner
25 of the original appointment.

26 (C) The committee shall have the following powers and duties:

27 (1) The committee shall undertake such studies as shall be necessary to evaluate if
28 a constitutional convention is needed to address the needs of the state and its people and,
29 based upon such study, shall make a determination as to whether or not a constitutional
30 convention is needed.

1 (2) If the committee determines that a constitutional convention is needed, it shall
2 prepare a plan for the conduct of an effective constitutional convention. Such plan shall
3 include but not be limited to:

4 (a) A policy agenda for the convention which shall include:

5 (i) Identification of significant policy areas that must be addressed in order to
6 propose a constitution that will serve the state effectively.

7 (ii) A draft of a proposed constitution for the state, including provisions addressing
8 such significant policy areas, as well as all other provisions necessary for an effective
9 constitution.

10 (iii) Materials explaining the proposed provisions on significant policy areas and the
11 reasons therefor.

12 (iv) Alternative proposals for provisions on significant policy areas, together with
13 explanations and explanatory materials therefor. The committee shall include multiple
14 optional approaches and solutions as appropriate to facilitate the work of the convention in
15 addressing issues.

16 (v) Pertinent background material and data relative to significant policy areas.

17 (b) Background and other materials that the committee determines will be useful to
18 the work of the convention.

19 (c) Proposals for elimination of statutory materials from the constitution, together
20 with recommendations for legislative action relative thereto.

21 (d) Recommendations for convention organization and deliberations, including
22 significant provisions for rules of procedure.

23 (e) Recommendations for budget needs for effective conduct of a convention.

24 (f) Recommendations for procedures for submission of alternative proposals to the
25 voters and ballot structure.

26 (3) The committee shall undertake all necessary study and analysis necessary to
27 complete such plan and submit such plan to the legislature as required by this Section.

28 (D) The committee may create or appoint advisory committees or task forces to act
29 in an advisory capacity or to assist in its studies, composed of such representatives of the
30 public or private sectors as it deems appropriate.

1 (E)(1) As soon as possible after the members of the Evaluation and Drafting
2 Committee have been appointed, the committee shall assemble such staff as it shall deem
3 necessary to assist it in completing its duties on a timely basis. Such staff may include:

4 (a) The Evaluation and Drafting Committee may employ such professional, research,
5 and other employees as the committee shall deem necessary to carry out its duties.
6 Compensation of staff personnel shall be established by the committee and shall be paid as
7 provided in Paragraph (3) of Subsection G of this Section.

8 (b) Personnel provided by the Louisiana State University, Southern University,
9 Tulane University, and Loyola University law schools from the faculty as requested by the
10 committee.

11 (2) In addition, to assist the committee in its work, the committee may utilize the
12 personnel, facilities, and services of the legislative auditor, the legislative fiscal officer, and
13 the staffs of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and the committee may request
14 and utilize such counsel, assistance, personnel, facilities, and advice as may be obtained
15 from any and all public sources and from any and all private sources, including but not
16 necessarily restricted to universities, colleges, foundations, charitable corporations, private
17 research agencies, individuals, and organizations.

18 (3) The committee may call upon the members or staffs of any and all departments
19 or agencies of the state for data and assistance, and all such departments and agencies shall
20 cooperate with the committee.

21 (F) The committee shall submit to the legislature its evaluation and determination
22 of whether or not a constitutional convention is needed, and if it determines that a
23 convention is needed, it shall also submit to the legislature, accompanying such evaluation,
24 a plan for the conduct of an effective constitutional convention. The committee shall
25 complete its work and make the submission to the legislature required by this Section no
26 later than February 15, 2011. The committee shall submit a copy of such report to the
27 governor. When the constitutional convention convenes as provided in Section 3 of this Act,
28 the committee shall submit a copy of the plan to the convention.

29 (G)(1) The committee may accept grants, donations, gifts, monies, aid, facilities,
30 and services from public or private sources for the purpose of completing its work and

1 preparing and submitting the plan for the conduct of the constitutional convention as
2 required by this Section and any such grants, monies, facilities, services, and donations, as
3 well as the names of the donors thereof, shall be recorded in the record of the proceedings
4 of the committee and of the convention and such records shall be open to inspection by any
5 person.

