

By the Committee on Innovation, Industry, and Technology

580-03378-20

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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; providing for the appointment and
5 removal of the Public Counsel; requiring the Committee
6 on Public Counsel Oversight to receive applications,
7 conduct interviews, and appoint a Public Counsel by a
8 specified date every 4 years; providing for the
9 filling of vacancies; providing an effective date.

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

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

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

17 (1) The committee designated by joint rule of the
18 Legislature or by agreement between the President of the Senate
19 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives as the Committee
20 on Public Counsel Oversight shall appoint a Public Counsel to
21 represent the general public of Florida before the Florida
22 Public Service Commission. The Public Counsel shall be an
23 attorney admitted to practice before the Florida Supreme Court,
24 ~~and shall be appointed for a term of 4 years, and may be~~
25 reappointed thereafter, provided that a person appointed as the
26 Public Counsel may not serve more than 12 consecutive years in
27 the position. The Public Counsel shall be appointed by a
28 majority vote of the committee appointees of each house and may
29 be removed from office by a majority vote of the committee

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30 appointees of each house. A person may continue as Public
31 Counsel beyond the 4-year term until his or her successor is
32 appointed and takes office, unless the person is removed by a
33 vote of the committee. The Committee on Public Counsel Oversight
34 shall receive applications, conduct interviews, and appoint a
35 Public Counsel to a 4-year term beginning on March 1, 2021, and
36 every 4 years thereafter ~~serve at the pleasure of the Committee~~
37 ~~on Public Counsel Oversight, subject to biennial reconfirmation~~
38 ~~by the committee.~~ The Public Counsel shall perform his or her
39 duties independently. Vacancies in the office shall be filled
40 for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as
41 the original appointment.

42 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.