

# THE CONSTITUTION OF WEST VIRGINIA

Ratified in 1872

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## **PREAMBLE**

Since through Divine Providence we enjoy the blessings of civil, political and religious liberty, we, the people of West Virginia, in and through the provisions of this Constitution, reaffirm our faith in and constant reliance upon God and seek diligently to promote, preserve and perpetuate good government in the State of West Virginia for the common welfare, freedom and security of ourselves and our posterity.

[This preamble was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 8, Acts, Regular Session, 1959, p. 659; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1960, c. 4; and ratified November 8, 1960. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 250,984; Against ratification, 102,340; Majority, 148,644.]

## **ARTICLE I**

### **Relations to the Government of the United States**

1. The State of West Virginia is, and shall remain, one of the United States of America. The Constitution of the United States of America, and the laws and treaties made in pursuance thereof, shall be the supreme law of the land.

### **Internal Government and Police**

2. The government of the United States is a government of enumerated powers, and all powers not delegated to it, nor inhibited to the States, are reserved to the States or to the people thereof. Among the powers so reserved to the States is the exclusive regulation of their own internal government and police; and it is the high and solemn duty of the several departments of government, created by this Constitution, to guard and protect the people of this State from all encroachments upon the rights so reserved.

### **Continuity of Constitutional Operation**

3. The provisions of the Constitution of the United States, and of this State, are operative alike in a period of war as in time of peace, and any departure therefrom, or violation thereof, under the plea of necessity, or any other plea, is subversive of good government, and tends to anarchy and despotism.

### **Representatives to Congress**

4. For the election of representatives to Congress, the State

shall be divided into districts, corresponding in number with the representatives to which it may be entitled; which districts shall be formed of contiguous counties, and be compact. Each district shall contain, as nearly as may be, an equal number of population, to be determined according to the rule prescribed in the Constitution of the United States.

## ARTICLE II

### The State

1. The territory of the following counties, formerly parts of the Commonwealth of Virginia, shall constitute and form the State of West Virginia, viz:

The counties of Barbour, Berkeley, Boone, Braxton, Brooke, Cabell, Calhoun, Clay, Doddridge, Fayette, Gilmer, Grant, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lewis, Lincoln, Logan, Marion, Marshall, Mason, McDowell, Mercer, Mineral, Monongalia, Monroe, Morgan, Nicholas, Ohio, Pendleton, Pleasants, Pocahontas, Preston, Putnam, Raleigh, Randolph, Ritchie, Roane, Summers, Taylor, Tucker, Tyler, Upshur, Wayne, Webster, Wetzel, Wirt, Wood and Wyoming. The State of West Virginia includes the bed, bank and shores of the Ohio River, and so much of the Big Sandy River as was formerly included in the Commonwealth of Virginia; and all territorial rights and property in, and jurisdiction over, the same, heretofore reserved by, and vested in, the Commonwealth of Virginia, are vested in and shall hereafter be exercised by the State of West Virginia. And such parts of the said beds, banks and shores as lie opposite, and adjoining several counties of this State, shall form parts of said several counties respectively.

[All of the territory of West Virginia was taken from the Commonwealth of Virginia, and in the Constitution of 1863 forty-four of the above-named counties were designated as forming the State of West Virginia, and in addition, the counties of Berkeley, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Morgan and Pendleton were to be admitted should that Constitution be adopted by a vote of the people of the districts comprising those counties. The districts adopted the Constitution, and these six counties became part of the State. The remaining four counties mentioned above were created by Acts of the Legislature as follows: Mineral County, from Hampshire County, on February 1, 1866; Grant County, from Hardy County, on February 14, 1866; Lincoln County, from parts of Cabell, Putnam, Kanawha and Boone Counties, on February 23, 1867; and Summers County, from parts of Greenbrier, Monroe, Mercer

and Fayette Counties, on February 27, 1871. After the ratification of the Constitution of 1872, Mingo County was created by an act of the Legislature from Logan County, on February 23, 1895, to make a total of fifty-five counties.]

### **Powers of Government in Citizens**

2. The powers of government reside in all the citizens of the State, and can be rightfully exercised only in accordance with their will and appointment.

### **Requisites of Citizenship**

3. All persons residing in this State, born, or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, shall be citizens of this State.

### **Equal Representation**

4. Every citizen shall be entitled to equal representation in the government, and, in all apportionments of representation, equality of numbers of those entitled thereto, shall as far as practicable, be preserved.

### **Provisions Regarding Property**

5. No distinction shall be made between resident aliens and citizens, as to the acquisition, tenure, disposition or descent of property.

### **Treason, What Constitutes—Penalty**

6. Treason against the State shall consist only in levying war against it, or in adhering to its enemies, giving them aid and comfort. No person shall be convicted of treason, unless on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt act, or on confession in open court. Treason shall be punished according to the character of the acts committed, by the infliction of one, or more, of the penalties of death, imprisonment or fine, as may be prescribed by law.

### **“Montani Semper Liberi”—State Seal**

7. The present seal of the State, with its motto, “*Montani Semper Liberi*,” shall be the great seal of the State of West Virginia,

and shall be kept by the Secretary of State, to be used by him officially, as directed by law.

### **Writs, Commissions, Official Bonds—Indictments**

8. Writs, grants and commissions, issued under the authority of this State, shall run in the name of, and official bonds shall be made payable to the State of West Virginia. Indictments shall conclude, "Against the peace and dignity of the State."

## **ARTICLE III**

### **Bill of Rights**

1. All men are, by nature, equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity, namely: The enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and of pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.

### **Magistrates Servants of People**

2. All power is vested in, and consequently derived from, the people. Magistrates are their trustees and servants, and at all times amendable to them.

### **Rights Reserved to People**

3. Government is instituted for the common benefit, protection and security of the people, nation or community. Of all its various forms that is the best, which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety, and is most effectually secured against the danger of maladministration; and when any government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community has an indubitable, inalienable, and indefeasible right to reform, alter or abolish it in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal.

### **Writ of Habeas Corpus**

4. The privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus* shall not be suspended. No person shall be held to answer for treason, felony or

other crime, not cognizable by a justice, unless on presentment or indictment of a grant jury. No bill of attainder, *ex post facto law*, or law impairing the obligation of a contract, shall be passed.

#### **Excessive Bail Not Required**

5. Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishment inflicted. Penalties shall be proportioned to the character and degree of the offense. No person shall be transported out of or forced to leave the State for any offense committed within the same; nor shall any person, in any criminal case, be compelled to be a witness against himself, or be twice put in jeopardy of life or liberty for the same offense.

#### **Unreasonable Searches and Seizures Prohibited**

6. The rights of the citizens to be secure in their houses, persons, papers and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated. No warrant shall issue except upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, particularly describing the place to be searched, or the person or thing to be seized.

#### **Freedom of Speech and Press Guaranteed**

7. No law abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, shall be passed; but the Legislature may, by suitable penalties, restrain the publication or sale of obscene books, papers, or pictures, and provide for the punishment of libel, and defamation of character, and for the recovery, in civil actions, by the aggrieved party, of suitable damages for such libel, or defamation.

#### **Relating to Civil Suits for Libel**

8. In prosecutions and civil suits for libel, the truth may be given in evidence; and if it shall appear to the jury, that the matter charged as libelous is true, and was published with good motives, and for justifiable ends, the verdict shall be for the defendant.

#### **Private Property, How Taken**

9. Private property shall not be taken or damaged for public

use, without just compensation; nor shall the same be taken by any company, incorporated for the purposes of internal improvement, until just compensation shall have been paid, or secured to be paid, to the owner; and when private property shall be taken, or damaged for public use, or for the use of such corporation, the compensation to the owner shall be ascertained in such manner as may be prescribed by general law: *Provided*, That when required by either of the parties, such compensation shall be ascertained by an impartial jury of twelve freeholders.

### **Safeguards for Life, Liberty and Property**

10. No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, and the judgment of his peers.

### **Political Tests Condemned**

11. Political tests, requiring persons, as a prerequisite to the enjoyment of their civil and political rights, to purge themselves by their own oaths, of past alleged offenses, are repugnant to the principles of free government, and are cruel and oppressive. No religious or political test oath shall be required as a prerequisite or qualification to vote, serve as a juror, sue, plead, appeal, or pursue any profession or employment. Nor shall any person be deprived by law, of any right, or privilege, because of any act done prior to the passage of such law.

### **Military Subordinate to Civil Power**

12. Standing armies, in time of peace, should be avoided as dangerous to liberty. The military shall be subordinate to the civil power; and no citizen, unless engaged in the military service of the State, shall be tried or punished by any military court for any offense that is cognizable by the civil courts of the State. No soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house, without consent of the owner; nor in time of war, except in the manner to be prescribed by law.

### **Right of Jury Trial**

13. In suits at common law, where the value in controversy

exceeds twenty dollars exclusive of interest and costs, the right of trial by jury, if required by either party, shall be preserved; and in such suit in a court of limited jurisdiction a jury shall consist of six persons. No fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise reexamined in any case than according to rule of court or law.

[The first amendment of this section was proposed by Joint Resolution No. 11, Acts, Regular Session, 1879, p. 182; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1879, c. 50; and ratified October 12, 1880. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 56,482; Against ratification, 34,073; Majority, 22,409.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

"In suits at common law, where the value in controversy, exclusive of interest and costs, exceeds twenty dollars, the right of trial by a jury of twelve men, if required by either party, shall be preserved; except that in appeals from judgments of justices, a jury of a less number may be authorized by law; but in trials of civil cases before a justice no jury shall be allowed and no fact tried by a jury shall in any case, be otherwise reexamined than according to the rules of common law."

The second amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 6, Acts, Regular Session, 1974, p. 946; submitted under authority of art. 11, c. 3, of the West Virginia Code; and ratified November 5, 1974. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 217,732; Against ratification, 127,393; Majority, 90,339.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

"In suits at common law, where the value in controversy exceeds twenty dollars exclusive of interest and costs, the right of trial by jury, if required by either party, shall be preserved; and in such suit before a justice a jury may consist of six persons. No fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise reexamined in any case than according to the rules of the common law."

This section was amended to read as set out above.]

### **Trials of Crimes—Provisions in Interest of Accused**

14. Trials of crimes, and of misdemeanors, unless herein otherwise provided, shall be by a jury of twelve men,\* public, without unreasonable delay, and in the county where the alleged offense was committed, unless upon petition of the accused, and for good cause shown, it is removed to some other county. In all such trials, the accused shall be fully and plainly informed of the character and cause of the accusation, and be confronted with the witness against him, and shall have the assistance of counsel, and a reasonable time to prepare for his defense; and there shall be awarded to him compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor.

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[\*See section 21 of this article, making women eligible for jury service.]



### **Religious Freedom Guaranteed**

15. No man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever; nor shall any man be enforced, restrained, molested or burthened, in his body or goods, or otherwise suffer, on account of his religious opinions or belief, but all men shall be free to profess and, by argument, to maintain their opinions in matters of religion; and the same shall, in nowise, affect, diminish or enlarge their civil capacities; and the Legislature shall not prescribe any religious test whatever, or confer any peculiar privileges or advantages on any sect or denomination, or pass any law requiring or authorizing any religious society, or the people of any district within this State, to levy on themselves, or others, any tax for the erection or repair of any house for public worship, or for the support of any church or ministry, but it shall be left free for every person to select his religious instructor, and to make for his support such private contracts as he shall please.

### **Voluntary Contemplation, Meditation or Prayer In Schools**

15a. Public schools shall provide a designated brief time at the beginning of each school day for any student desiring to exercise their right to personal and private contemplation, meditation or prayer. No student of a public school may be denied the right to personal and private contemplation, meditation or prayer nor shall any student be required or encouraged to engage in any given contemplation, meditation or prayer as a part of the school curriculum.

[This section was proposed by Senate Joint Resoulution No. 1, Acts, Regular Session, 1984, p. 1123; and ratified November 6, 1984. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 511,057; Against ratification, 145,835; Majority, 365,222 (unofficial).]

### **Right of Public Assembly Held Inviolat**

16. The right of the people to assemble in a peaceable manner, to consult for the common good, to instruct their representatives, or to apply for redress of grievances, shall be held inviolate.

### **Courts Open to All—Justice Administered Speedily**

17. The courts of this State shall be open, and every person, for an injury done to him, in his person, property or reputation, shall have remedy by due course of law; and justice shall be administered without sale, denial or delay.

### **Conviction Not to Work Corruption of Blood or Forfeiture**

18. No conviction shall work corruption of blood or forfeiture of estate.

### **Hereditary Emoluments, etc., Provided Against**

19. No hereditary emoluments, honors or privileges shall ever be granted or conferred in this State.

### **Preservation of Free Government**

20. Free government and the blessings of liberty can be preserved to any people only by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality and virtue, and by a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles.

### **Jury Service for Women**

21. Regardless of sex all persons, who are otherwise qualified, shall be eligible to serve as petit jurors, in both civil and criminal cases, as grand jurors and as coronor's jurors.

[This section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 2, Acts, Regular Session, 1955, p. 571; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1955, c. 22; and ratified November 6, 1956. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 327,113; Against ratification, 202,002; Majority, 125,111.]

### **Right to Keep and Bear Arms**

22. A person has the right to keep and bear arms for the defense of self, family, home and state, and for lawful hunting and recreational use.

[This section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 18, Acts, Regular Session, 1985, p. 1704; submitted in accordance with article eleven, chapter three of the code of West Virginia, one thousand nine hundred thirty-one, as amended; and ratified November 4, 1986. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 336,285; Against ratification, 66,387; Majority, 269,898.]

## ARTICLE IV

### Election and Officers

1. The citizens of the state shall be entitled to vote at all elections held within the counties in which they respectively reside; but no person who is a minor, or who has been declared mentally incompetent by a court of competent jurisdiction, or who is under conviction of treason, felony or bribery in an election, or who has not been a resident of the state and of the county in which he offers to vote, for thirty days next preceding such offer, shall be permitted to vote while such disability continues; but no person in the military, naval or marine service of the United States shall be deemed a resident of this state by reason of being stationed therein.

[This amendment was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 13, Acts, Regular Session, 1994, p. 2230 and ratified November 8, 1994. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 213,956, Against ratification, 153,369; Majority, 59,587.]