6 (2) The members of the Evaluation and Drafting Committee shall be paid the same
7 per diem for each day of conducting the work of the committee and for each day of
8 attendance at meetings of the committee as is provided in Section 9 of this Act for
9 convention delegates, and the members of the committee shall be subject to the limitations
10 on other compensation provided in that Section.

11 (3) Per diem of committee members and all other expenses directly incurred by the
12 committee may be paid from any funds available for the purpose and, with the approval of
13 the presiding officers of the two houses of the Louisiana Legislature, from funds available
14 to such presiding officers for expenses of the legislature.

15 (H) Legislative committee rooms in the State Capitol shall be available for use by
16 the committee. In addition, the committee may use the facilities and services of any board,
17 commission, department, or agency of the state or of any political subdivision of the state,
18 and all such entities shall cooperate with the committee to the fullest extent in furnishing
19 services and facilities upon request. In addition, the committee may use the facilities and
20 services of other persons and organizations.

21 (I) The Evaluation and Drafting Committee shall be dissolved thirty days after
22 submission of a copy of the plan for the conduct of the constitutional convention to the
23 convention, except that if a different termination date is provided in the rules of the
24 convention, the Evaluation and Drafting Committee shall be dissolved on that date.

25 Section 3. Call for convention; delegates. (A) A constitutional convention is hereby
26 called, to convene on January 16, 2012, at 12:00 noon, which shall be held for the purpose
27 of framing a new constitution for the state of Louisiana subject to the terms, conditions, and
28 provisions set forth in this Act.

29 (B)(1) There shall be one hundred twenty-three delegates to the convention.

1 (a) One delegate shall be elected from each of the districts from which members of
2 the House of Representatives of the Louisiana Legislature are elected in 2011.

3 (b) The members of the constitutional convention Evaluation and Drafting
4 Committee, appointed as provided in Section 2 of this Act, shall be delegates to the
5 convention.

6 (c) Five additional delegates shall be appointed not later than December 1, 2011, as
7 follows:

8 (i) A representative of the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry appointed
9 by the association.

10 (ii) A representative of the Louisiana AFL-CIO appointed by the Louisiana AFL-
11 CIO.

12 (iii) A representative of the Louisiana League of Women Voters appointed by the
13 league.

14 (iv) A representative of the Louisiana National Association for the Advancement of
15 Colored People appointed by the association.

16 (v) A representative of the Louisiana Municipal Association or the Police Jury
17 Association of Louisiana appointed by the joint concurrence of the two associations.

18 (2) The appointments required by this Subsection shall be made and shall be
19 submitted to the secretary of state not later than December 1, 2011. The secretary of state
20 shall issue a commission to each delegate selected as provided in this Section.

21 (3) Each delegate to the convention shall be an elector of the state of Louisiana, shall
22 be at least eighteen years of age, and shall be a resident of the state of Louisiana. In
23 addition, each delegate elected from a representative district shall be a resident of the district
24 from which he is elected at the time he qualifies as a candidate for election as a delegate.

25 (4) The election or appointment of any public official or public employee as a
26 delegate to the convention and his service in the convention, the appointment of any public
27 official or public employee as a member of the Evaluation and Drafting Committee and his
28 service on the committee, the appointment of any public official or public employee to the
29 staff of the convention or the staff of the Evaluation and Drafting Committee and his service
30 on such staff, as authorized and provided in this Act, shall not be construed to constitute dual

1 officeholding or dual employment within the prohibitions of Part III of Chapter 2 of Title
2 42 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950. However, a delegate elected from a
3 representative district shall be considered an elected official within the scope of and subject
4 to the provisions of Chapter 15 of Title 42 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, and
5 a delegate, member of the Evaluation and Drafting Committee, or member of the staff of the
6 convention or of the Evaluation and Drafting Committee who is not an elected official shall
7 be considered a public employee within the scope of and subject to the provisions of Chapter
8 15 of Title 42 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950. For purposes of Chapter 15 of
9 Title 42 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, the agency and the governmental entity
10 of delegates and staff members of the convention shall be the convention and the agency and
11 the governmental entity of members and staff members of the Evaluation and Drafting
12 Committee shall be both the committee and the convention. For purposes of any other office
13 or employment of any such person, the agency or governmental entity as provided in R.S.
14 42:1102 shall remain applicable. The delegates to the convention, the staff of the
15 convention, and the members and staff of the Evaluation and Drafting Committee shall be
16 subject to the public bribery provisions of the laws of this state.

