
Inventory of the California State Assembly Constitutional Amendments Committee Records, including records of Assembly Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee, 1960-1982

Inventory Numbers: See individual series.

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Sacramento, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: California State Assembly Constitutional Amendments Committee records,

Date (inclusive): 1960-1982

Inventory: See individual series.

Creator: Assembly Constitutional Amendments Committee, Assembly Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee

Extent: 5.5 cubic feet

Repository: California State Archives
Sacramento, California

Abstract: This collection contains the records of the California State Assembly Local Government Committee and the Assembly Elections and Constitutional Amendment Committee. They reflect the activity of the committees in overseeing constitutional amendments, and election procedures for the period 1969-1970. They consist of bill files, hearing files, and subject files. This relatively small collection only includes records created between 1959 and 1982 with the bulk from 1968-1972.

Language: English

Access

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

Acquisition Information

The California State Archives received these records as voluntary transfers from the Committees. These transfers occurred over a number of years and archives staff arranged them at various times. While the physical arrangement of the records reflects this variety, this inventory describes all of these records according to present standards for legislative committee records. Therefore, the physical arrangement of these records does not necessarily follow the inventory's order.

Committee History

The Assembly Constitutional Amendment Committee was first created in 1901. Its purpose was to review all proposed constitutional amendments. In most cases, the committee reviewed proposed amendments in addition to the review by a specific legislative committee with jurisdiction over the topic of the Amendment.

The necessity of the committee was questioned at times. In 1959, the Bureau of Public Administration reviewed the entire standing committee structure of the California Legislature. The subsequent report noted that the Senate simply referred constitutional amendments to a specific committee rather than have an additional Constitutional Amendment Committee. They suggested the Assembly abolish its committee (Bureau of Public Administration and the California Citizens Legislative Advisory Commission, Standing and Interim Committees of the California Legislature (Sacramento: Assembly Rules Committee, 1959), 14). Nevertheless, the Assembly committee continued to play its traditional role (HR 438, Assembly Journal, 11 July 1968, 5708).

The most significant change for the committee came in the 1960s, when citizens and politicians advocated a substantive revision of the California Constitution. In response, the Legislature created a Citizen's Advisory Committee to Study Constitutional Revision in 1963. As the Advisory Committee finished its deliberations, the Constitutional Amendments Committee reviewed these recommendations before they were presented to the legislature and then to the voters.

In 1969, the Constitutional Amendments Committee merged with the Elections and Reapportionment Committee creating the Elections and Constitutional Amendment Committee (HR 21, Assembly Journal, 13 January 1969, 113-114). Its scope then became "the subject matter embraced in the Elections Code, uncodified laws on the same subject, matters relating to elections and reapportionment, the subject matter of the State Constitution and all matters relating thereto." After questions about the computer tabulation of the primary election results were raised in June 1970, there was a subcommittee on Voter Tabulation formed on June 8, 1970 (HR 414, Assembly Journal, 4 August 1969, 7393; Assembly Journal, 8 June 1970, 4233).

In 1971, the committee once again became the Constitutional Amendments Committee and was responsible only for review of such Amendments; the Elections and Reapportionment Committee took over matters related to elections. In 1974, the number of Assembly committees was reduced from 26 to 19. One of the committees abolished was the Constitutional Amendment Committee effective November 30, 1974 (HR 13, Assembly Journal, 14 January 1971, 167; HR 208, Assembly Journal, 28 August 1974, 17935). The Assembly Judiciary Committee took over review of constitutional amendments from 1974 until 1980.

In 1980, the Assembly Constitutional Amendments Committee was reestablished as a regular standing committee. Once again, the committee's responsibilities were to review all constitutional amendments introduced in the legislature, to review initiatives for "possible defects" in proposed constitutional amendments and to explore methods of improving the initiative process without undermining its "fundamental responsibility." At the time, however, Sacramento Union columnist Dan Walters speculated that Speaker of the House Leo McCarthy reconstituted the committee specifically way to block passage of SCA 4 (1980) that would have allowed for legislative veto of agency regulations (Assembly Journal, 1 December 1980, 12; Larry Doyle, Memorandum to Phil Wyman, 8 June 1981, Assembly Constitutional Amendments Committee Records, LP220:2, California State Archives).