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

1. The male citizens of the State shall be entitled to vote at all elections held within the counties in which they respectively reside; but no person who is a minor, or of unsound mind, or a pauper, or who is under conviction of treason, felony, or bribery in an election, or who has not been a resident of the State for one year, and of the county in which he offers to vote, for sixty days next preceding such offer, shall be permitted to vote while such disability continues; but no person in the military, naval or marine service of the United States shall be deemed a resident of this State by reason of being stationed therein.

### Mode of Voting by Ballot

2. In all elections by the people, the mode of voting shall be by ballot; but the voter shall be left free to vote by either open, sealed or secret ballot, as he may elect.

### Voter Not Subject to Arrest on Civil Process

3. No voter, during the continuance of an election at which he is entitled to vote, or during the time necessary and convenient for going to and returning from the same, shall be subject to arrest upon civil process, or be compelled to attend any court, or judicial proceeding, as suitor, juror or witness; or to work upon the public roads; or, except in time of war or public danger to render military service.

### Persons Entitled to Hold Office—Age Requirements

4. No person, except citizens entitled to vote, shall be elected

or appointed to any state, county or municipal office; but the Governor and Judges must have attained the age of thirty, and the Attorney General and Senators the age of twenty-five years, at the beginning of their respective terms of service; and must have been citizens of the State for five years next preceding their election or appointment, or be citizens at the time this Constitution goes into operation.

### **Oath or Affirmation to Support the Constitution**

5. Every person elected or appointed to any office, before proceeding to exercise the authority, or discharge the duties thereof, shall make oath or affirmation that he will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of this State, and that he will faithfully discharge the duties of his said office to the best of his skill and judgment; and no other oath, declaration, or test shall be required as a qualification, unless herein otherwise provided.

### **Provisions for Removal of Officials**

6. All officers elected or appointed under this Constitution, may, unless in cases herein otherwise provided for, be removed from office for official misconduct, incompetence, neglect of duty, or gross immorality, in such manner as may be prescribed by general laws, and unless so removed they shall continue to discharge the duties of their respective offices until their successors are elected, or appointed and qualified.

### **General Elections, When Held—Terms of Officials**

7. The general elections of state and county officers, and of members of the Legislature, shall be held on the Tuesday next after the first Monday in November, until otherwise provided by law. The terms of such officers, not elected, or appointed to fill a vacancy, shall, unless herein otherwise provided, begin, on the first day of January; and of the members of the Legislature, on the first day of December next succeeding their election. Elections to fill vacancies, shall be for the unexpired term. When vacancies occur prior to any general election, they shall be filled by appointments, in such manner as may be prescribed herein, or by general law, which appointments shall expire at such time after the next general election as the person so elected to fill such vacancy shall be qualified.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by Joint Resolution No. 9, Acts, Regular Session, 1883, p. 137; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1883, c. 43; and

ratified October 14, 1884. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 66,181; Against ratification, 25,422; Majority, 40,759.

This section, prior to its amendment, provided that the general election should be held on "the second Tuesday of October," and the change was made in order that the election of state officers would fall on the same day as the presidential election. As a consequential amendment the term of office of members of the Legislature was made to begin on the first day of December instead of the first day of November, as in the original section.]

### **Further Provisions Regarding State's Officers and Agents**

8. The Legislature, in cases not provided for in this Constitution, shall prescribe, by general laws, the terms of office, powers, duties and compensation of all public officers and agents, and the manner in which they shall be elected, appointed and removed.

### **Impeachment of Officials**

9. Any officer of the State may be impeached for maladministration, corruption, incompetency, gross immorality, neglect of duty, or any high crime or misdemeanor. The House of Delegates shall have the sole power of impeachment. The Senate shall have the sole power to try impeachments and no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two thirds of the members elected thereto. When sitting as a court of impeachment, the President of the Supreme Court of Appeals, or, if from any cause it be improper for him to act, then any other judge of that court, to be designated by it, shall preside; and the Senators shall be on oath or affirmation, to do justice according to law and evidence. Judgment in cases of impeachment, shall not extend further than to removal from office, and disqualification to hold any office of honor, trust or profit, under the State; but the party convicted shall be liable to indictment, trial, judgment, and punishment according to law. The Senate may sit during the recess of the Legislature for the trial of impeachments.

### **Fighting of Duels Prohibited**

10. Any citizen of this State, who shall, after the adoption of this Constitution, either in or out of the State, fight a duel with deadly weapons, or send or accept a challenge so to do, or who shall act as a second or knowingly aid or assist in such duel, shall, ever thereafter, be incapable of holding any office of honor, trust or profit in this State.

### **Safeguards for Ballots**

11. The Legislature shall prescribe the manner of conducting and making returns of elections, and of determining contested elections; and shall pass such laws as may be necessary and proper to prevent intimidation, disorder or violence at the polls, and corruption or fraud in voting, counting the vote, ascertaining or declaring the result, or fraud in any manner upon the ballot.

### **Registration Laws Provided For**

12. The Legislature shall enact proper laws for the registration of all qualified voters in this State.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 45, Acts, Regular Session, 1901, p. 472; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1901, c. 154; and ratified November 4, 1902. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 55,196; Against ratification, 25,379; Majority, 29,817.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“No citizen shall ever be denied or refused the right or privilege of voting at an election, because his name is not, or has not been registered or listed as a qualified voter.”]

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Division of Powers**

1. The Legislative, Executive and Judicial Departments shall be separate and distinct, so that neither shall exercise the powers properly belonging to either of the others; nor shall any person exercise the powers of more than one of them at the same time, except that justices of the peace shall be eligible to the Legislature.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Legislature**

1. The legislative power shall be vested in a Senate and House of Delegates. The style of their Acts shall be, “Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia.”

### **Composition of Senate and House of Delegates**

2. The Senate shall be composed of twenty-four, and the House of Delegates of sixty-five, members subject to be increased according to the provisions hereinafter contained.

[The Senate is now composed of thirty-four, and the House of Delegates of one hundred members.]

### **Senators and Delegates—Term of Office**

3. Senators shall be elected for the term of four years, and Delegates for the term of two years. The Senators first elected, shall divide themselves into two classes, one Senator from every district being assigned to each class; and of these classes, the first to be designated by lot in such manner as the Senate may determine, shall hold their seats for two years and the second for four years, so that after the first election, one half of the Senators shall be elected biennially.

### **Division of State into Senatorial Districts**

4. For the election of Senators, the State shall be divided into twelve Senatorial Districts, which number shall not be diminished, but may be increased as hereinafter provided. Every district shall elect two Senators, but, where the district is composed of more than one county, both shall not be chosen from the same county. The districts shall be compact, formed of contiguous territory, bounded by county lines, and, as nearly as practicable, equal in population, to be ascertained by the census of the United States. After every such census, the Legislature shall alter the Senatorial Districts, so far as may be necessary to make them conform to the foregoing provision.

[There are now seventeen Senatorial Districts, as provided by Acts, First Extraordinary Session, 1964, c. 1.]

### **Senatorial Districts Designated**

5. Until the Senatorial Districts shall be altered by the Legislature as herein prescribed, the counties of Hancock, Brooke and Ohio, shall constitute the first Senatorial District; Marshall, Wetzel and Marion, the second; Ritchie, Doddridge, Harrison, Gilmer and Calhoun, the third; Tyler, Pleasants, Wood and Wirt, the fourth; Jackson, Mason, Putnam and Roane, the fifth; Kanawha, Clay, Nicholas, Braxton and Webster, the sixth; Cabell, Wayne, Lincoln, Boone, Logan, Wyoming, McDowell and Mercer, the seventh; Monroe, Greenbrier, Summers, Pocahontas, Fayette and Raleigh, the eighth; Lewis, Randolph, Upshur, Barbour, Taylor and Tucker, the ninth; Preston and Monongalia, the tenth; Hampshire, Mineral, Hardy, Grant and Pendleton, the eleventh; Berkeley, Morgan and Jefferson, the twelfth.

[By the provisions of the Reapportionment Act of 1937, Acts, Regular Session, 1937, c. 128, the number of Senatorial Districts was increased to sixteen, the number of Senators to thirty-two, and the counties rearranged in the various districts.

Under the Reapportionment Act of 1964, Acts, First Extraordinary Session, 1964, c. 1, the number of Senatorial Districts was fixed at seventeen. The County of Kanawha embraces two districts, the eighth and the seventeenth. The other fifty-four counties are arranged into fifteen districts, each consisting of two or more counties.

For a list of the counties comprising the present seventeen Senatorial Districts, see Acts, Fifth Extraordinary Session, 2001, c. 10, p. 2981].

### **Provision for Delegate Representation**

6. For the election of Delegates, every county containing a population of less than three fifths of the ratio of representation for the House of Delegates, shall, at each apportionment, be attached to some contiguous county or counties, to form a Delegate District.

[By the provisions of Acts, Regular Session, 1901, c. 10, the House of Delegates consisted of eighty-six members, each county having at least one member. From 1916 to 1952, the House of Delegates consisted of ninety-four members. In 1951, the membership was increased to one hundred members with each county continuing to have at least one member. See Acts, Regular Session, 1951, c. 166.

Under the Reapportionment Act of 1964, Acts, First Extraordinary Session, 1964, c. 1, the membership was again fixed at one hundred, but seven delegate districts were established, embracing fifteen counties, and allotted a total of nine delegates.

Under the Reapportionment Act of 1973, Acts, Regular Session, 1973, c. 71, the membership was apportioned into thirty-six delegate districts embracing all fifty-five counties and allotted one hundred delegates.

Under the Reapportionment Act of 1982, Acts, Regular Session, 1982, c. 99, the membership was apportioned into forty delegate districts embracing all fifty-five counties and allotted one hundred delegates.

Under the Reapportionment Act of 1991, Acts, Third Extraordinary Session, 1991, c. 3, the membership was apportioned into fifty-six districts embracing all fifty-five counties and allotted one hundred delegates.]

Under the Reapportionment Act of 2001, Acts, Fifth Extraordinary Session, 2001, c.10, the membership was apportioned into fifty-eight districts embracing all fifty-five counties and allotted one hundred delegates.]

### **After Census, Delegate Apportionment**

7. After every census the Delegates shall be apportioned as follows: The ratio of representation of the House of Delegates shall be ascertained by dividing the whole population of the State by the number of which the House is to consist and rejecting the fraction of a unit, if any, resulting from such division. Dividing the population of every Delegate District, and of every county not included in a Delegate District, by the ratio thus ascertained, there shall be assigned to each a number of Delegates equal to the quotient obtained by this division, excluding the fractional remainder. The additional Delegates necessary to make up the number of which the House is to consist, shall then be assigned to



those Delegate Districts, and counties not included in a Delegate District, which would otherwise have the largest fractions unrepresented; but every Delegate District and county not included in a Delegate District, shall be entitled to at least one Delegate.

### **Designation of Delegate Districts**

8. Until a new apportionment shall be declared, the counties of Pleasants and Wood shall form the first Delegate District, and elect three Delegates; Ritchie and Calhoun, the second, and elect two Delegates; Barbour, Harrison and Taylor, the third, and elect one Delegate; Randolph and Tucker, the fourth, and elect one Delegate; Nicholas, Clay and Webster, the fifth, and elect one Delegate; McDowell and Wyoming, the sixth and elect one Delegate.

### **Further Apportionments**

9. Until a new apportionment shall be declared, the apportionment of Delegates to the counties not included in Delegate Districts, and to Barbour, Harrison and Taylor counties, embraced in such district shall be as follows:

To Barbour, Boone, Braxton, Brooke, Cabell, Doddridge, Fayette, Hampshire, Hancock, Jackson, Lewis, Logan, Greenbrier, Monroe, Mercer, Mineral, Morgan, Grant, Hardy, Lincoln, Pendleton, Putnam, Roane, Gilmer, Taylor, Tyler, Upshur, Wayne, Wetzel, Wirt, Pocahontas, Summers and Raleigh counties, one Delegate each.

To Berkeley, Harrison, Jefferson, Marion, Marshall, Mason, Monongalia and Preston counties, two Delegates each.

To Kanawha County, three Delegates.

To Ohio County, four Delegates.

[Many changes have been made in this apportionment. There are 58 delegate districts. For the present apportionment, see Acts, Fifth Extraordinary Session, 2001, c. 10, p. 2981.]

### **Arrangement of Senatorial and Delegate Districts**

10. The arrangement of the Senatorial and Delegate Districts, and apportionment of Delegates, shall hereafter be declared by law, as soon as possible after each succeeding census, taken by authority of the United States. Where so declared they shall apply to the first general election for members of the Legislature, to be

thereafter held, and shall continue in force unchanged, until such District shall be altered, and Delegates apportioned, under the succeeding census.

### **Additional Territory May Be Admitted into State**

11. Additional territory may be admitted into, and become part of this State, with the consent of the Legislature and a majority of the qualified voters of the State, voting on the question. And in such case provision shall be made by law for the representation thereof in the Senate and House of Delegates, in conformity with the principles set forth in this Constitution. And the number of members of which each house of the Legislature is to consist, shall thereafter be increased by the representation assigned to such additional territory.

### **Senators and Delegates Required to Be Residents of District**

12. No person shall be a Senator or Delegate who has not for one year next preceeding his election, been a resident within the District or County from which he is elected; and if a Senator or Delegate remove from the District or County for which he was elected, his seat shall be thereby vacated.

### **Eligibility to Seat in Legislature**

13. No person holding any other lucrative office or employment under this State, the United States, or any foreign government; no member of Congress; and no person who is sheriff, constable, or clerk of any court of record, shall be eligible to a seat in the Legislature.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 8, Acts, Regular Session, 1970, p. 456; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1970, c. 22; and ratified November 3, 1970. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 208,032; Against ratification, 141,970; Majority, 66,062.

This section prior to its amendment, read:

“No person holding a lucrative office under this State, the United States, or any foreign government; no member of Congress; no person who is a salaried officer of any railroad company, or who is sheriff, constable, or clerk of any court of record, shall be eligible to a seat in the Legislature.”]

### **Bribery Conviction Forfeits Eligibility**

14. No person who has been, or hereafter shall be convicted of bribery, perjury, or other infamous crimes, shall be eligible to a

seat in the Legislature. No person who may have collected or been entrusted with public money, whether state, county, township, district, or other municipal organization, shall be eligible to the Legislature, or to any office of honor, trust, or profit in this State, until he shall have duly accounted for and paid over such money according to law.