17 (5) Each candidate for election as a delegate to the constitutional convention and
18 each elected delegate shall be subject to the provisions of the Campaign Finance Disclosure
19 Act and the office of delegate shall be a district office for the purposes of that Act.

20 (6) Any attorney at law serving as a delegate to the convention shall be entitled to
21 the absolute right of the continuance of any case in which he is bona fide counsel of record
22 in any court of the state during his attendance upon the sessions and work of the convention.

23 (C)(1) The one hundred five delegates to the convention to be elected from
24 representative districts shall be elected at a special election to be held as provided in this Act.
25 The special primary election for such delegates shall be held at the primary election on
26 Saturday, October 22, 2011, and, if necessary, the special general election for delegates shall
27 be held at a statewide election to be held on Saturday, November 19, 2011. The governor
28 shall issue a proclamation and give notice of the election to be held under this Section not
29 less than forty-five days before the date of the election as herein fixed. Each person desiring
30 to become a candidate for election as a delegate from a representative district shall qualify

1 as a candidate from the particular representative district he seeks to represent by filing a
2 statement of candidacy with the secretary of state not later than the closing of the qualifying
3 period for candidates in the primary election on October 22, 2011, as otherwise provided by
4 law. Qualification as a candidate shall be without regard to party affiliation.

5 (2) The election of a person to the office of delegate shall be in accordance with
6 provisions for the election of candidates for public office in the Louisiana Election Code.

7 Section 4. Conduct of election for elected delegates. (A) Except as otherwise
8 provided in this Act, the primary and general elections for convention delegates shall be
9 conducted and the results thereof published and promulgated in accordance with the
10 Louisiana Election Code. All qualified electors shall be entitled to vote in their respective
11 election precincts without regard to party affiliation. The votes for candidates for the office
12 of delegate shall be tabulated as in the case of candidates for public office.

13 (B) The costs of the elections authorized by this Act for election of delegates shall
14 be paid as provided by the Louisiana Election Code for payment of costs of elections in
15 which a candidate for the state legislature appears on the ballot.

16 (C) All offenses, prosecutions, penalties, and punishments arising out of or in
17 connection with the elections required by this Act shall be governed by the applicable laws
18 of the state.

19 Section 5. Vacancies. In the event of the death or the inability or unwillingness of
20 any elected delegate to serve, whether before or during the convention, the speaker of the
21 House of Representatives, the president of the Senate, and the governor shall fill such
22 vacancy by appointment, by unanimous consent of the three officials, of a person from the
23 same district who possesses the qualifications for delegate. In the event of the death or the
24 inability or unwillingness to serve of any other delegate, the vacancy shall be filled in the
25 same manner as the original selection within thirty days after the vacancy.

26 Section 6. Convention authority; limitations. (A) The convention shall have
27 authority to frame a new constitution for the state, including such alternative provisions as
28 it deems appropriate, which shall be submitted to the electors of the state for their approval
29 or rejection. However, the convention is prohibited from framing any article or provision
30 whereby:

1 (1) The bonded or other indebtedness of the state or of any parish, municipality,
2 district, or other political subdivision or authority of the state would be impaired.

3 (2) The term of office of members of the legislature or of any other elected or of any
4 appointed official of the state or of any political subdivision thereof would be reduced or
5 shortened prior to the expiration of the term of office being held at the time of the adoption
6 of the new constitution, or the salary of any such official would be reduced prior to the
7 expiration of the term of office being held at the time of the adoption of a new constitution.

8 (3) The state capital is removed or could be removed from Baton Rouge.

9 (B) Any action to determine a question of the construction or validity of this Act or
10 to determine the scope of authority of the convention shall be brought in the Nineteenth
11 Judicial District Court. The matter shall be tried by preference over other matters, and the
12 court shall render a decision as soon as practicable. In the event of an appeal, the appellate
13 court shall place the matter on its preferential docket, shall hear it without delay, and shall
14 render a decision as soon as practicable.

