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Citizens Constitution Committee

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

March 11, 1953

Office

J. E. Dovel, Chairman

204 Peabody Hall

University of Florida

GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

Chairman

J. E. Dovel

Gainesville

Rep. C. Farris Bryant

11 & C Bank Bldg.

Coala, Fla.

Dear Representative Bryant:

Vice Chairman

B. E. Sheffer

Clearwater

I. D. Saunders

Middleburg

J. M. Fleming

Pensacola

J. Peter Knowles

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Pensacola

Earl F. Reeves

Gainesville

The Citizens Constitution Committee endorses the passage of a joint resolution or bill by the 1953 session of the Florida Legislature to establish a Constitutional Commission for the State of Florida. It is proposed that this Constitutional Commission be appointed; one-third to be named by the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives; one-third by the President of the Florida Senate; and one-third by the Governor of the State. This Commission should be provided with funds to make a study of the Florida Constitution so that it might propose to the 1955 session of the Florida Legislature revision of those articles or parts of the Constitution (with exception of the Bill of Rights) which might be improved by revision. The 1955 Legislature would then consider such recommendations.

The Citizens Constitution Committee also endorses for passage by the 1953 Legislature, and if passed, the submission to the electorate an amendment of Article III, The Legislature Article, in two particulars. (1) It is proposed that the two houses of the Florida Legislature determine the length of the regular biennial session and that the regular session no longer be specifically limited to 60 days. (2) It is proposed that an annual salary be provided for members of the Legislature; which salary would be drawn regardless of the length of the legislature session. There is no fixed recommendation as to the amount of such salary, but it is estimated that it would not greatly increase legislative expenses. On the other hand, it would provide a fixed sum rather than a daily pay scale and come nearer meeting the expenses of the members of the Legislature who have to devote considerable time to legislature business even while the Legislature is not in session.

We trust that you will give some consideration to the recommendations made above. Enclosed are (1) a set of tables and explanatory matter on the 48 state legislatures, taken from the current issue of the Book of the States and, (2) an article by Senator Richard L. Neuberger of the Oregon State Senate on the need for strengthening state legislatures in general. If we can give you any further information, please feel free to write us.

The three paragraphs above were used in a letter by your Chairman to each member of the 1953 Florida Legislature, not a member of the Committee. With the assistance of Governor McFarty, we have every reason to feel that our recommendations will have some success at the 1953 session. If you have not paid your dues to the Committee for 1953, your check for the same would be most welcome.

Sincerely,



J. E. Dovel