### **Senators and Delegates Not to Hold Civil Office for Profit**

15. No Senator or Delegate, during the term for which he shall have been elected, shall be elected or appointed to any civil office of profit under this State, which has been created, or the emoluments of which have been increased during such term, except offices to be filled by election by the people. Nor shall any member of the Legislature be interested, directly or indirectly, in any contract with the State, or any county thereof, authorized by any law passed during the term for which he shall have been elected.

### **Oath of Senators and Delegates**

16. Members of the Legislature, before they enter upon their duties, shall take and subscribe the following oath or affirmation: "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of West Virginia, and faithfully discharge the duties of Senator (or Delegate) according to the best of my ability"; and they shall also take this further oath, to wit: "I will not accept or receive, directly or indirectly, any money or other valuable thing, from any corporation, company, or person for any vote or influence I may give or withhold, as Senator (or Delegate), on any bill, resolution or appropriation, or for any act I may do or perform as Senator (or Delegate)." These oaths shall be administered in the hall of the house to which the member is elected, by a Judge of the Supreme Court of Appeals, or of a Circuit Court, or by any other person authorized by law to administer an oath; and the Secretary of State shall record and file said oaths subscribed by each member; and no other oath or declaration shall be required as a qualification. Any member who shall refuse to take the oath herein prescribed, shall forfeit his seat; and any member who shall be con-

victed of having violated the oath last above required to be taken, shall forfeit his seat and be disqualified thereafter from holding any office of profit or trust in this State.

### **Members of Legislature Privileged from Civil Arrest**

17. Members of the Legislature shall, in all cases except treason, felony, and breach of the peace, be privileged from arrest during the session, and for ten days before and after the same; and for words spoken in debate, or any report, motion or proposition made in either house, a member shall not be questioned in any other place.

### **Time and Place of Assembly of Legislature**

18. The Legislature shall assemble annually at the seat of government, and not oftener unless convened by the Governor. Regular sessions of the Legislature shall commence on the second Wednesday of January of each year. Upon the convening of the Legislature in each odd-numbered year, each House shall proceed to organize by the election of its officers for two-year terms and both Houses shall then in joint assembly open and publish the election returns delivered to the Legislature as prescribed by other provisions of this Constitution and by general law. When all of these matters have been completed in the year one thousand nine hundred seventy-three and every fourth year thereafter, the Legislature shall adjourn until the second Wednesday of February following. Notwithstanding the provisions of section fifty-one of this article and any other provisions of this Legislature, on and after the effective date hereof, there shall be submitted by the Governor to the Legislature, on the second Wednesday of February in the year one thousand nine hundred seventy-three and every fourth year thereafter, and on the second Wednesday of January of all other years, unless a later time in any year be fixed by the Legislature, a budget for the next ensuing fiscal year and a bill for the proposed appropriations of such budget.

[The first amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 4, Acts, Regular Session, 1953, p. 612; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1953, c. 31; and ratified November 2, 1954. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 190,877; Against ratification, 137,624; Majority, 53,253.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“This Legislature shall assemble at the seat of government, biennially, and not oftener, unless convened by the Governor. This first session of the Legislature, after the adoption of this Constitution, shall commence on the third Tuesday of November, 1872; and the regular biennial session of the Legislature shall commence on the Second Wednesday of January, 1875, and every two years thereafter, on the same day.”

It was amended to read:

“The Legislature shall assemble annually at the seat of government, and not oftener, unless convened by the Governor. Regular sessions of the Legislature shall commence on the second Wednesday of January of each year. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the Constitution, the board of public works shall, on and after the effective date hereof, submit to the Legislature an annual budget prepared as otherwise required by the Legislature.”

The second amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 8, Acts, Regular Session, 1970, p. 456; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1970, c. 22; and ratified November 3, 1970. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 208,032; Against ratification, 141,970; Majority, 66,062.

This section was amended to read as set out above.]

### **Convening of Legislature by Governor**

19. The Governor may convene the Legislature by proclamation whenever, in his opinion, the public safety or welfare shall require it. It shall be his duty to convene it, on application in writing, of three fifths of the members elected to each house.

### **Seat of Government**

20. The seat of government shall be at Charleston, until otherwise provided by law.

### **Provisions for Assembling of Legislature Other Than at the Seat of Government**

21. The Governor may convene the Legislature at another place, when, in his opinion, it cannot safely assemble at the seat of Government, and the Legislature may, when in session, adjourn to some other place, when in its opinion, the public safety or welfare, or the safety of the members, or their health, shall require it.

### **Length of Legislative Session**

22. The regular session of the Legislature held in the year one thousand nine hundred seventy-three and every fourth year thereafter shall, in addition to the meeting days preceding the

adjournment provided for in section eighteen of this article, not exceed sixty calendar days computed from and including the second Wednesday of February, and the regular session held in all other years shall not exceed sixty calendar days computed from and including the second Wednesday of January. Any regular session may be extended by a concurrent resolution adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members elected to each House determined by yeas and nays and entered on the Journals.

[The first amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 3, Acts, Regular Session, 1919, p. 498; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1919, c. 127; and ratified November 2, 1920. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 160,929; Against ratification, 122,744; Majority, 38,185.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

"No session of the Legislature, after the first, shall continue longer than forty-five days, without the concurrence of two thirds of the members elected to each house."

It was amended to read:

"All sessions of the Legislature, other than extraordinary sessions, shall continue in session for a period not exceeding fifteen days from date of convening, during which time no bills shall be passed or rejected, unless the same shall be necessary to provide for a public emergency, shall be specially recommended by the governor and passed by a vote of four fifths of the members elected to each house; whereupon, a recess of both houses must be taken until the Wednesday after the second Monday of March following. On reassembling of the Legislature, no bill shall be introduced in either house without a vote of three fourths of all the members elected to each house taken by yeas and nays. The regular session shall not continue longer than forty-five days after reconvening, without the concurrence of two thirds of the members elected to each house."

The second amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 9, Acts, Regular Session, 1927, p. 350; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1927, c. 28; and ratified November 6, 1928. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 275,374; Against ratification, 85,123; Majority, 190,251.

It was amended to read:

"All sessions of the Legislature, other than extraordinary sessions, shall continue for a period of sixty days from the date of beginning. But all regular sessions may be extended by the concurrence of two thirds of the members elected to each house."

The third amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 4, Acts, Regular Session, 1953, p. 612; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1953, c. 31; and ratified November 2, 1954. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 190,877; Against ratification, 137,624; Majority, 53,253.

It was amended to read:

"The regular session of the Legislature held in the year one thousand nine hundred fifty-five and every second year thereafter shall not exceed sixty days, and the regular session held in the year one thousand nine hundred fifty-six and every

second year thereafter shall not exceed thirty days. During any thirty-day session the Legislature shall consider no other business than the annual budget bill, except such as may be stated in a proclamation issued by the Governor at least ten days prior to the convening of the session, or such business as may be stated by the Legislature on its own motion in a concurrent resolution adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members elected to each house. All regular sessions may be extended by the concurrence of two thirds of the members elected to each house."

The fourth amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 8, Acts, Regular Session, 1970, p. 456; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1970, c. 22; and ratified November 3, 1970. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 208,032; Against ratification, 141,970; Majority, 66,062.

This section was amended to read as set out above.]

### **Concerning Adjournment**

23. Neither house shall, during the session, adjourn for more than three days, without the consent of the other. Nor shall either, without such consent, adjourn to any other place than that in which the Legislature is sitting.

### **Rules Governing Legislative Proceedings**

24. A majority of the members elected to each House of the Legislature shall constitute a quorum. But a smaller number may adjourn from day to day, and shall be authorized to compel the attendance of absent members, as each House may provide. Each House shall determine the rules of its proceedings and be the judge of the elections, returns and qualifications of its own members. The Senate shall choose, from its own body, a President; and the House of Delegates, from its own body a Speaker. Each House shall appoint its own officers, and remove them at pleasure. The oldest Delegate in point of continuous service present at the assembly of the Legislature at which officers thereof are to be selected, and if there be two or more such Delegates with equal continuous service the one agreed upon by such Delegates or chosen by such Delegates by lot, shall call the House to order, and preside over it until the Speaker thereof shall have been chosen, and have taken his seat. The oldest member of the Senate in point of continuous service present at the assembly of the Legislature at which officers thereof are to be selected, and if there be two or more such members with equal continuous service the one agreed upon by such members or chosen by such members by lot, shall call the

Senate to order, and preside over the same until a President of the Senate shall have been chosen, and have taken his seat.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 8, Acts, Regular Session, 1970, p. 456; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1970, c. 22; and ratified November 3, 1970. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 208,032; Against ratification, 141,970; Majority, 66,062.

This section, prior to its amendment read:

“A majority of the members elected to each house of the Legislature shall constitute a quorum. But a smaller number may adjourn from day to day, and shall be authorized to compel the attendance of absent members, as each house may provide. Each house shall determine the rules of its proceedings and be the judge of the elections, returns and qualifications of its own members. The Senate shall choose, from its own body, a President; and the House of Delegates, from its own body, a Speaker. Each house shall appoint its own officers, and remove them at pleasure. The oldest Delegate present shall call the House to order at the opening of each new House of Delegates, and preside over it until the Speaker thereof shall have been chosen and has taken his seat. The oldest member of the Senate present at the commencement of each regular session thereof shall call the Senate to order, and preside over the same until a President of the Senate shall have been chosen and has taken his seat.”]

### **Authority to Punish Members**

25. Each house may punish its own members for disorderly behavior, and with the concurrence of two thirds of the members elected thereto, expel a member, but not twice for the same offense.

### **Provisions for Undisturbed Transaction of Business**

26. Each house shall have power to provide for its own safety, and the undisturbed transaction of its business, and may punish, by imprisonment, any person not a member, for disrespectful behavior in its presence; for obstructing any of its proceedings, or any of its officers in the discharge of his duties, or for any assault, threat or abuse of a member, for words spoken in debate. But such imprisonment shall not extend beyond the termination of the session, and shall not prevent the punishment of any offense, by the ordinary course of law.

### **Accounting for State Moneys**

27. Laws shall be enacted and enforced, by suitable provisions and penalties, requiring sheriffs, and all other officers, whether state, county, district or municipal, who shall collect or



receive, or whose official duty it is, or shall be, to collect, receive, hold or pay out any moneys belonging to, or which is, or shall be, for the use of the State or of any county, district, or municipal corporation, to make annual account and settlement therefor. Such settlement, when made, shall be subject to exceptions, and take such direction, and have only such force and effect, as may be provided by law; but in all cases such settlement shall be recorded, and be open to the examination of the people at such convenient place or places as may be appointed by law.

### **Origination of Bills**

28. Bills and resolutions may originate in either house, but may be passed, amended or rejected by the other.

### **Requirement for Reading of Bills**

29. No bill shall become a law until it has been fully and distinctly read, on three different days, in each house, unless in case of urgency, by a vote of four fifths of the members present, taken by yeas and nays on each bill, this rule be dispensed with: *Provided*, In all cases, that an engrossed bill shall be fully and distinctly read in each house.

### **Acts to Embrace but One Object—Time of Effect**

30. No act hereafter passed shall embrace more than one object, and that shall be expressed in the title. But if any object shall be embraced in an act which is not so expressed, the act shall be void only as to so much thereof as shall not be so expressed, and no law shall be revived, or amended, by reference to its title only; but the law revived, or the section amended, shall be inserted at large, in the new act. And no act of the Legislature, except such as may be passed at the first session under this Constitution, shall take effect until the expiration of ninety days after its passage, unless the Legislature shall by a vote of two thirds of the members elected to each house, taken by yeas and nays, otherwise direct.

### **How Bills May Be Amended**

31. When a bill or joint resolution, passed by one house, shall be amended by the other, the question on agreeing to the bill, or joint resolution, as amended, shall be again voted on, by yeas and nays, in the house by which it was originally passed, and the result entered upon its journals; in all such cases, the affirmative vote of a majority of all the members elected to such house shall be necessary.

### **“Majority” Defined**

32. Whenever the words, “a majority of the members elected to either house of the Legislature,” or words of like import, are used in this Constitution, they shall be construed to mean a majority of the whole number of members to which each house is, at the time, entitled, under the apportionment of representation, established by the provisions of this Constitution.

### **Compensation and Expenses of Members**

33. Members of the Legislature shall receive such compensation in connection with the performance of their respective duties as members of the Legislature and such allowances for travel and other expenses in connection therewith as shall be (1) established in a resolution submitted to the Legislature by the Citizens Legislative Compensation Commission hereinafter created, and (2) thereafter enacted into general law by the Legislature at a regular session thereof, subject to such requirements and conditions as shall be prescribed in such general law. The Legislature may in any such general law reduce but shall not increase any item of compensation or expense allowance established in such resolution. All voting on the floor of both Houses on the question of passage of any such general law shall be by yeas and nays to be entered on the Journals.

The Citizens Legislative Compensation Commission is hereby created. It shall be composed of seven members who have been residents of this State for at least ten years prior to the date of appointment, to be appointed by the Governor within twenty days

after ratification of this amendment, no more than four of whom shall be members of the same political party. The members shall be broadly representative of the public at large. Members of the Legislature and officers and employees of the State or of any county, municipality or other governmental unit of the State shall not be eligible for appointment to or to serve as members of the Commission. Each member of the Commission shall serve for a term of seven years, except of the members first appointed, one member shall be appointed for a term of one year, and one each for terms ending two, three, four, five, six and seven years after the date of appointment. As the term of each member first appointed expires, a successor shall be appointed for a seven-year term. Any member may be reappointed for any number of terms, and any vacancy shall be filled by the Governor for the unexpired term. Any member of the Commission may be removed by the Governor prior to the expiration of such member's term for official misconduct, incompetency or neglect of duty. The Governor shall designate one member of the Commission as chairman. The members of the Commission shall serve without compensation, but shall be entitled to be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred in the performance of their duties as such members.

The Commission shall meet as often as may be necessary and shall within fifteen days after the beginning of the regular session of the Legislature in the year one thousand nine hundred seventy-one and within fifteen days after the beginning of the regular session in each fourth year thereafter submit by resolution to the Legislature its determination of compensation and expense allowances, which resolution must be concurred in by at least four members of the Commission.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution, such compensation and expense allowances as may be provided for by any such general law shall be paid on and after the effective date of such general law. Until the first such general law becomes effective, the provisions of this section in effect immediately prior to the ratification of this amendment shall continue to govern.