15 Section 7. Convention organization. (A)(1) The delegates to the convention chosen
16 as provided in this Act shall meet in the House chamber in the State Capitol, or at such other
17 suitable location in the capital city as shall be determined jointly by the presiding officers
18 of the legislature, at 12:00 noon on Monday, January 16, 2012. The chief justice, or in his
19 absence any associate justice of the supreme court designated by the court, shall attend the
20 convention at the opening thereof and shall preside until the chairman has been elected. The
21 secretary of state shall attend the opening of the convention and call the roll of the delegates,
22 whereupon the temporary presiding officer shall administer to the delegates the following
23 oath:

24 "I, . . . , do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the constitution and laws of
25 the United States and the constitution and laws of this state and that I will faithfully and
26 impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent on me as a delegate to the
27 convention, according to the best of my ability and understanding, and that I will observe
28 and obey the limitation of authority contained in the Act under which this convention has
29 assembled. So help me God."

1 (2) No delegate shall be qualified to serve as such unless and until he has taken and
2 subscribed to the oath in Paragraph (1) of this Subsection.

3 (B) After the oath has been administered, the delegates shall proceed to effect the
4 permanent organization of the convention and shall:

5 (1) Adopt rules of procedure for the convention, which rules shall not be inconsistent
6 with the provisions of this Act.

7 (2) Elect from among their number a chairman, a vice chairman, and such other
8 officers as they deem necessary.

9 (3) Elect from among their number an executive committee, the membership of
10 which shall be determined by the delegates but which shall include among its members all
11 of the elected officers of the convention.

12 (4) Elect a chief clerical officer of the convention who shall not be a delegate and
13 whose duties shall be provided by the rules of procedure for the convention.

14 (5) Take such other actions as they deem necessary to effect a permanent
15 organization of the convention.

16 (C) Prior to the convening of the convention, members of the House of
17 Representatives and Senate staffs as designated by the presiding officers of the legislature
18 shall prepare a draft of rules of procedure for consideration, amendment, and adoption by
19 the convention when it convenes. Such proposed rules shall be based upon the rules of the
20 constitutional convention convened in 1973, except as inconsistent with the provisions of
21 this Act. The rules of procedure adopted by the convention shall be subject to later change
22 as the delegates shall provide therein. No delegate shall be allowed to vote by proxy and the
23 rules shall so provide. No committee of the convention, including the executive committee,
24 shall exceed seventeen members and the rules shall so provide.

25 (D) After completing organizational activities, the convention may meet either as
26 a full body or in committees until it completes its duties as provided in this Act.

27 Section 8. Staff; budget; committees. (A) As soon as possible after the members
28 of the executive committee are elected, the executive committee shall employ a research
29 director, research assistants, and secretarial and clerical personnel in accordance with the
30 provisions of Subsection B of this Section and may also employ such other professional,

1 research, technical, clerical, and stenographic employees as the committee shall deem
2 necessary. Compensation of staff personnel shall be established by the executive committee.

3 (B) The staff of the constitutional convention may include but shall not be limited
4 to the following who shall not be delegates to the convention:

5 (1) A director of research who shall possess such qualifications as determined by the
6 committee.

7 (2) Research assistants in such number and possessing such qualifications as
8 determined by the committee.

9 (3) Personnel provided by the Louisiana State University, Tulane University, Loyola
10 University, and Southern University law schools from the faculty as requested by the
11 committee.

12 (4) Such other staff as the executive committee deems necessary.

13 (C) The secretary of state shall advertise for applicants for the staff of the
14 constitutional convention and shall receive such applications for staff service prior to the
15 first meeting of the convention. He shall present the applications he has received to the
16 executive committee on the day the convention convenes. If the executive committee deems
17 necessary, it may receive additional applications after the convention convenes.

18 (D) As soon as possible after the members of the executive committee are elected,
19 the executive committee shall prepare a budget of anticipated expenses of the convention,
20 including staff salaries and other necessary expenditures, based on the amount of the
21 appropriation for the convention and any other funds available for expenditure.

22 (E) The executive committee may create and establish such substantive and
23 procedural committees as it deems appropriate. The chairman of the convention shall
24 appoint the chairman, vice chairman, and the membership of each such committee.

25 (F) Unless the legislature is in session, the House chamber and the legislative
26 committee rooms in the State Capitol shall be available for use by the convention and its
27 committees. If the facilities at the State Capitol are not available or are not sufficient for use
28 by the convention or its committees, the convention or its committees shall meet at a suitable
29 location in the capital city, which location shall be determined by the chairman of the
30 convention, and public notice of the location shall be given and posted at suitable locations

1 in the State Capitol. The convention shall have full authority to use the facilities and
2 services of any board, commission, department, or agency of the state or of any political
3 subdivision of the state, and all such entities shall cooperate with the convention to the
4 fullest extent in furnishing services, facilities, and employees upon request. In addition, the
5 convention may use the facilities and services of other persons and organizations.

