

20207052e1

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

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13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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15 Section 1. Subsection (1) of section 350.061, Florida
16 Statutes, is amended to read:

17 350.061 Public Counsel; appointment; oath; restrictions on
18 Public Counsel and his or her employees.—

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

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30 before July 1, 2020, may not be considered in applying the
31 limitation on consecutive years of service. The Public Counsel
32 shall be appointed by a majority vote of the committee
33 appointees of each house and may be removed from office by a
34 majority vote of the committee appointees of each house. A
35 person may continue as Public Counsel beyond the 4-year term
36 until his or her successor is appointed and takes office, unless
37 the person is removed by a vote of the committee. The Committee
38 on Public Counsel Oversight shall receive applications, conduct
39 interviews, and appoint a Public Counsel to a 4-year term
40 beginning on March 1, 2021, and every 4 years thereafter ~~serve~~
41 ~~at the pleasure of the Committee on Public Counsel Oversight,~~
42 ~~subject to biennial reconfirmation by the committee.~~ The Public
43 Counsel shall perform his or her duties independently. Vacancies
44 in the office shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired
45 term in the same manner as the original appointment.

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