[The first amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 3, Acts, Regular Session, 1919, p. 498; submitted by Acts, Regular Session,

1919, c. 127; and ratified November 2, 1920. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 160,929; Against ratification, 122,744; Majority, 38,185.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“The members of the Legislature shall each receive for their services the sum of four dollars per day and ten cents for each mile traveled in going to and returning from the seat of Government by the most direct route. The Speaker of the House of Delegates and the President of the Senate, shall each receive an additional compensation of two dollars per day for each day they shall act as presiding officers. No other allowance or emolument than that by this section provided shall directly or indirectly be made or paid to the members of either House for postage, stationery, newspapers, or any other purpose whatever.”

It was amended to read:

“The members of the Legislature shall each receive for their services the sum of five hundred dollars per annum and ten cents for each mile traveled in going to and returning from the seat of government by the most direct route. The Speaker of the House of Delegates and the President of the Senate, shall each receive an additional compensation of two dollars per day for each day they shall act as presiding officers. No other allowance or emolument than that by this section provided shall directly or indirectly be made or paid to the members of either house for postage, stationery, newspapers, or any other purpose whatever.”

The second amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 4, Acts, Regular Session, 1953, p. 612; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1953, c. 31; and ratified November 2, 1954. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 190,877; Against ratification, 137,624; Majority, 53,253.

It was amended to read:

“Each member of the Legislature shall receive for his services the sum of one thousand five hundred dollars a year, and expenses for one round trip in connection with any session, at the rate of ten cents a mile traveled in going to and returning from the seat of government by the most direct route: *Provided*, That if party caucuses are held in advance of the date of the assembly of the Legislature in odd-numbered years for the purpose of selecting candidates for officers of the two houses, expenses for travel at the rate herein fixed shall be allowed each member for one round trip in connection with attending such caucuses. The Speaker of the House of Delegates and the President of the Senate shall each receive an additional compensation of five dollars a day for each day served as presiding officer. No other allowance or emolument than that by this section provided shall directly or indirectly be made or paid to the members of either house for postage, stationery, newspapers, or any other purpose whatever. Notwithstanding any other provision of the Constitution, the compensation herein provided for shall be paid to each member of the Legislature on and after the adoption of this amendment.”

The third amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 8, Acts, Regular Session, 1970, p. 456; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1970, c. 22; and ratified November 3, 1970. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 208,032; Against ratification, 141,970; Majority, 66,062.

This section was amended to read as set out above.]

**Distribution of Laws and Journals Provided for—  
Contracts for Printing**

34. The Legislature shall provide by law that the fuel, stationery and printing paper, furnished for the use of the State; the copying, printing, binding and distributing the laws and journals; and all other printing ordered by the Legislature, shall be let by contract to the lowest responsible bidder, bidding under a maximum price to be fixed by the Legislature; and no member or officer thereto, or officer of the State, shall be interested, directly or indirectly, in such contract, but all such contracts shall be subject to the approval of the Governor, and in case of his disapproval of any such contract, there shall be a reletting of the same in such manner as may be prescribed by law.

**State Not to Be Made Defendant in Any Court,  
Except in Garnishment or Attachment Proceedings**

35. The State of West Virginia shall never be made defendant in any court of law or equity, except the State of West Virginia, including any subdivision thereof or any municipality therein, or any officer, agent or employee thereof, may be made defendant in any garnishment or attachment proceeding, as garnishee or suggestee.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 3, Acts, Regular Session, 1935, p. 662; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1935, c. 23; and ratified November 3, 1936. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 161,386; Against ratification, 61,472; Majority, 99,914.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“The State of West Virginia shall never be made defendant in any court of law or equity.”]

**Lotteries; Bingo; Raffles; County Option**

36. The Legislature shall have no power to authorize lotteries, or gift enterprises for any purpose, and shall pass laws to prohibit the sale of lottery or gift enterprise tickets in this State; except that the Legislature may authorize lotteries which are regulated, controlled, owned and operated by the State of West Virginia in the manner provided by general law, either separately by this State or jointly or in cooperation with one or more other states and may authorize state regulated bingo games and raffles for the purpose of raising money by charitable or public service

organizations or by the state fair of West Virginia for charitable or public service purposes: *Provided*, That each county may disapprove the holding of bingo games and raffles within that county at a regular, primary or special election but once having disapproved such activity, may thereafter authorize the holding of bingo games and raffles, by majority vote at a regular, primary, or special election held not sooner than five years after the election resulting in disapproval; that all proceeds from the bingo games and raffles be used for the purpose of supporting charitable or public service purposes; and that the Legislature shall provide a means of regulating the bingo games and raffles so as to ensure that only charitable or public service purposes are served by the conducting of the bingo games and raffles.

[The first amendment to this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 13, Acts, Regular Session, 1980, p. 739; submitted in accordance with Article 11, Chapter 3 of the West Virginia Code; and ratified November 4, 1980. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 387,790; Against ratification, 216,659; Majority, 171,131.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“The Legislature shall have no power to authorize lotteries, or gift enterprises for any purpose, and pass laws to prohibit the sale of lottery or gift enterprise tickets in this State.”

The second amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 3, Acts, Regular Session, 1983, p. 1076 and ratified November 6, 1984. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 437,357; Against ratification, 219,453; Majority, 217,904 (unofficial).

This section was amended to allow the Legislature to authorize lotteries which are regulated, controlled, owned and operated by the State of West Virginia in the manner provided by general law, either separately by this State or jointly or in cooperation with one or more other states.”]

### **Terms of Office Not to Be Extended After Election**

37. No law shall be passed after the election of any public officer, which shall operate to extend the term of his office.

### **Salaries of Officials Cannot Be Increased During Official Terms**

38. No extra compensation shall be granted or allowed to any public officer, agent, servant or contractor, after the services shall have been rendered or the contract made; nor shall any Legislature authorize the payment of any claim or part thereof,

hereafter created against the State, under any agreement or contract made, without express authority of law; and all such unauthorized agreements shall be null and void. Nor shall the salary of any public officer be increased or diminished during his term of office, nor shall any such officer, or his or their sureties be released from any debt or liability due to the State: *Provided*, The Legislature may make appropriations for expenditures hereafter incurred in suppressing insurrection, or repelling invasion.

### **Local Laws Not to Be Passed in Enumerated Cases**

39. The Legislature shall not pass local or special laws in any of the following enumerated cases; that is to say, for

Granting divorces;

Laying out, opening, altering and working roads or highways;

Vacating roads, town plats, streets, alleys and public grounds;

Locating, or changing county seats;

Regulating or changing county or district affairs;

Providing for the sale of church property, or property held for charitable uses;

Regulating the practice in courts of justice;

In incorporating cities, towns or villages, or amending the charter of any city, town or village, containing a population of less than two thousand;

Summoning or impaneling grand or petit juries;

The opening or conducting of any election, or designating the place of voting;

The sale and mortgage of real estate belonging to minors, or others under disability;

Chartering licensing, or establishing ferries or toll bridges;

Remitting fines, penalties or forfeitures;

Changing the law of descent;

Regulating the rate of interest;

Authorizing deeds to be made for land sold for taxes;

Releasing taxes; releasing title to forfeited lands.

The Legislature shall provide, by general laws, for the foregoing and all other cases for which provision can be so made; and in no case shall a special act be passed, where a general law would be proper, and can be made applicable to the case, nor in any other case in which the courts have jurisdiction, and are competent to give the relief asked for.

### **Municipal Home Rule**

39a. No local or special law shall hereafter be passed incorporating cities, towns or villages, or amending their charters. The Legislature shall provide by general laws for the incorporation and government of cities, towns and villages, and shall classify such municipal corporations, upon the basis of population, into not less than two nor more than five classes. Such general laws shall restrict the powers of such cities, towns and villages to borrow money and contract debts, and shall limit the rate of taxes for municipal purposes, in accordance with section one, article ten of the Constitution of the State of West Virginia. Under such general laws, the electors of each municipal corporation, wherein the population exceeds two thousand, shall have power and authority to frame, adopt and amend the charter of such corporation, or to amend an existing charter thereof, and through its legally constituted authority, may pass all laws and ordinances relating to its municipal affairs: *Provided*, That any such charter or amendment thereto, and any such law or ordinance so adopted, shall be invalid and void if inconsistent or in conflict with this Constitution or the general laws of the State then in effect, or thereafter from time to time enacted.

[This section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 3, Acts, Regular Session, 1935, p. 706; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1935, c. 22; and ratified November 3, 1936. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 150,370; Against ratification, 59,580; Majority, 90,790.

### **Limiting Powers of Court or Judge**

40. The Legislature shall not confer upon any court, or judge, the power of appointment to office, further than the same is



herein provided for.

### **Each House to Keep Journal of Proceedings**

41. Each house shall keep a journal of its proceedings, and cause the same to be published from time to time, and all bills and joint resolutions shall be described therein, as well by their title as their number, and the yeas and nays on any question, if called for by one tenth of those present shall be entered on the journal.

### **Appropriation Bills to Be Specific**

42. Bills making appropriations for the pay of members and officers of the Legislature, and for salaries for the officers of the government, shall contain no provision on any other subject.

**Editors Note:** This section is superseded by the Budget Amendment of 1918 and the Modern Budget Amendment of 1968; section 51 of this article.

### **Board or Court of Registration of Voters Prohibited**

43. The Legislature shall never authorize or establish any board or court of registration of voters.

### **Election of Legislative, County and Municipal Officers**

44. In all elections to office which may hereafter take place in the Legislature, or in any county, or municipal body, the vote shall be *viva voce*, and be entered on its journals.

### **Bribery and Attempt to Bribe—Punishment**

45. It shall be the duty of the Legislature, at its first session after the adoption of this Constitution, to provide, by law, for the punishment by imprisonment in the penitentiary, of any person who shall bribe, or attempt to bribe, any executive or judicial officer of this State, or any member of the Legislature in order to influence him, in the performance of any of his official or public duties; and also to provide by law for the punishment by imprisonment in the penitentiary of any of said officers, or any member of the Legislature, who shall demand, or receive, from any corporation, company or person, any money, testimonial, or other valuable thing, for the performance of his official or public duties, or for refusing or failing to perform the same, or for any vote or influence a member of the Legislature may give or

withhold as such member; and also to provide by law for compelling any person, so bribing or attempting to bribe, or so demanding or receiving a bribe, fee, reward, or testimonial, to testify against any person or persons, who may have committed any of said offenses: *Provided*, That any person so compelled to testify, shall be exempted from trial and punishment for the offense of which he may have been guilty, and concerning which he is compelled to testify; and any person convicted of any of the offenses specified in this section, shall, as a part of the punishment thereof, be forever disqualified from holding any office or position of honor, trust, or profit in this State.

### **Manufacture and Sale of Intoxicating Liquors**

46. The Legislature shall by appropriate legislation, regulate the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors within the limits of this State, and any law authorizing the sale of such liquors shall forbid and penalize the consumption and the sale thereof for consumption in a saloon or other public place.

[The first amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 6, Acts, Regular Session, 1911, p. 289; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1911, c. 15; and ratified November 5, 1912. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 164,945; Against ratification, 72,603; Majority, 82,342.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“Laws may be passed regulating or prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors within the limits of this State.”

It was amended to read:

“On and after the first day of July, one thousand nine hundred fourteen, the manufacture, sale and keeping for sale of malt, vinous or spiritous liquors, wine, porter, ale, beer or any intoxicating drink, mixture or preparation of like nature, except as hereinafter provided, are hereby prohibited in this State: *Provided, however*, That the manufacture and sale and keeping for sale of such liquors for medicinal, pharmaceutical, mechanical, sacramental and scientific purposes, and the manufacture and sale of denatured alcohol for industrial purposes may be permitted under such regulations as the Legislature may prescribe. The Legislature shall, without delay, enact such laws, with regulations, conditions, securities and penalties as may be necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this section.”

The second amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Committee Substitute for House Joint Resolution No. 1, Acts, Regular Session, 1933, p. 532; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1933, c. 25; and ratified November 6, 1934. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 276,978; Against ratification, 237,559; Majority, 39,419.

This section was amended to read as set out above.]

### **Incorporation of Religious Denominations Prohibited**

47. No charter of incorporation shall be granted to any church or religious denomination. Provisions may be made by general laws for securing the title to church property, and for the sale and transfer thereof, so that it shall be held, used, or transferred for the purposes of such church, or religious denomination.

### **Homestead Exemption**

48. Any husband or parent, residing in this State, or the infant children of deceased parents, may hold a homestead of the value of five thousand dollars, and personal property to the value of one thousand dollars, exempt from forced sale, subject to such regulations as shall be prescribed by law: *Provided*, That such homestead exemption shall in nowise affect debts or liabilities existing at the time of the adoption of this Constitution and the increases in such homestead exemption provided by this amendment shall in nowise affect debts or liabilities existing at the time of the ratification of such amendment: *Provided, however*, That no property shall be exempt from sale for taxes due thereon, or for the payment of purchase money due upon said property, or for debts contracted for the erection of improvements thereon.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 7, Acts, Regular Session, 1973, p. 582; and ratified at a special election November 6, 1973. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 202,407; Against ratification, 31,665; Majority, 170,742.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“Any husband or parent, residing in this State, or the infant children of deceased parents, may hold a homestead of the value of one thousand dollars, and personal property to the value of two hundred dollars, exempt from forced sale subject to such regulations as shall be prescribed by law: *Provided*, That such homestead exemption shall in nowise affect debts or liabilities existing at the time of the adoption of this Constitution: *And provided further*, That no property shall be exempt from sale for taxes due thereon, or for the payment of purchase money due upon said property, or for debts contracted for the erection of improvements thereon.”

### **Property of Married Women**

49. The Legislature shall pass such laws as may be necessary to protect the property of married women from the debts, liabilities and control of their husbands.

### **Plan of Proportional Representation**

50. The Legislature may provide for submitting to a vote of the people at the general election to be held in 1876, or at any general election thereafter, a plan or scheme of proportional representation in the Senate of this State; and if a majority of the votes cast at such election be in favor of the plan submitted to them, the Legislature shall, at its session succeeding such election, rearrange the Senatorial Districts in accordance with the plan so approved by the people.

### **Budget and Supplementary Appropriation Bills**

51. The Legislature shall not appropriate any money out of the treasury except in accordance with the provisions of this section.