6 (G) The convention shall have full authority to accept grants, monies, aid, facilities,
7 and services from public or private sources for the purpose of accomplishing its task of
8 framing a new constitution and any such grants, monies, facilities, services, and donations,
9 as well as the names of the donors thereof, shall be recorded in the record of the proceedings
10 of the convention, and such records shall be open to inspection by any person.

11 (H) The final draft of the proposed constitution shall be completed no later than July
12 15, 2012.

13 Section 9. Compensation of delegates. The delegates to the convention shall receive
14 a per diem for each day of actual attendance at meetings of the convention or of committees
15 thereof in the amount provided for members of the legislature for attendance at legislative
16 sessions, but no delegate shall be paid a per diem after July 15, 2012, or the date the final
17 draft is completed, whichever is earlier. No delegate may accept any other compensation
18 from any source for work performed as a delegate to the convention. However, if a delegate
19 is engaged in regular, bona fide employment, should the delegate's employer choose to
20 continue to pay the usual compensation while the delegate is engaged in the work of the
21 convention, such delegate may accept that compensation, notwithstanding any provision of
22 law to the contrary.

23 Section 10. Appropriation; use of funds. (A) Any appropriation for the expenses
24 of the convention shall be used solely to defray the necessary expenses of the constitutional
25 convention for which provision is made in this Act, including the payment of per diem of
26 delegates, salaries, and expenses of necessary employees, supplies, materials, equipment,
27 printing, and reproduction of materials, and all other necessary expenses incurred in
28 connection with the convention and its work.

29 (B) Any funds appropriated for the convention shall be withdrawn from the state
30 treasury in accordance with warrants signed by the chairman of the convention, and all

1 checks for the disbursement of funds shall be signed by the chairman and the vice chairman
2 of the convention or by the chairman or vice chairman and such other person as shall be
3 designated by the convention.

4 (C) The legislature shall make adequate appropriations to the convention for so long
5 as the convention remains in existence and for so long thereafter as is necessary to assure
6 the payment of all expenses incurred in connection with the work of the convention. The
7 convention shall not be deemed to be a budget unit of the state and therefore shall not be
8 subject to the provisions of Chapter 1 of Title 39 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950.
9 The financial books and records of the convention, however, shall be subject to audit by the
10 legislative auditor.

11 Section 11. Submission of proposed constitution; election. (A) Upon completion
12 of its work, the convention shall submit a proposed draft of a new constitution for the state
13 to the governor. At the discretion of the convention it may also propose and submit at the
14 same time such alternative provisions as it deems appropriate. The constitution as drafted
15 by the convention, together with any alternative provisions proposed for submission, shall
16 be submitted to the people for adoption or rejection. Within thirty days after submission of
17 the proposed draft to the governor, he shall by proclamation call an election, to be held at
18 the same time as the presidential election in 2012 for the purpose of submitting the proposed
19 draft and any alternative provisions to the people for adoption or rejection.

20 (B) The election shall be held, and the results shall be promulgated in accordance
21 with the Louisiana Election Code. All electors duly qualified to vote in the state at the time
22 of the election shall be entitled to vote without regard to party affiliation in their respective
23 precincts on the proposition for or against adoption of the revision and on the question or
24 questions of adoption of such alternative provisions as may be proposed by the convention.
25 The costs of the election shall be paid as provided in the Louisiana Election Code for
26 elections in which a constitutional amendment appears on the ballot.

27 (C) The convention may submit to the electors of the state the proposal of
28 acceptance or rejection of the constitution and any alternative provisions in such form and
29 manner as it may determine and may direct the proper election officials to take the necessary
30 steps to effectuate such determination of the convention in presenting the proposed

1 constitution and any alternative provisions to the electors. Adoption of the constitution and
2 of any such alternative provisions shall require the favorable vote of a majority of the
3 electors voting on the respective proposition.

