

By the Committee on Innovation, Industry, and Technology; and
Senator Powell

580-03250-19

2019196c1

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to Office of Public Counsel; amending
3 s. 350.061, F.S.; providing term limits for the Public
4 Counsel; requiring the Committee on Public Counsel
5 Oversight to receive applications, conduct interviews,
6 and appoint a Public Counsel by a specified date every
7 4 years; providing for the filling of vacancies;
8 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 must ~~shall~~ be an
22 attorney admitted to practice before the Florida Supreme Court,
23 ~~and~~ shall be appointed for a term of 4 years, and may be
24 reappointed thereafter, provided that a person appointed as the
25 Public Counsel may not serve more than 12 consecutive years in
26 the position. The Public Counsel may be removed from office by a
27 majority vote of the committee appointees of each house. A
28 person may continue as Public Counsel beyond the 4-year limit
29 until his or her successor is appointed and takes office, unless

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

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