#### **Subsection A—Appropriation Bills**

(1) Every appropriation bill shall be either a budget bill, or a supplementary appropriation bill, as hereinafter provided.

#### **Subsection B—Budget Bills**

(2) Within ten days after the convening of the regular session of the Legislature in odd-numbered years, unless such time shall be extended by the Legislature, and on the second Wednesday of January in even-numbered years, the Governor shall submit to the Legislature a budget for the next ensuing fiscal year. The budget shall contain a complete plan of proposed expenditures and estimated revenues for the fiscal year and shall show the estimated surplus or deficit of revenues at the end of each fiscal year. Accompanying each budget shall be a statement showing:

(a) An estimate of the revenues and expenditures for the current fiscal year, including the actual revenues and actual expenditures to the extent available, and the revenues and expenditures for the next preceding fiscal year; (b) the current assets, liabilities,

reserves and surplus or deficit of the State; (c) the debts and funds of the State; (d) an estimate of the State's financial condition as of the beginning and end of the fiscal year covered by the budget; (e) any explanation the Governor may desire to make as to the important features of the budget and any suggestions as to methods for reduction or increase of the State's revenue.

(3) Each budget shall embrace an itemized estimate of the appropriations, in such form and detail as the Governor shall determine or as may be prescribed by law: (a) For the Legislature as certified to the Governor in the manner hereinafter provided; (b) for the executive department; (c) for the judiciary department, as provided by law, certified to the Governor by the Auditor; (d) for payment and discharge of the principal and interest of any debt of the State created in conformity with the Constitution, and all laws enacted in pursuance thereof; (e) for the salaries payable by the State under the Constitution and laws of the State; (f) for such other purposes as set forth in the Constitution and in laws made in pursuance thereof.

(4) The Governor shall deliver to the presiding officer of each House the budget and a bill for all the proposed appropriations of the budget clearly itemized and classified, in such form and detail as the Governor shall determine or as may be prescribed by law; and the presiding officer of each House shall promptly cause the bill to be introduced therein, and such bill shall be known as the "Budget Bill." The Governor may, with the consent of the Legislature, before final action thereon by the Legislature, amend or supplement the budget to correct an oversight, or to provide funds contingent on passage of pending legislation, and in case of an emergency, he may deliver such an amendment or supplement to the presiding officers of both Houses; and the amendment or supplement shall thereby become a part of the budget bill as an addition to the items of the bill or as a modification of or a substitute for any item of the bill the amendment or supplement may affect.

(5) The Legislature shall not amend the budget bill so as to create a deficit but may amend the bill by increasing or decreasing any item therein: *Provided*, That no item relating to the judiciary shall be decreased, and except as otherwise

provided in this Constitution, the salary or compensation of any public officer shall not be increased or decreased during his term of office: *Provided further*, That the Legislature shall not increase the estimate of revenue submitted in the budget without the approval of the Governor.

(6) The Governor and such representatives of the executive departments, boards, officers and commissions of the State expending or applying for state moneys as have been designated by the Governor for this purpose, shall have the right, and when requested by either House of the Legislature it shall be their duty, to appear and be heard with respect to any budget bill, and to answer inquiries relative thereto.

### **Subsection C—Supplementary Appropriation Bills**

(7) Neither House shall consider other appropriations until the budget bill has been finally acted upon by both Houses, and no such other appropriations shall be valid except in accordance with the provisions following: (a) Every such appropriation shall be embodied in a separate bill limited to some single work, object or purpose therein stated and called therein a supplementary appropriation bill; (b) each supplementary appropriation bill shall provide the revenue necessary to pay the appropriation thereby made by a tax, direct or indirect, to be laid and collected as shall be directed in the bill unless it appears from such budget that there is sufficient revenue available.

### **Subsection D—General Provisions**

(8) If the budget bill shall not have been finally acted upon by the Legislature three days before the expiration of its regular session, the Governor shall issue a proclamation extending the session for such further period as may, in his judgment, be necessary for the passage of the bill; but no matter other than the bill shall be considered during such an extension of session except a provision for the cost thereof.

(9) For the purpose of making up the budget, the Governor shall have the power, and it shall be his duty, to require from the proper state officials, including herein all executive departments, all executive and administrative officers, bureaus, boards,

commissions and agencies expending or supervising the expenditure of, and all institutions applying for state moneys and appropriations, such itemized estimates and other information, in such form and at such times as he shall direct. The estimates for the legislative department, certified by the presiding officer of each House, and for the judiciary, as provided by law, certified by the Auditor, shall be transmitted to the Governor in such form and at such times as he shall direct, and shall be included in the budget.

(10) The Governor may provide for public hearings on all estimates and may require the attendance at such hearings of representatives of all agencies and all institutions applying for state moneys. After such public hearings he may, in his discretion, revise all estimates except those for the legislative and judiciary departments.

(11) Every budget bill or supplementary appropriation bill passed by a majority of the members elected to each House of the Legislature shall, before it becomes law, be presented to the Governor. The Governor may veto the bill, or he may disapprove or reduce items or parts of items contained therein. If he approves he shall sign it and thereupon it shall become a law. The bill, items or parts thereof, disapproved or reduced by the Governor, shall be returned with his objections to each House of the Legislature.

Each House shall enter the objections at large upon its journal and proceed to reconsider. If, after reconsideration, two thirds of the members elected to each House agree to pass the bill, or such items or parts thereof, as were disapproved or reduced, the bill, items or parts thereof, approved by two thirds\* of such members, shall become law, notwithstanding the objections of the Governor. In all such cases, the vote of each House shall be determined by yeas and nays to be entered on the journal.

A bill, item or part thereof, which is not returned by the Governor within five days (Sundays excepted) after the bill has been presented to him shall become a law in like manner as if he had signed the bill, unless the Legislature, by adjournment, prevents such return, in which case it shall be filed in the office

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[\*Every bill other than a budget bill or supplementary appropriation bill, disapproved by the Governor, requires a vote of a majority of the members elected to each house in order to become law, notwithstanding the objections of the Governor. See "Governor's Approval or Disapproval of Bills Passed by the

Legislature," Art. VII, §14.]

of the Secretary of State, within five days after such adjournment, and shall become a law; or it shall be so filed within such five days with the objections of the Governor, in which case it shall become law to the extent not disapproved by the Governor.

(12) The Legislature may, from time to time, enact such laws, not inconsistent with this section, as may be necessary and proper to carry out its provisions.

(13) In the event of any inconsistency between any of the provisions of this section and any of the other provisions of the Constitution, the provisions of this section shall prevail. But nothing herein shall be construed as preventing the Governor from calling extraordinary sessions of the Legislature, as provided by section nineteen of this article, or as preventing the Legislature at such extraordinary sessions from considering any emergency appropriation or appropriations.

(14) If any item of any appropriation bill passed under the provisions of this section shall be held invalid upon any ground, such invalidity shall not affect the legality of the bill or of any other item of such bill or bills.

[This section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 1, Acts, Second Extraordinary Session, 1917, p. 69; submitted by Acts, Second Extraordinary Session, 1917, c. 15; and ratified November 5, 1918. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 51,405; Against ratification, 26,651; Majority, 24,754.

The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 3, Acts, Regular Session, 1967, p. 1288; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1968, c. 15; and ratified November 5, 1968. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 323,560; Against ratification, 159,255; Majority, 164,305.

This section was amended to read as set out above.]

### **Motor Fuel and Motor Vehicle Revenue**

52. Revenue from gasoline and other motor fuel excise and license taxation, motor vehicle registration and license taxes, and all other revenue derived from motor vehicles or motor fuels shall, after the deduction of statutory refunds and cost of administration and collection authorized by legislative appropriation, be appropriated and used solely for construction, reconstruction, repair and maintenance of public highways, and also the payment of the interest and principal on all road bonds heretofore issued or



which may be hereafter issued for the construction, reconstruction or improvement of public highways, and the payment of obligations incurred in the construction, reconstruction, repair and maintenance of public highways.

[This section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 6, Acts, Regular Session, 1941, p. 589; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1941, c. 11; and ratified November 3, 1942. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 228,828; Against ratification, 36,651; Majority, 190,177.]

### **Forestry**

53. The Legislature may by general law define and classify forest lands and provide for cooperation by contract between the State and the owner in the planting, cultivation, protection, and harvesting thereof. Forest lands embraced in any such contract may be exempted from all taxation or be taxed in such manner, including the imposition of a severance tax or charge as trees are harvested, as the Legislature may from time to time provide. But any tax measured by valuation shall not exceed the aggregate rates authorized by section one of article ten of this Constitution.

[This section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 7, Acts, Regular Session, 1945, p. 640; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1945, c. 22; and ratified November 5, 1946. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 179,150; Against ratification, 148,104; Majority, 31,046.]

### **Continuity of Governmental Operations**

54. The Legislature of West Virginia in order to insure continuity of state and local governmental operations in periods of emergency resulting from disasters caused by enemy attack, shall have the power and the immediate duty (1) to provide for prompt and temporary succession to the powers and duties of public offices, of whatever nature and whether filled by election or appointment, the incumbents of which may become unavailable for carrying on the powers and duties of such officers, and (2) to adopt such other measures as may be necessary and proper for insuring the continuity of governmental operations.

[This section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 9, Acts, Regular Session, 1959, p. 660; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1959, c. 19; and ratified November 8, 1960. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 237,233; Against ratification, 101,192; Majority, 136,041.]

### **Revenues and Properties Applicable to Fish and Wildlife Conservation**

55. Fees, moneys, interest or funds arising from the sales of all permits and licenses to hunt, trap, fish or otherwise hold or capture fish and wildlife resources and money reimbursed and granted by the federal government for fish and wildlife conservation shall be expended solely for the conservation, restoration, management, educational benefit, recreational use and scientific study of the state's fish and wildlife, including the purchases or other acquisition of property for said purposes and for the administration of the laws pertaining thereto and for no other purposes. In the event that any such properties or facilities are converted to uses other than those specified in this section and the conversion jeopardizes the availability of the receipt of federal funds by the state, the agency of the state responsible for the conservation of its fish and wildlife resources shall receive fair market compensation for the converted properties or facilities. Such compensation shall be expended only for the purposes specified in this section. All moneys shall be deposited within the state treasurer in the "license fund" and other specific funds created especially for fish and wildlife conservation and the public's use of fish and wildlife. Nothing in this section shall prevent the Legislature from reducing or increasing the amount of any permit or license to hunt, trap, fish or otherwise hold or capture fish or wildlife or to repeal or enact additional fees or requirements for the privilege of hunting, trapping, fishing or to otherwise hold or capture fish or wildlife.

[This section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 2, Acts, Regular Session, 1995, p. 1833, and ratified November 5, 1996. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 405,862; Against ratification, 107,677; Majority, 298,185.]

### **Revenues Applicable to Nongame Wildlife Resources In the State**

56. Notwithstanding any provision of section fifty-two of article six of this Constitution, the Legislature may, by general law, provide funding for conservation, restoration, management, educational benefit and recreational and scientific use of nongame wildlife resources in this state by providing a specialized nongame wildlife motor vehicle registration plate for

motor vehicles registered in this state. The registration plate shall be issued on a voluntary basis pursuant to terms and conditions provided by general law for an additional fee above the basic registration and license fees and costs otherwise dedicated to the road fund. Any moneys collected from the issuance of these specialized registration plates in excess of those revenues otherwise dedicated to the road fund shall be deposited in a special revenue account in the state treasury and expended only in accordance with appropriations made by the Legislature as provided by general law for the conservation, restoration, management, educational benefit and recreational and scientific use of nongame wildlife resources in this state. All moneys collected which are in excess of the revenues otherwise dedicated to the road fund shall be deposited by the state treasurer in the "nongame wildlife fund" created especially for nongame wildlife resources in this state.

[This section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 8, Acts, Regular Session, 1995, p. 1835, and ratified November 5, 1996. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 356,137; Against ratification, 136,934; Majority, 219,203.]

## ARTICLE VII Executive Department

1. The executive department shall consist of a Governor, Secretary of State, Auditor, Treasurer, Commissioner of Agriculture and Attorney General, who shall be *ex officio* reporter of the court of appeals. Their terms of office shall be four years, and shall commence on the first Monday after the second Wednesday of January next after their election. They shall reside at the seat of government during their terms of office, keep there the public records, books and papers pertaining to their respective offices, and shall perform such duties as may be prescribed by law.

[The first amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 7, Acts, First Extraordinary Session, 1933, p. 506; submitted by Acts, First Extraordinary Session, 1933, c. 30; and ratified November 6, 1934. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 251,965; Against ratification, 145,787; Majority, 106,178.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

"The Executive Department shall consist of a Governor, Secretary of State, State Superintendent of Free Schools, Auditor, Treasurer and Attorney General, who shall be *ex officio* reporter of the Court of Appeals. Their terms of office, respectively, shall be four years, and shall commence on the fourth day of March, next after their election. They shall, except the Attorney General, reside at the

seat of government during their terms of office, and keep there the public records, books and papers pertaining to their respective offices and shall perform such duties as may be prescribed by law.”

It was amended to read:

“The executive department shall consist of a Governor, Secretary of State, State Superintendent of Free Schools, Auditor, Treasurer, Commissioner of Agriculture and Attorney General, who shall be ex officio reporter of the Court of Appeals. Their terms of office shall be four years, and shall commence on the first Monday after the second Wednesday of January next after their election. They shall reside at the seat of government during their terms of office, and keep there the public records, books and papers pertaining to their respective offices, and shall perform such duties as may be prescribed by law.”

The second amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 1, Acts, Regular Session, 1957, p. 837; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1957, c. 19; and ratified November 4, 1958. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 230,879; Against ratification, 206,201; Majority, 24,678.

This amendment deleted “State Superintendent of Free Schools.”

The section was amended to read as set out above.]

## Election

2. An election for Governor, Secretary of State, Auditor, Treasurer, Commissioner of Agriculture and Attorney General shall be held at such times and places as may be prescribed by law.

[The first amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 5, Acts, Regular Session, 1901, p. 459; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1901, c. 153; and ratified November 4, 1902. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 59,509; Against ratification, 22,022; Majority, 37,487.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“An election for Governor, State Superintendent of Free Schools, Auditor, Treasurer and Attorney General, shall be held at such times and places as may be prescribed in this Constitution or by general law.”

It was amended to read:

“An election for Governor, Secretary of State, State Superintendent of Free Schools, Auditor, Treasurer and Attorney General, shall be held at such times and places as may be prescribed by law.”