4 (D) Upon promulgation of the results of the election by the secretary of state, if the
5 constitution is ratified and adopted by the people in the election for which provision is made
6 in this Section, the governor shall proclaim the constitution, including such alternative
7 provisions as are adopted by the people at the election, to be the Constitution of Louisiana.
8 The constitution, including such alternative provisions as are so adopted, shall become
9 effective at midnight on December 31, 2012, except as otherwise provided in the constitution
10 adopted or in any such alternative provisions adopted.

11 Section 12. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
12 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
13 by the governor, as provided in Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
14 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
15 effective on the day following such approval.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

Abramson

HB No. 567

Abstract: Calls a constitutional convention to be convened on Jan. 16, 2012, composed of 123 delegates, 105 to be elected from representative districts and 18 appointed delegates, charged with preparing a proposed new constitution no later than July 15, 2012. Provides for a convention to be preceded by work of an Evaluation and Drafting Committee that will determine if a constitutional convention is needed, and if so, propose a plan for an effective convention, including a proposed constitution.

Proposed law states legislative findings that there is a need to address a number of key policy areas that require constitutional change, that the constitution restricts the legislature in effectively addressing state and constituent needs, and that a serious analysis and revision of the state constitution is needed to conduct an examination of the state's critical needs, to consider reform proposals, and to craft provisions that allow legislative solutions.

Proposed law creates the Evaluation and Drafting Committee for the constitutional convention. Provides that its purpose is to evaluate and determine if a constitutional convention is needed, and if it determines that a convention is needed, to develop and propose a plan for the conduct of an effective constitutional convention, including a draft proposed constitution with alternative provisions.

(1) Provides that the committee is composed of 13 members, to be appointed by Monday, Aug. 2, 2010, as follows:

- (a) Two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker.
 - (b) Two members of the Senate appointed by the Senate president.
 - (c) Two members appointed by the governor.
 - (d) One member appointed by the chief justice of the La. Supreme Court.
 - (e) A representative of the La. State Law Institute appointed by the La. State Law Institute.
 - (f) A representative of the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center or the LSU E. J. Ourso College of Business appointed jointly by the law center chancellor and the business college dean.
 - (g) A representative of the Southern University Law Center or the Southern University College of Business appointed jointly by the law center chancellor and the business college dean.
 - (h) A representative of the Tulane University Law School or the Tulane University A.B. Freeman School of Business appointed jointly by the law school dean and the business school dean.
 - (i) A representative of the Loyola University New Orleans College of Law and the Loyola University New Orleans Joseph A. Butt, S.J., College of Business appointed jointly by the law school dean and the business college dean.
 - (j) A representative of the Public Affairs Research Council of La. appointed by the council.
- (2) Requires the committee to hold its organizational meeting not later than Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2010, and elect a chairman, a vice chairman, and other officers it finds necessary. Provides for filling of committee vacancies in the manner of the original appointments.
 - (3) Requires the committee to undertake studies necessary to evaluate if a constitutional convention is needed to address the needs of the state and its people and, based upon such study, to determine if a constitutional convention is needed.
 - (4) Provides, if the committee determines that a constitutional convention is needed, that the committee prepare a plan for the conduct of an effective constitutional convention, such plan to include:
 - (a) A policy agenda for the convention, identifying significant policy areas to be addressed; a draft of a proposed constitution, including provisions addressing significant policy areas and other necessary provisions; materials explaining the significant policy issue proposals; alternative proposals on significant policy areas, together with explanations and explanatory materials (to include multiple optional approaches and solutions); pertinent background material and data on significant policy areas.
 - (b) Background and other materials useful to the convention.
 - (c) Proposals for elimination of statutory materials and recommendations for legislative action relative thereto.
 - (d) Recommendations for convention organization and deliberations, including significant rules of procedure.
 - (e) Recommendations for convention budget needs.
 - (f) Recommendations for procedures for submission of alternative proposals to the voters and ballot structure.
 - (5) Authorizes the committee to create or appoint advisory committees or task forces to advise or assist in its studies, composed of representatives of the public or private sectors.
 - (6) Requires the Evaluation and Drafting Committee to assemble necessary staff, to include: committee employees (authorizes employment of professional, research, and other employees with compensation to be established by the committee and paid as provided in the Act) (see 9 below); personnel provided by the LSU, Southern University, Tulane University, and Loyola University law schools from the faculty as requested by the committee. Authorizes the committee to use personnel,