Nevertheless, hoping to strengthen the political influence of the committee, the Committee's Chair Philip Wyman explored the possibility of adding responsibility for "measure relating to judges, courts and court personnel" and removing this responsibility from the Assembly Judiciary Committee. He was concerned that the relatively small number of measures being referred to the committee meant that without expanded responsibilities its influence would decline (Larry Doyle, Memorandum to Phil Wyman, 8 June 1981).

Perhaps because of this limited workload, the committee's responsibilities were absorbed temporarily into the Elections, Reapportionment, and Constitutional Amendments Committee in 1983. A Constitutional Amendments Committee existed again from 1985 to 1986. Afterwards, however, the review of constitutional amendment became part of the responsibilities of the Assembly Elections, Reapportionment, and Constitutional Amendments Committee (Assembly Journal, 12 January 1987, 192).

The chairs of these committees were:

Assembly Constitutional Amendment Committee, 1903-1975

H. S. G. McCartney (Rep.), 1903-1904
Frederick Houser (Rep.), 1905-1906
H. W. A. Weske (Rep.), 1907-1908
Nathan C. Goghlan (Rep./Union Labor), 1909-1910
W. A. Sutherland (Rep.), 1911-1912
William C. Clark (Rep.), 1913-1914
John F. Quinn (Dem./Rep.), 1915-1916
Milton Marks (Rep.), 1917-1918
Arthur A. Wendering (Rep./Dem.), 1919-1920
Carlton W. Greene (Rep./Dem.), 1921-1922
Allen G. Mitchell (Rep.), 1923-1924
Roscoe J. Anderson (Rep., Rep./Dem.), 1925-1930
B. J. Feigenbaum (Rep, Rep./Dem.), 1931-1934
E. V. Latham (Rep.), 1935-1936
Charles A. Hunt (Dem.), 1937-1938
Ernest C. Crowley (Dem., Dem./Rep.), 1941-1952
Frank P. Belotti (Dem./Rep.), 1953-1954
Clark L. Bradley (Rep.), 1955-1956
Eugene G. Nisbet (Dem.), 1957-1958
John A. Busterud (Rep.), 1959-1960
Milton Marks (Rep.), 1961-1962
Edward M. Gaffney (Dem.), 1963-1964
Edward E. Elliott (Dem.), 1965-1968

Assembly Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee, 1969-1970

Paul V. Priolo (Rep.), 1969-1970

Assembly Constitutional Amendments Committee, 1971-1974, 1981-1982, 1985-1986

Alex P. Garcia (Dem.), 1971-1974
Dennis Brown (Rep.), 1981
Phillip D. Wyman (Rep.), 1981-1982
Johan Klehs, (Dem.), 1985-1986.

Scope and Content

The records of the Assembly Constitutional Amendments Committee and its predecessors consist of bill files, hearing files, and subject files. This relatively small collection only includes records created between 1959 and 1982 with the bulk from 1968-1972. Records on the committee before 1959 are not held by California State Archives. The bill files may contain correspondence, testimony and related reports on Constitutional Amendments proposed by Senators or Assembly Members as well as on constitutional amendments introduced by popular initiatives. The hearing files for these committee files are particularly rich for the 1960s when the California Constitution was being substantively revised. Other hearings exposed concerns about whether California citizens and interest groups were overusing the initiative process. A series of hearing in the late 1960s examined whether the minimum voting age in California should be changed to 18; this debate reflected pressures being put on politicians in light of student activism and the drafting of men younger than 21 to serve in the Vietnam War. In 1970, concerns over the use of computer to tabulate ballots in a number of California counties resulted in a series of hearings that reflect concern about the potential corruption of the voting process with new technology. Researchers should be aware that the subject files for these committees consist of material that did not correspond to either specific bills or hearings. The committee did not necessarily label these files in this manner and the contents of specific files and their potential usefulness to researchers varies greatly.

Related Collections at the California State Archives

Constitutional Revision Commission Records, 1964-1972

Assembly Judiciary Committee Records, especially for 1975-1980.

Assembly Elections, Reapportionment, and Constitutional Amendment Committee Records, especially for 1983-1984, and 1987-2001.

Note to Researchers

Researchers interested in this committee are advised to check the papers of its chairs (listed in the Committee History). Committee chairs often kept materials relating to committee operations among their personal files. These papers may be available at the California State Archives or at other repositories.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been associated with these materials in the Archives' automated public access system (currently in development, November 2003).

California. Legislature. Assembly. Constitutional Amendments Committee.