The second amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 1, Acts, Regular Session, 1957, p. 837; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1957, c. 19; and ratified November 4, 1958. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 230,879; Against ratification, 206,201; Majority, 24,678.

This amendment deleted “State Superintendent of Free Schools,” and added “Commissioner of Agriculture.” (See Acts, Regular Session, 1911, c. 35 and Barnes' West Virginia Code, 1923, § 2, c. 15D, election of Commissioner of Agriculture prior to this amendment.)

This section was amended to read as set out above.]

### **Certification of Election Returns—Contests**

3. The returns of every election for the above named officers shall be sealed up and transmitted by the returning officers of the Secretary of State, directed "to the Speaker of the House of Delegates," who shall, immediately after the organization of the House, and before proceeding to business, open and publish the same, in the presence of a majority of each house of the Legislature, which shall for that purpose assemble in the Hall of the House of Delegates. The person having the highest number of votes for either of said offices, shall be declared duly elected thereto; but if two or more have an equal and the highest number of votes for the same office, the Legislature shall, by joint vote, choose one of such persons for said office. Contested, elections for the office of Governor shall be determined by both houses of the Legislature by joint vote, in such manner as may be prescribed by law.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 5, Acts, Regular Session, 1901, p. 459; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1901, c. 153; and ratified November 4, 1902. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 59,509; Against ratification, 22,022; Majority, 37,487.

This amendment deleted the following sentence at the end of the original section:

"The Secretary of State shall be appointed by the Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, and shall continue in office, unless sooner removed, until the expiration of the official term of the Governor by whom he shall have been appointed."

### **Eligibility**

4. None of the executive officers mentioned in this article shall hold any other office during the term of his service. A person who has been elected or who has served as Governor during all or any part of two consecutive terms shall be ineligible for the office of Governor during any part of the term immediately following the second of the two consecutive terms. The person holding the office of Governor when this section is ratified shall not be prevented from holding the office of Governor during the term immediately following the term he is then serving.

[The first amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 5, Acts, Regular Session, 1901, p. 459; submitted by Acts, Regular Session

1901, c. 153; and ratified November 4, 1902. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 59,509; Against ratification, 22,022; Majority, 37,487.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“Neither the Governor, State Superintendent of Free Schools, Auditor, Treasurer, nor Attorney General, shall hold any other office during the term of his service. The Governor shall be ineligible to said office for the four years next succeeding the term for which he was elected.”

It was amended to read:

“None of the executive officers mentioned in this article shall hold any other office during the term of his service. The Governor shall not be eligible to said office for the four years next succeeding the term for which he was elected.”

The second amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 4, Acts, Regular Session, 1970, p. 454; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1970, c. 23; and ratified November 3, 1970. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 213,758; Against ratification, 157,597; Majority, 56,161.

This section was amended to read as set out above.]

### **Chief Executive—Powers**

5. The chief executive power shall be vested in the Governor, who shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

### **Governor's Message**

6. The Governor shall at the commencement of each session, give to the Legislature information by message, of the condition of the State, and shall recommend such measures as he shall deem expedient. He shall accompany his message with a statement of all money received and paid out by him from any funds, subject to his order, with vouchers therefor; and at the commencement of each regular session, present estimates of the amount of money required by taxation for all purposes.

### **Extraordinary Legislative Sessions**

7. The Governor may, on extraordinary occasions convene, at his own instance, the Legislature; but when so convened it shall enter upon no business except that stated in the proclamation by which it was called together.

### **Governor to Nominate Certain Officers**

8. The Governor shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, (a majority of all the Senators elected

concurring by yeas and nays) appoint all officers whose offices are established by this Constitution, or shall be created by law, and whose appointment or election is not otherwise provided for; and no such officer shall be appointed or elected by the Legislature.

### **Recess Vacancies—How Filled**

9. In case of a vacancy, during the recess of the Senate, in any office which is not elective, the Governor shall, by appointment, fill such vacancy, until the next meeting of the Senate, when he shall make a nomination for such office, and the person so nominated, when confirmed by the Senate, (a majority of all the Senators elected concurring by yeas and nays) shall hold his office during the remainder of the term, and until his successor shall be appointed and qualified. No person, after being rejected by the Senate, shall be again nominated for the same office, during the same session, unless at the request of the Senate; nor shall such person be appointed to the same office during the recess of the Senate.

### **Governor's Power of Removal**

10. The Governor shall have power to remove any officer whom he may appoint in case of incompetency, neglect of duty, gross immorality, or malfeasance in office; and he may declare his office vacant and fill the same as herein provided in other cases of vacancy.

### **Executive May Remit Fines and Forfeitures**

11. The Governor shall have power to remit fines and penalties in such cases and under such regulations as may be prescribed by law; to commute capital punishment and, except where the prosecution has been carried on by the House of Delegates to grant reprieves and pardons after conviction; but he shall communicate to the Legislature at each session the particulars of every case of fine or penalty remitted, or punishment commuted and of reprieve or pardon granted, with his reasons therefor.

### **Governor Commander-in-Chief of Military Forces**

12. The Governor shall be commander-in-chief of the military forces of the State, (except when they shall be called into the service of the United States) and may call out the same to execute the laws, suppress insurrection and repel invasion.

### **Official Bond of State Officers**

13. When any state officer has executed his official bond, the Governor shall, for such causes and in such manner as the Legislature may direct, require of such officer reasonable additional security; and if the security is not given as required, his office shall be declared vacant, in such manner as may be provided by law.

### **Governor's Approval or Disapproval of Bills Passed By the Legislature**

14. Subject to the provisions of section fifteen of this article, every bill passed by the Legislature shall, before it becomes a law, be presented to the Governor. If he approves, he shall sign it, and thereupon it shall become a law; but if not, he shall return it, with his objections, to the House in which it originated, which House shall enter the objections at large upon its Journal, and may proceed to reconsider the returned bill. Notwithstanding the provisions of section fifty-one, article six of this Constitution, any such bill may be reconsidered even if the Legislature is at the time in extended session for the sole purpose of considering the budget bill, as specified in said section fifty-one. If after any such reconsideration, a majority\* of the members elected to that House agree to pass the bill, it shall be sent, together with the objections of the Governor to the other House, by which it may likewise be reconsidered, and if approved by a majority of the members elected to that House, it shall become a law, notwithstanding the objections of the Governor. If upon any such reconsideration the bill is amended and reenacted, then it shall be again sent to the Governor and he shall act upon it as if it were before him for the first time. In all cases, the vote of each House shall be determined by yeas and nays to be entered on the Journal.

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[\*A budget bill or supplementary appropriation bill, disapproved by the Governor, requires a vote of two thirds of the members elected to each house in order to become law, notwithstanding the objections of the Governor. See "Modern Budget Amendment," Art. VI, § 51, Sub. § D(11).]



Any bill which shall not be returned by the Governor within five days, Sundays excepted, after it shall have been presented to him shall be a law, in the same manner as if he had signed it, unless the Legislature shall, by adjournment sine die, prevent its return, in which case it shall be filed with his objections in the office of the Secretary of State within fifteen days, Sundays excepted, after such adjournment, or become a law.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 8, Acts, Regular Session, 1970, p. 456; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1970, c. 22; and ratified November 3, 1970. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 208,032; Against ratification, 141,970; Majority, 66,062.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“Every bill passed by the Legislature shall, before it becomes a law, be presented to the Governor. If he approve, he shall sign it, and thereupon it shall become a law; but if not, he shall return it with his objections, to the house in which it originated, which house shall enter the objections at large upon its journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If, after such reconsideration, a majority of the members elected to that house agree to pass the bill, it shall be sent, together with the objections to the other house, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered, and if approved by a majority of the members elected to that house, it shall become a law, notwithstanding the objections of the Governor. But in all such cases, the vote of each house shall be determined by yeas and nays to be entered on the journal. Any bill which shall not be returned by the Governor within five days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him shall be a law, in like manner as if he had signed it, unless the Legislature shall, by their adjournment, prevent its return, in which case it shall be filed with his objections in the office of the Secretary of State, within five days after such adjournment, or become a law.”]

### **Governor's Approval or Disapproval of Bills Making Appropriations of Money**

15. A bill passed by the Legislature making appropriations of money must be submitted to the Governor for his approval or disapproval to the extent and only to the extent required by section fifty-one, article six of this Constitution, and any provision therein contained as to such approval or disapproval shall govern and control as to any such bill.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 8, Acts, Regular Session, 1970, p. 456; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1970, c. 22; and ratified November 3, 1970. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 208,032; Against ratification, 141,970; Majority, 66,062.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“Every bill passed by the Legislature making appropriations of money, embracing distinct items, shall before it becomes a law, be presented to the Governor; if he disapproves the bill, or any item or appropriation therein

contained, he shall communicate such disapproval with his reasons therefor to the house in which the bill originated; but all items not disapproved shall have the force and effect of law according to the original provisions of the bill. Any item or items so disapproved shall be void, unless repassed by a majority of each house according to the rules and limitations prescribed in the preceding section in reference to other bills.”]

### **Vacancy in Governorship, How Filled**

16. In case of the death, conviction on impeachment, failure to qualify, resignation, or other disability of the Governor, the President of the Senate shall act as Governor until the vacancy is filled, or the disability removed; and if the President of the Senate, for any of the above named causes, shall become incapable of performing the duties of Governor, the same shall devolve upon the Speaker of the House of Delegates; and in all other cases where there is no one to act as Governor, one shall be chosen by joint vote of the Legislature. Whenever a vacancy shall occur in the office of Governor before the first three years of the term shall have expired, a new election for Governor shall take place to fill the vacancy.

### **Vacancies in Other Executive Departments**

17. If the office of Secretary of State, Auditor, Treasurer, Commissioner of Agriculture or Attorney General shall become vacant by death, resignation, or otherwise, it shall be the duty of the Governor to fill the same by appointment, and the appointee shall hold his office until his successor shall be elected and qualified in such manner as may be prescribed by law. The subordinate officers of the executive department and the officers of all public institutions of the State shall keep an account of all moneys received or disbursed by them, respectively, from all sources, and for every service performed, and make a semiannual report thereof to the Governor under oath or affirmation; and any officer who shall willfully make a false report shall be deemed guilty of perjury.

[The first amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 5, Acts, Regular Session, 1901, p. 459; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1901, c. 153; and ratified November 4, 1902. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 59,509; Against ratification, 22,022; Majority, 37,478.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“If the office of Auditor, Treasurer, State Superintendent of Free Schools, or Attorney General, shall become vacant by death, resignation, or otherwise, it shall be the duty of the Governor to fill the same by appointment, and the appointee shall hold his office until his successor shall be elected and qualified in such manner as may be provided by law. The subordinate officers of the executive department and the officers of all public institutions of the State shall keep an account of all moneys received or disbursed by them respectively, from all sources, and for every service performed, and make a semiannual report thereof to the Governor under oath or affirmation, and any officer who shall willfully make a false report shall be deemed guilty of perjury.”

It was amended by inserting the words “Secretary of State” in the first line, and by substituting the word “prescribed” for the word “provided” near the end of the first sentence.

The second amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 1, Acts, Regular Session, 1957, p. 837; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1957, c. 19; and ratified November 4, 1958. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 230,879; Against ratification, 206,201; Majority, 24,678.

This amendment deleted “State Superintendent of Free Schools” and inserted “Commissioner of Agriculture” in the first sentence.

The section was amended to read as set out above.]

### **Executive Heads to Make Reports**

18. The subordinate officers of the Executive Department and the officers of all the public institutions of the State, shall, at least ten days preceding each regular session of the Legislature, severally report to the Governor, who shall transmit such report to the Legislature; and the Governor may at any time require information in writing, under oath, from the officers of his department, and all officers and managers of state institutions, upon any subject relating to the condition, management and expenses of their respective officers.

### **Salaries of Officials**

19. The officers named in this article shall receive for their services a salary to be established by law, which shall not be increased or diminished during their official terms, and they shall not, after the expiration of the terms of those in office at the adoption of this amendment, receive to their own use any fees, costs, perquisites of office or other compensation, and all fees that may hereafter be payable by law, for any service performed by any officer provided for in this article of the Constitution, shall be paid in advance into the state treasury.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 2, Acts, Regular Session, 1901, p. 459; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1901, c. 153; and ratified November 4, 1902. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 56,280; Against ratification, 23,513; Majority, 32,767.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“The Governor shall receive for his services, a salary of twenty-seven hundred dollars per annum and no additional emolument, allowance or perquisite shall be paid or made to him, on any account. Any person acting as Governor shall receive the emoluments of that office. The Secretary of State shall receive one thousand; the State Superintendent of Free Schools, fifteen hundred; the Treasurer, fourteen hundred; the Auditor, two thousand; and the Attorney General, thirteen hundred dollars per annum; and no additional emolument or allowance, except as herein otherwise provided, shall be paid or made out of the treasury of the State to any of the foregoing executive officers on any account.”]

## **ARTICLE VIII THE JUDICIARY**

### **Judicial Power**

1. The judicial power of the State shall be vested solely in a supreme court of appeals and in the circuit courts, and in such intermediate appellate courts and magistrate courts as shall be hereafter established by the Legislature, and in the justices, judges and magistrates of such courts.

### **Supreme Court of Appeals**

2. The supreme court of appeals shall consist of five justices. A majority of the justices of the court shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

The justices shall be elected by the voters of the State for a term of twelve years, unless sooner removed or retired as authorized in this article. The Legislature may prescribe by law whether the election of such justices is to be on a partisan or nonpartisan basis.

Provision shall be made by rules of the supreme court of appeals for the selection of a member of the court to serve as chief justice thereof. If the chief justice is temporarily disqualified or unable to serve, one of the justices of the court designated in accordance with the rules of the court shall serve temporarily in his stead.

When any justice is temporarily disqualified or unable to

serve, the chief justice may assign a judge of a circuit court or of an intermediate appellate court to serve from time to time in his stead.

### **Supreme Court of Appeals; Jurisdiction and Powers; Officers and Employees; Terms**

3. The supreme court of appeals shall have original jurisdiction of proceedings in habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition and certiorari.