- facilities, and services of the legislative auditor, the legislative fiscal officer, and the staffs of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and to request and utilize counsel, assistance, personnel, facilities, and advice from public and private sources. Authorizes the committee to call upon the members or staffs of state departments or agencies for data and assistance and requires them to cooperate with the committee.
- (7) Requires the committee to complete its work and submit to the legislature by Feb. 15, 2011, its evaluation and determination of whether or not a constitutional convention is needed, and if it determines that a convention is needed, to also submit its plan for the conduct of an effective constitutional convention. Requires that a copy of such report be submitted to the governor and to the constitutional convention when it convenes.
 - (8) Authorizes the committee to accept grants, donations, gifts, monies, aid, facilities, and services from public or private sources which shall be recorded with the names of the donors thereof in the record of the committee and the convention and shall be open to inspection by any person.
 - (9) Provides that Evaluation and Drafting Committee members be paid the same per diem for each day of committee work and each day of committee meeting attendance as is provided for convention delegates and makes committee members subject to the same limitations on other compensation as provided for convention delegates. (See below). Provides that per diem and other expenses of the committee may be paid from any funds available for the purpose and, with the approval of the presiding officers of the two houses of the La. Legislature, from funds available for expenses of the legislature.
 - (10) Requires that legislative committee rooms in the State Capitol be available for committee use. Permits the committee to use facilities and services of any state or local department or agency and requires that they cooperate by furnishing services and facilities upon request. Also authorizes the committee to use the facilities and services of other persons and organizations.
 - (11) Provides that the Evaluation and Drafting Committee shall be dissolved 30 days after submission of the plan for the conduct of the constitutional convention to the convention unless a different termination date is provided in convention rules.

Proposed law provides for a constitutional convention as follows:

- (1) Calls the convention to convene at noon on Jan. 16, 2012, to frame a new constitution for the state, subject to the terms, conditions, and provisions of the Act.
- (2) Provides for 123 delegates as follows:
 - (a) 105 delegates to be elected from House of Representatives' 2011 election districts.
 - (b) 13 delegates who shall be the members of the Evaluation and Drafting Committee (see above).
 - (c) Five additional delegates appointed not later than Dec. 1, 2011, as follows:
 - (i) A representative of the La. Association of Business and Industry appointed by the association.
 - (ii) A representative of the La. AFL-CIO appointed by the La. AFL-CIO.
 - (iii) A representative of the La. League of Women Voters appointed by the league.
 - (iv) A representative of the La. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People appointed by the association.
 - (v) A representative of the La. Municipal Association or the Police Jury Association of La. appointed jointly by the associations.

- (3) Requires that delegates be qualified electors of the state and that elected delegates be residents of the district from which elected. Excepts selection and service of members and staff of the Evaluation and Drafting Committee and delegates and staff of the convention from dual employment/dual officeholding laws. Members of the Evaluation and Drafting Committee, delegates, and staff are subject to the code of ethics, public bribery laws, and, in the case of elected delegates and candidates for delegate, the campaign finance laws. Attorney delegates are entitled to continuance of cases in which they are counsel of record while attending sessions and convention work.
- (4) Provides that the election for delegates shall be held at the primary election on Saturday, Oct. 22, 2011, and if a general election is necessary, on Nov. 19, 2011. Candidates qualify without regard to party affiliation. Election is to be in accordance with provisions for election of candidates for public office in the La. Election Code (election code).
- (5) Provides for conduct of the elections in accordance with the election code, except for any conflicts with the Act. Voters vote without regard to party affiliation. Provides for application of state law to tabulation of votes in delegates' election. Provides for election costs to be paid as provided by the La. Election Code as in the case of elections for the state legislature.
- (6) Provides for filling of vacancies in elected delegates' offices by joint appointment by the governor, the speaker of the House, and the president of the Senate of a qualified person from the same district. Provides for filling other vacancies in the same manner as the original selection within 30 days of vacancy.

Proposed law grants to the convention the authority to frame a new state constitution, including such alternative provisions as it deems appropriate. Provides the procedure for judicial determination of the scope of the authority of the convention and questions relating to the construction and validity of the Act and for expedited hearings and decisions. Prohibits any article or provision whereby:

- (1) State or local bonded indebtedness is impaired.
- (2) Terms of office of elected or appointed state or local officials are reduced or shortened prior to the expiration of the term of office at the time the new constitution is adopted, or the salaries of such officials reduced prior to the expiration of such terms.
- (3) The state capital is removed or may be removed from Baton Rouge.

