

By Senator Powell

30-01961-19

2019196\_\_

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to the Office of Public Counsel;  
3       amending s. 350.061, F.S.; providing term limits for  
4       the Public Counsel; requiring the Committee on Public  
5       Counsel Oversight to receive applications, conduct  
6       interviews, and appoint a Public Counsel by a  
7       specified date every 4 years; providing for the  
8       filling of vacancies; providing an effective date.

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10   Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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12       Section 1. Subsection (1) of section 350.061, Florida  
13       Statutes, is amended to read:

14       350.061 Public Counsel; appointment; oath; restrictions on  
15       Public Counsel and his or her employees.—

16       (1) The committee designated by joint rule of the  
17       Legislature or by agreement between the President of the Senate  
18       and the Speaker of the House of Representatives as the Committee  
19       on Public Counsel Oversight shall appoint a Public Counsel to  
20       represent the general public of Florida before the Florida  
21       Public Service Commission. The Public Counsel shall be an  
22       attorney admitted to practice before the Florida Supreme Court  
23       and shall be appointed by ~~serve at the pleasure of~~ the Committee  
24       on Public Counsel Oversight for a term not to exceed 4 years,  
25       except that the Public Counsel shall continue in office beyond  
26       the 4-year limit until his or her successor is appointed and  
27       takes office. A person may not be appointed Public Counsel if by  
28       the end of his or her term he or she would have served more than  
29       12 consecutive years. The Committee on Public Counsel Oversight

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30 shall receive applications, conduct interviews, and appoint a  
31 Public Counsel to a 4-year term beginning on January 15, 2021,  
32 and every 4 years thereafter, ~~subject to biennial reconfirmation~~  
33 ~~by the committee.~~ The Public Counsel shall perform his or her  
34 duties independently. Vacancies in the office shall be filled  
35 for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as  
36 the original appointment.

37 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2019.