The court shall have appellate jurisdiction in civil cases at law where the matter in controversy, exclusive of interest and costs, is of greater value or amount than three hundred dollars unless such value or amount is increased by the Legislature; in civil cases in equity; in controversies concerning the title or boundaries of land; in proceedings in quo warranto, habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition and certiorari; and in cases involving personal freedom or the constitutionality of a law. It shall have appellate jurisdiction in criminal cases, where there has been a conviction for a felony or misdemeanor in a circuit court, and such appellate jurisdiction as may be conferred upon it by law where there has been such a conviction in any other court. In criminal proceedings relating to the public revenue, the right of appeal shall belong to the State as well as to the defendant. It shall have such other appellate jurisdiction, in both civil and criminal cases, as may be prescribed by law.

The court shall have power to promulgate rules for all cases and proceedings, civil and criminal, for all of the courts of the State relating to writs, warrants, process, practice and procedure, which shall have the force and effect of law.

The court shall have general supervisory control over all intermediate appellate courts, circuit courts and magistrate courts. The chief justice shall be the administrative head of all the courts. He may assign a judge from one intermediate appellate court to another, from one circuit court to another, or from one magistrate court to another, for temporary service. The court shall appoint an administrative director to serve at its pleasure at a salary to be fixed by the court. The administrative director shall, under the direction of the chief justice, prepare and submit a budget for the court.

The officers and employees of the supreme court of appeals, including the clerk and the law librarian, shall be appointed and may be removed by the court. Their duties and compensation shall be prescribed by the court.

The number, times and places of the terms of the supreme court of appeals shall be prescribed by law. There shall be at least two terms of the court held annually.

### **Writ of Error, Supersedeas and Appeal; Scope and Form of Decisions**

4. A writ of error, supersedeas or appeal shall be allowed by the supreme court of appeals, or a justice thereof, only upon a petition assigning error in the judgment or proceedings of a court and then only after the court, or a justice thereof, shall have examined and considered the record and is satisfied that there probably is error in the record, or that it presents a point proper for the consideration of the court.

No decision rendered by the court shall be considered as binding authority upon any court, except in the particular case decided, unless a majority of the justices of the court concur in such decision.

When a judgment or order of another court is reversed, modified or affirmed by the court, every point fairly arising upon the record shall be considered and decided; the reasons therefor shall be concisely stated in writing and preserved with the record; and it shall be the duty of the court to prepare a syllabus of the points adjudicated in each case in which an opinion is written and in which a majority of the justices thereof concurred, which shall be prefixed to the published report of the case.

### **Circuit Courts**

5. The judge or judges of each circuit court shall be elected by the voters of the circuit for a term of eight years, unless sooner removed or retired as authorized in this article. The Legislature may prescribe by law whether the election of such judges is to be on a partisan or nonpartisan basis. Upon the effective date of this article, each statutory court of record of limited jurisdiction

existing in the State immediately prior to such effective date shall become part of the circuit court for the circuit in which it presently exists, and each such judge of such statutory court of record of limited jurisdiction shall thereupon become a judge of such circuit court. During his continuance in office, a judge of a circuit court shall reside in the circuit of which he is a judge.

The Legislature may increase, or other than during term of office decrease, the number of circuit judges within any circuit. The judicial circuits in existence on the effective date of this article shall remain as so constituted until changed by law, and the Legislature, at any session thereof held in the odd-numbered year next preceding the time for the full term election of the judges thereof, may rearrange the circuits and may increase or diminish the number of circuits. A judge of a circuit court in office at the time of any such change shall continue as a judge of the circuit in which he shall continue to reside after such change until his term shall expire, unless sooner removed or retired as authorized in this article.

There shall be at least one judge for each circuit court and as many more as may be necessary to transact the business of such court. If there be two or more judges of a circuit court, provision shall be made by rules of such circuit court for the selection of one of such judges to serve as chief judge thereof. If the chief judge is temporarily qualified or unable to serve, one of the judges of the circuit court designated in accordance with the rules of such court shall serve temporarily in his stead.

The supreme court of appeals shall provide for dividing the business of those circuits in which there shall be more than one judge between the judges thereof so as to promote and secure the convenient and expeditious transaction of such business.

In every county in the State the circuit court for such county shall sit at least three times in each year. The supreme court of appeals shall designate the times at which each circuit court shall sit, but until this action is taken by the supreme court of appeals, each circuit court shall sit at the times prescribed by law. If there be two or more judges of a circuit court, such judges may hold court in the same county or in different counties within the circuit at the same time or at different times.

### **Circuit Courts; Jurisdiction, Authority and Power**

6. Circuit courts shall have control of all proceedings before magistrate courts by mandamus, prohibition and certiorari.

Circuit courts shall have original and general jurisdiction of all civil cases at law where the value or amount in controversy, exclusive of interest and costs, exceeds one hundred dollars unless such value or amount is increased by the Legislature; of all civil cases in equity; of proceedings in habeas corpus, mandamus, quo warranto, prohibition and certiorari; and of all crimes and misdemeanors. On and after January one, one thousand nine hundred seventy-six, the Legislature may provide that all matters of probate, the appointment and qualification of personal representatives, guardians, committees and curators, and the settlements of their accounts, shall be vested exclusively in circuit courts or their officers, but until such time as the Legislature provides otherwise, jurisdiction in such matters shall remain in the county commissions or tribunals existing in lieu thereof or the officers of such county commissions or tribunals.

Circuit courts shall have appellate jurisdiction in all cases, civil and criminal, where an appeal, writ of effort or supersedeas is allowed by law to the judgment or proceedings of any magistrate court, unless such jurisdiction is conferred by law exclusively upon an intermediate appellate court or the supreme court of appeals.

Circuit courts shall also have such other jurisdiction, authority or power, original or appellate or concurrent, as may be prescribed by law.

Subject to the approval of the supreme court of appeals, each circuit court shall have the authority and power to establish local rules to govern the court.

Subject to the supervisory control of the supreme court of appeals, each circuit court shall have general supervisory control over all magistrate courts in the circuit. Under the direction of the chief justice of the supreme court of appeals, the judge of the circuit court, or the chief judge thereof if there be more than one judge of the circuit court, shall be the administrative head of the circuit court and all magistrate courts in the circuit.



### **General Provisions Relating to Justices, Judges and Magistrates**

7. All justices, judges and magistrates must be residents of this State and shall be commissioned by the Governor. No person may hereafter be elected as a justice of the supreme court of appeals unless he has been admitted to practice law for at least ten years prior to his election, and no person may hereafter be elected as a judge of a circuit court unless he has been admitted to practice law for at least five years prior to his election.

Justices, judges and magistrates shall receive the salaries fixed by law, which shall be paid entirely out of the state treasury, and which may be increased but shall not be diminished during their term of office, and they shall receive expenses as provided by law. The salary of a circuit judge shall also not be diminished during his term of office by virtue of the statutory courts of record of limited jurisdiction of his circuit becoming a part of such circuit as provided in section five of this article.

Any justice of the supreme court of appeals and any judge of any circuit court, including any statutory court of record of limited jurisdiction which becomes a part of a circuit court by virtue of section five of this article, in office on the effective date of this article shall continue in office until his term shall expire, unless sooner removed or retired as authorized in this article: *Provided*, That as to the term of any judge of a statutory court of record of limited jurisdiction which does not expire on the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred seventy-six, the following provisions shall govern and control unless any such judges shall be sooner removed or retired as authorized in this article: (1) If the term would otherwise expire before the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred seventy-six, such term shall continue through and expire on said thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred seventy-six, (2) if the term would otherwise expire on the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred seventy-seven, such term shall terminate and expire on the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred seventy-six, and (3) if the term would otherwise expire after the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred

seventy-six, but other than on the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred seventy-seven, such term shall continue through and expire on the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred eighty-four.

No justice, judge or magistrate shall hold any other office, or accept any appointment or public trust, under this or any other government; nor shall he become a candidate for any elective public office or nomination thereto, except a judicial office; and the violation of any of these provisions shall vacate his judicial office. No justice of the supreme court of appeals or judge of an intermediate appellate court or of a circuit court shall practice the profession of law during the term of his office, but magistrates who are licensed to practice this profession may practice law except to the extent prohibited by the Legislature.

If from any cause a vacancy shall occur in the office of a justice of the supreme court of appeals or a judge of a circuit court, the Governor shall issue a directive of election to fill such vacancy in the manner prescribed by law for electing a justice or judge of the court in which the vacancy exists, and the justice or judge shall be elected for the unexpired term; and in the meantime, the Governor shall fill such vacancy by appointment until a justice or judge shall be elected and qualified. If the unexpired term be less than two years, or such additional period, not exceeding a total of three years, as may be prescribed by law, the Governor shall fill such vacancy by appointment for the unexpired term.

### **Censure, Temporary Suspension and Retirement of Justices, Judges and Magistrates; Removal**

8. Under its inherent rule-making power, which is hereby declared, the supreme court of appeals shall, from time to time, prescribe, adopt, promulgate and amend rules prescribing a judicial code of ethics, and a code of regulations and standards of conduct and performances for justices, judges and magistrates, along with sanctions and penalties for any violation thereof, and the supreme court of appeals is authorized to censure or temporarily suspend any justice, judge or magistrate having the judicial power of the State, including one of its own members, for

any violation of any such code of ethics, code of regulations and standards, or to retire any such justice, judge or magistrate who is eligible for retirement under the West Virginia judges' retirement system (or any successor or substituted retirement system for justices, judges and magistrates of this State) and who, because of advancing years and attendant physical or mental incapacity, should not, in the opinion of the supreme court of appeals, continue to serve as a justice, judge or magistrate.

No justice, judge or magistrate shall be censured, temporarily suspended or retired under the provisions of this section unless he shall have been afforded the right to have a hearing before the supreme court of appeals, nor unless he shall have received notice of the proceedings, with a statement of the cause or causes alleged for his censure, temporary suspension or retirement, at least twenty days before the day on which the proceeding is to commence. No justice of the supreme court of appeals may be temporarily suspended or retired unless all of the other justices concur in such temporary suspension or retirement. When rules herein authorized are prescribed, adopted and promulgated, they shall supersede all laws and parts of laws in conflict therewith, and such laws become of no further force or effect to the extent of such conflict.

A retired justice or judge may, with his permission and with the approval of the supreme court of appeals, be recalled by the chief justice of the supreme court of appeals for temporary assignment as a justice of the supreme court of appeals, or judge of an intermediate appellate court, a circuit court or a magistrate court.

A justice or judge may be removed only by impeachment in accordance with the provisions of section nine, article four of this Constitution. A magistrate may be removed from office in the manner provided by law for the removal of county officers.

### **Clerks of Circuit Courts**

9. The voters of each county shall elect a clerk of the circuit court, whose term of office shall be six years; his duties, responsibilities, compensation and the manner of removing him

from office shall be prescribed by law. Whenever the clerk shall be so situated as to make it improper for him to act in any matter, a clerk to act therein shall be appointed by the judge of the circuit court or the chief judge thereof, if there be more than one judge of the circuit court. Vacancies shall be filled in the manner prescribed by law. A clerk of the circuit court in office on the effective date of this article shall continue in office until his term shall expire, unless sooner removed in the manner prescribed by law.

### Magistrate Courts

10. The Legislature shall establish in each county a magistrate court or courts with the right of appeal as prescribed by law. Such courts shall be courts of record if so prescribed by law.

The Legislature shall determine the qualifications and the number of magistrates for each such court to be elected by the voters of the county, and the Legislature may prescribe by law whether the election of such magistrates is to be on a partisan or nonpartisan basis: *Provided*, That any person in office as a justice of the peace of this State on the effective date of this article and who has served as a justice of the peace of this State for at least one year prior to such effective date shall, insofar as any qualifications established by the Legislature for the office of magistrate are concerned and notwithstanding the same, be deemed qualified for life to run for election as a magistrate of any such court: *And provided further*, That the Legislature shall not have the power to require that a magistrate be a person licensed to practice the profession of law, nor shall any justice or judge of any higher court establish any rules which by their nature would dictate or mandate that a magistrate be a person licensed to practice the profession of law. The magistrates of such courts shall hold their offices for the term of four years unless sooner removed or retired as authorized in this article. The Legislature shall also determine the number of officers to be selected for each such court and the manner of their selection. During his continuance in office a magistrate or officer of such a court shall reside in the county for which he is elected or selected. The Legislature shall prescribe by law for the filling of

any vacancy in the office of a magistrate or officer of such court.

The jurisdiction of a magistrate court shall extend throughout the county for which it is established, shall be uniform for all counties of the State and shall be subject to such regulations as to venue of actions and the counties in which process may be executed or served on parties or witnesses as may be prescribed by law. The times and places for holding such courts shall be designated or determined in such manner as shall be prescribed by law.

Magistrate courts shall have such original jurisdiction in criminal matters as may be prescribed by law, but no person shall be convicted or sentenced for a felony in such courts. In criminal cases, the procedure may be by information or warrant of arrest, without presentment or indictment by a grand jury. Such courts shall have original jurisdiction in all civil cases at law wherein the value or amount in controversy, exclusive of interest and costs, shall not exceed fifteen hundred dollars, unless such amount and value shall be increased by the Legislature, except such civil matters as may be excluded from their jurisdiction by law; and, to the extent provided by law, in proceedings involving real estate when the title thereto is not in controversy. No judgment of a magistrate in any proceeding involving real estate or any right pertaining thereto shall bar the title of any party or any remedy therefor.

The division of the business of a magistrate court in any county in which there shall be more than one magistrate of such court between the magistrates thereof so as to promote and secure the convenient and expeditious transaction of such business shall be determined in such manner or by such method as shall be prescribed by the judge of the circuit court of such county, or the chief judge thereof, if there be more than one judge of such circuit court.

In a trial by jury in a magistrate court, the jury shall consist of six jurors who are qualified as prescribed by law.

No magistrate or any officer of a magistrate court shall be compensated for his services on a fee basis or receive to his own use for his services any pecuniary compensation, reward or benefit other than the salary prescribed by law.

### **Municipal Courts**

11. The Legislature may provide for the establishment in incorporated cities, towns or villages of municipal, police or mayors' courts, and may also provide the manner of selection of the judges of such courts. Such courts shall have jurisdiction to enforce municipal ordinances, with the right of appeal as prescribed by law. Until otherwise provided by law, all such courts heretofore established shall remain and continue as now constituted, and with the same right of appeal, insofar as their jurisdiction to enforce municipal ordinances is concerned; but on and after January one, one thousand nine hundred seventy-seven, any other jurisdiction now exercised by such courts shall cease. No judge of a municipal, police or mayor's court or any officer thereof shall be compensated for his services on a fee basis or receive to his own use for his services any pecuniary compensation, reward or benefit other than the salary prescribed therefor.