Proposed law provides for convention organization:

- (1) Includes provisions for oath for delegates; adoption of rules; election of chairman, vice chairman, chief clerical officer, and other officers deemed necessary by the convention; and election of an executive committee which shall include all of the elected officers of the convention; and other actions necessary to organize.
- (2) Provides for House and Senate staff designated by the presiding officers of the legislature, prior to the convention, to prepare rules of procedure for adoption by the convention, based on the 1973 convention rules, such rules to be subject to change and adoption by the convention. Prohibits proxy voting. Limits committee membership to 17 members.

Proposed law provides for the initial meeting of the convention on Jan. 16, 2012. Provides that after organizational activities are completed, the convention may meet either as a full body or in committees until it completes its duties.

Proposed law provides for convention staff, budget, committees, meeting site, and other assistance:

- (1) Requires the executive committee to employ a research director, research and clerical staff, and other employees deemed necessary. Specifies certain staff membership. Provides for soliciting staff applications. Provides for executive committee to set staff compensation.
- (2) Provides that staff may include but not be limited to a research director, research assistants, personnel provided by the four law schools from the faculty as requested by the committee, and such other staff as deemed necessary by the executive committee. Requires the secretary of state, prior to the first meeting of the convention, to advertise and receive applications for staff service and present those applications to the executive committee on the day the convention convenes.
- (3) Requires the executive committee to prepare a budget of anticipated expenses of the convention, based on the amount of the appropriation for the convention and any other funds available for expenditure.
- (4) Authorizes the executive committee to establish any substantive or procedural committees it deems necessary. Provides that the chairman of the convention appoint the chairman, vice chairman, and membership of each such committee.
- (5) Requires that the House Chamber and the legislative committee rooms in the State Capitol be available for convention use, unless the legislature is in session. Authorizes the convention to meet elsewhere in Baton Rouge as determined by the chairman when State Capitol facilities are not available or are insufficient.
- (6) Authorizes convention use of facilities and services of state departments and agencies and of political subdivisions and requires their cooperation in furnishing services, facilities, and employees. Authorizes the convention to accept grants, facilities, and services from public and private sources, with such to be recorded in convention records which shall be open for inspection.

Proposed law provides for compensation of delegates and payment of convention expenses:

- (1) Provides per diem for delegates in the same amount provided for the legislature for each day of actual attendance at meetings of the convention or of committees thereof. Prohibits payment of per diem after July 15, 2012, or the date the final draft is completed, whichever is earlier. Prohibits a delegate from accepting any additional compensation for work performed as a delegate to the convention, but allows a delegate to continue to receive compensation for the delegate's regular bona fide employment while a delegate.
- (2) Requires that the legislature make adequate appropriations to the convention for the payment of the necessary expenses of the convention such as per diem, salaries, and expenses of employees, supplies, materials, equipment, and printing for so long as the convention remains in existence and for so long thereafter as is necessary to pay the expenses of the convention.
- (3) Requires that funds appropriated be withdrawn from the state treasury in accordance with warrants signed by the convention chairman and that checks be signed by the chairman and vice chairman, or the chairman or vice chairman and such other person as designated by the convention.

Proposed law provides that the final draft of a proposed constitution be completed not later than July 15, 2012. Requires the convention, upon completion of its work, to submit to the governor the proposed constitution and any alternative provisions agreed upon. Provides that the constitution and any alternative provisions proposed for submission shall be submitted to the people for their adoption or rejection at a special election. Requires the

governor to call the election within 30 days after the draft is submitted, to be held at the same time as the presidential election in 2012 (Nov. 6, 2012). Provides for the election to be held and the results thereof promulgated in accordance with the La. Election Code and for costs to be paid as provided in the election code for elections in which a constitutional amendment appears on the ballot. Voters are allowed to vote without regard to party affiliation. Requires a majority vote to approve the constitution and any alternative proposals.

Proposed law provides for the convention to determine the manner for submission of alternative proposals. Upon promulgation of the results of the election by the secretary of state, if the constitution is ratified and adopted by the people, requires the governor to proclaim the constitution, including alternative provisions adopted, to be the Constitution of La. Provides that the constitution and any such alternative provisions adopted shall become effective at midnight on Dec. 31, 2012, except as otherwise provided in the constitution or in any alternative provisions adopted.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.