California. Legislature. Assembly. Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee.

California Constitution Revision Commission

Referendum - California.

Voting age - California.

Series 1. **Bill Files, 1959-1976, 1981-1982.**

Physical Description: 46 file folders.

Scope and Content Note

Arrangement

Bill files for 1959-1968 arranged by date of hearings on bills.

Bill Files after 1968 arranged chronologically by session, by house of origin, and numerically by bill number.

Bill files may include minutes; summaries of measures heard; hearing activity reports; amendments; analyses; letters, resolutions, telegrams, testimony, position statements in support or opposition; committee worksheets and press releases; Legislative Counsel opinions and conflict letters; newspaper editorials and clippings; background reports, information, and data. The committee bill files after 1969 tend to include more committee files and background information than the earlier files.

- 1959 Hearings, minutes, and roll calls: ACA1-ACA56, SCA1-SCA31 (20+ items) LP31:1
- 1960 Hearings, minutes, and roll calls: ACA1-ACA6; SCA1, SCA2 (10+ items) LP31:1
- 1961 Hearings, minutes, and roll calls: ACA1-ACA92, AB479, SCA4-SCA38 (1ff) LP31:2
- 1962 Hearings, minutes, and roll calls: ACA1-ACA9, SCA1 (1ff) LP31:5
- 1965 Hearings, minutes, and roll calls: ACA3-ACA90, SCA14-46 (1ff) LP154:228
- 1966 Hearings, minutes, and roll calls during 1st Ex. Sess: ACA1X, ACA13X, SCA4X, AB 78X-AB147X (1ff) LP154:229
- 1967 Hearings, minutes, and roll calls: ACA3-ACA74 (1ff) LP154:230
- 1968 Hearings, minutes, and roll calls: Prop 1., Prop 1a, Prop. 9, ACA1-ACA53, SCA2-SCA28, AB918-AB2044, SB705 (11ff) LP89:13-21, LP154:231-232
- 1969 General committee materials, AB12-AB2288, LP173:7-10B
- ACA5-ACA87, ACRs, AJRs (8ff) LP154:233-235, LP89:32
- 1970 General committee materials, AB91-AB2450, ACA2-ACA72, AJR65, SB3-SB1421, SCA3-SCA19 (5ff) LP154:236-239, LP90:8
- 1971 General committee materials, ACA1-ACA84, SB40, SCA1-SCA44 (5ff) LP90:16-20
- 1972 ACA1-ACA27, SCA6-SCA76 (3ff) LP155:2-4
- 1973-1974 AB39-AB4334, ACA1-ACA14, SB278, SB819, SCA6-SCA51; ACA1x; LP176:204-205
- 1975-1976 Possible Legislation (9ff) LP176:207-212
- 1981-1982 ACA3-ACA86, SCA21-SCA40 (1ff) LP220:3

Series 2. **Hearing Files, 1960-1980.**

Physical Description: 69 file folders.

Scope and Content Note

Arrangement

Hearing files are described by date of hearing

The committee held hearings on topics related to proposed and ratified constitutional amendments, as well as on matter relating to the conduct of elections between 1969-1970. From 1965 to 1969, many of these hearing focused on the recommendations of the Constitutional Revision Commission and subsequent constitutional amendments that sought to enact this major overhaul of the California Constitution. A series of hearings in 1969 considering reducing the minimum voting age to 18, a change later made federally by the ratification of the 26th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

The following year, a subcommittee on Vote Tabulation examined problems associated with the use of new voting machines in the May 1970 primary election. Additional topics that may be of interest to researchers include enactment of a state lottery, the initiative process, annual budget requirements, and income tax indexing. Some hearing files are very complete, including transcripts of the hearings, working papers, correspondence, dictabelts, notes on the meeting, background papers, and related reports. Others may contain only some of these materials. Appendix A is available at the California State Archives and provides a chronological list of the hearings and their subject matter.

Series 3. **Subject Files, 1968-1982.**

Physical Description: 27 file folders.

Scope and Content Note

Arrangement

Subject files are arranged alphabetically by subject.

The subject files may include correspondence, memos, reports, press releases, newspaper clippings, and general committee working papers. They vary greatly in the amount and kind of information. Committee members and consultants created these files to track topics of interest to the committee including constitutional revision, election administration, reapportionment, voting age, and the administration of the committee. Appendix B is available at the California State Archives and provides an alphabetical list of the subjects.