### **Issuance and Execution of Writs, Warrants and Process; Admission to Bail**

12. The Legislature may designate the courts and officers or deputies thereof who shall have the power to issue, execute or serve such writs, warrants or any other process as may be prescribed by law, and may specify before what courts or officers thereof such writs, warrants or other process shall be returnable. The Legislature may also designate the courts and officers or deputies thereof who shall have the power to admit persons to bail. No person exercising such power shall be compensated therefor on a fee basis.

### **Parts of Existing Law Effective**

13. Except as otherwise provided in this article, such parts of the common law, and of the laws of this State as are in force on the effective date of this article and are not repugnant thereto, shall be and continue the law of this State until altered or repealed by the Legislature.

### **Pending Causes; Transfer of Causes; Records**

14. Until otherwise provided by law, all matters pending in any court on the effective date of this article shall remain and be prosecuted in the court in which they are pending.

Whenever the jurisdiction, powers or duties of any court are terminated or changed, the Legislature shall provide by law for the transfer of all matters pending therein as to which the court shall not thereafter act, together with all of the records and papers pertaining thereto, to a court having jurisdiction, powers or duties as to such matters, and shall provide for the prosecution therein of such matters as if then and there pending.

All records and papers pertaining to matters already disposed of in any court shall be preserved or disposed of in a manner prescribed by law.

### **Offices Phased Out; Effective Date of Article; Certain Provisions to Be Operable at Time Specified; Effect of Article on Certain Provisions of Constitution**

15. Notwithstanding the provisions of section one of this article, the office of justice of the peace, as heretofore constituted, shall continue until January one, one thousand nine hundred seventy-seven. No person shall be elected to the office of justice of the peace or constable at the general election to be held in the year one thousand nine hundred seventy-six, and said offices shall cease to exist as of January one, one thousand nine hundred seventy-seven.

This article shall take effect from the time of ratification, but in any case where it is specified in this article that a provision shall become operable on and after a certain date, such date shall govern and control as to the operable date of such provision.

The provisions of this article shall supersede and prevail over all other provisions of this Constitution which are expressly or impliedly in conflict or inconsistent therewith.

[The amendment of this article was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 6, Acts, Regular Session, 1974, p. 946; submitted under authority of art. 11, c. 3, of the West Virginia Code; and ratified November 5, 1974. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 217,732; Against ratification, 127,393; Majority, 90,339.]

**Editor's note.**—For a full and comprehensive comparison of the foregoing art. 8, see sections 1 through 30, art. 8, West Virginia Code, 1972.

### Family Courts

16. There is hereby created under the general supervisory control of the supreme court of appeals a unified family court system in the State of West Virginia to rule on family law and related matters. Family courts shall have original jurisdiction in the areas of family law and related matters as may hereafter be established by law. Family courts may also have such further jurisdiction as established by law.

Family court judges shall be elected by the voters for a term prescribed by law not to exceed eight years, unless sooner removed or retired as authorized in this article. Family court judges must be admitted to practice law in this state for at least five years prior to their election. Family court judges shall reside in the circuit for which he or she is a judge.

The necessary number of family court judges, the number of family court circuits and the arrangement of circuits shall be established by law. Staggered terms of office for family court judges may also be established by law.

The supreme court of appeals shall have general supervisory control over all family courts and may provide for the assignment of a family court judge to another court for temporary service. The provisions of sections seven and eight of this article applicable to circuit judges shall also apply to family court judges.

*Resolved further*, That in accordance with the provisions of article eleven, chapter three of the code of West Virginia, one thousand nine hundred thirty-one, as amended, such proposed amendment is hereby numbered "Amendment No. 1" and designated as the "Unified Family Court Amendment" and the purpose of the proposed amendment is summarized as follows: "To amend the Constitution of West Virginia to permit the Legislature to establish a unified system of family courts with jurisdiction over family law and child welfare matters."

[This section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 30, Acts, Regular Session, 1999, p. 1711, and ratified November 7, 2000. Vote on the amendment: For Ratification, 346,523 Against Ratification, 124,786 Majority, 221, 737.]



## ARTICLE IX

### County Organization

1. The voters of each county shall elect a surveyor of lands, a prosecuting attorney, a sheriff, and one and not more than two assessors, who shall hold their respective offices for the term of four years.

#### Constables, Coroners and Overseers of the Poor

2. There shall also be elected in each district of the county, by the voters thereof, one constable, and if the population of any district shall exceed twelve hundred, an additional constable, whose term of office shall be four years, and whose powers as such shall extend throughout their county. The assessor shall, with the advice and consent of the county court, have the power to appoint one or more assistants. Coroners, overseers of the poor and surveyors of roads, shall be appointed by the county court. The foregoing officers, except the prosecuting attorneys, shall reside in the county and district for which they shall be respectively elected.

#### Sheriffs

3. A person who has been elected or who has served as sheriff during all or any part of two consecutive terms shall be ineligible for the office of sheriff during any part of the term immediately following the second of the two consecutive terms. The person holding the office of sheriff when this section is ratified shall not be prevented from holding the office of sheriff during the term immediately following the term he is then serving.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 3, Acts, Regular Session, 1973, p. 700; and ratified at a special election on November 6, 1973. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 123,003; Against ratification, 107,427; Majority, 15,576.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“The same person shall not be elected sheriff for two consecutive full terms; nor shall any person who acted as his deputy be elected successor to such sheriff, nor shall any sheriff act as deputy of his successor; nor shall he during his term or service, or within one year thereafter, be eligible to any other office. The retiring sheriff shall finish all business remaining in his hands, at the expiration of his term; for which purpose his commission and official bond shall remain in force. The duties of the office of sheriff shall be performed by him in person, or under his superintendence.”]

### **Malfeasance and Misfeasance In Office**

4. The presidents of the county courts, the justices of the peace, sheriffs, prosecuting attorneys, clerks of the circuit and of the county courts, and all other county officers shall be subject to indictment for malfeasance, misfeasance, or neglect of official duty and upon conviction thereof, their offices shall become vacant.

### **Commissioning of Officers Not Otherwise Provided For**

5. The Legislature shall provide for commissioning such of the officers herein mentioned, as it may deem proper, not provided for in this Constitution, and may require any class of them to give bond with security for the faithful discharge of the duties of their respective offices.

### **Compensation—Deputies**

6. It shall further provide for the compensation, the duties and responsibilities of such officers, and may provide for the appointment of their deputies and assistants by general law.

### **Conservators of the Peace**

7. The president of the county court and every justice and constable shall be a conservator of the peace throughout his county.

### **Formation of New Counties**

8. No new county shall hereafter be formed in this State with an area of less than four hundred square miles; nor with a population of less than six thousand; nor shall any county, from which a new county, or part thereof shall be taken, be reduced in area below four hundred square miles, nor in population below six thousand. Nor shall a new county be formed without the consent of a majority of the voters residing within the boundaries of the proposed new county, and voting on the question.

### **County Commissions**

9. The office of county court or tribunal in lieu thereof heretofore created is hereby continued in all respects as

heretofore constituted, but from and after the effective date of this amendment shall be designated as the county commission and wherever in this Constitution the code of West Virginia, Acts of the Legislature or elsewhere in law a reference is made to the county court of any county, such reference, shall be read, construed and understood to mean the county commission.

Except as otherwise provided in section eleven or thirteen of this article, there shall be in each county of the state a county commission, composed of three commissioners, and two of said commissioners shall be a quorum for the transaction of business. It shall hold four regular sessions in each year, and at such times as may be fixed and entered of record by the said commission. Provisions may be made by law for holding special sessions of said commissions.

### **Terms of Office of County Commissions**

10. The commissioners shall be elected by the voters of the county, and hold their office for a term of six years, except that at the first meeting of said commissioners they shall designate by lot, or otherwise in such manner as they may determine, one of their number, who shall hold his office for a term of two years, one for four years, and one for six years, so that one shall be elected every two years; but no two of said commissioners shall be elected from the same magisterial district. If two or more persons residing in the same district shall receive the greater number of votes cast at any election, then only the one of such persons receiving the highest number shall be declared elected, and the person living in another district, who shall receive the next highest number of votes, shall be declared elected. Said commissioners shall annually elect one of their number as president. The commissioners of said commissions, now in office, shall remain therein for the term for which they have been elected, unless sooner removed therefrom, in the manner prescribed by law.

### **Powers of County Commissioners**

11. The county commissions, through their clerks, shall have the custody of all deeds and other papers presented for record in

their counties, and the same shall be preserved therein, or otherwise disposed of, as now is, or may be prescribed by law. They shall also, under such regulations as may be prescribed by law, have the superintendence and administration of the internal police and fiscal affairs of their counties, including the establishment and regulation of roads, ways, bridges, public landings, ferries and mills, with authority to lay and disburse the county levies: *Provided*, That no license for the sale of intoxicating liquors in any incorporated city, town or village, shall be granted without the consent of the municipal authorities thereof, first had and obtained. Until otherwise prescribed by law, they shall, in all cases of contest, be the judge of the election, qualification and returns of their own members, and of all county and district officers, subject to such regulations by appeal or otherwise, as may be prescribed by law. Such commissions may exercise such other powers, and perform such other duties, not of a judicial nature, as may be prescribed by law. Such existing tribunals as have been heretofore established by the Legislature to act as to police and fiscal matters in lieu of county commissions in certain counties shall remain and continue as now constituted in the counties in which they have been respectively established until otherwise provided by law, and they shall have and exercise the powers which the county commissions have under this article, and, until otherwise provided by law, such clerk as is mentioned in section twelve of this article shall exercise any powers and discharge any duties, heretofore conferred on, or required of, any such tribunal or the clerk of such tribunal respecting the recording and preservation of deeds and other papers presented for record and such other matters as are prescribed by law to be exercised and discharged by the clerk thereof.

### **Clerk of County Commission**

12. The voters of each county shall elect a clerk of the county commission, whose term of office shall be six years. His duties and compensation and the manner of his removal shall be prescribed by law. But the clerks of said commissions, now in office, shall remain therein for the term for which they have been elected, unless sooner removed therefrom, in the manner prescribed by law.

### Reformation of County Commissions

13. The Legislature shall, upon the application of any county, reform, alter or modify the county commission established by this article in such county, and in lieu thereof, with the assent of a majority of the voters of such county voting at an election, create another tribunal for the transaction of the business required to be performed by the county commission created by this article. Whenever a county commission shall receive a petition signed by ten percent of the registered voters of such county requesting the reformation, alteration or modification of such county commission, it shall be the mandatory duty of such county commission to request the Legislature, at its next regular session thereafter, to enact an act reforming, altering or modifying such county commission and establishing in lieu thereof another tribunal for the transaction of the business required to be performed by such county commission, such act to take effect upon the assent of the voters of such county, as aforesaid. Whenever any such tribunal is established, all of the provisions of this article in relation to the county commission shall be applicable to the tribunal established in lieu of said commission. When such tribunal has been established, it shall continue to act in lieu of the county commission until otherwise provided by law.

[The foregoing article was amended by adding sections 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 and was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 6, Acts, Regular Session, 1974, p. 946; submitted under authority of art. 11, c. 3, of the West Virginia Code; and ratified November 5, 1974. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 217,732; Against ratification, 127,393; Majority, 90,339.]

**Editor's note.**—The purpose of the foregoing sections 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 is to remove the county court from the Judicial Department, art. 8, as amended, and to transfer the office of county court or tribunal to art. 9, County Organization.

## ARTICLE X

### Taxation and Finance

1. Subject to the exceptions in this section contained, taxation shall be equal and uniform throughout the State, and all property, both real and personal, shall be taxed in proportion to its value to be ascertained as directed by law. No one species of property from which a tax may be collected shall be taxed higher than any other species of property of equal value; except that the aggregate of taxes assessed in any one year upon personal property employed exclusively in agriculture, including

horticulture and grazing, products of agriculture as above defined, including livestock, while owned by the producer, and money, notes, bonds, bills and accounts receivable, stocks and other similar intangible personal property shall not exceed fifty cents on each one hundred dollars of value thereon and upon all property owned, used and occupied by the owner thereof exclusively for residential purposes and upon farms occupied and cultivated by their owners or bona fide tenants, one dollar; and upon all other property situated outside of municipalities, one dollar and fifty cents; and upon all other property situated within municipalities, two dollars; and the Legislature shall further provide by general law for increasing the maximum rates authorized to be fixed by the different levying bodies upon all classes of property by submitting the question to the voters of the taxing units affected, but no increase shall be effective unless at least sixty percent of the qualified voters shall favor such increase, and such increase shall not continue for a longer period than three years at any one time, and shall never exceed by more than fifty percent the maximum rate herein provided and prescribed by law; and the revenue derived from this source shall be apportioned by the Legislature among the levying units of the State in proportion to the levy laid in said units upon real and other personal property; but property used for educational, literary, scientific, religious or charitable purposes, all cemeteries, public property, the personal property, including livestock, employed exclusively in agriculture as above defined and the products or agriculture as so defined while owned by the producers may by law be exempted from taxation; household goods to the value of two hundred dollars shall be exempted from taxation. The Legislature shall have authority to tax privileges, franchises, and income of persons and corporations and to classify and graduate the tax on all incomes according to the amount thereof and to exempt from taxation incomes below a minimum to be fixed from time to time, and such revenues as may be derived from such tax may be appropriated as the Legislature may provide. After the year nineteen hundred thirty-three, the rate of the state tax upon property shall not exceed one cent upon the hundred dollars valuation, except to pay the principal and interest of bonded indebtedness of the State now existing.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 3, Acts, Extraordinary Session, 1932, p. 72; submitted by Acts, Extraordinary Session, 1932, c. 10; and ratified November 8, 1932. Vote on the amendment: For

ratification, 335,482; Against ratification, 43,931; Majority, 291,551.

This section, prior to its amendment read:

“Taxation shall be equal and uniform throughout the State, and all property, both real and personal, shall be taxed in proportion to its value, to be ascertained as directed by law. No one species of property, from which a tax may be collected, shall be taxed higher than any other species of property of equal value; but property used for educational, literary, scientific, religious or charitable purposes, all cemeteries and public property may, by law, be exempted from taxation. The Legislature shall have power to tax, by uniform and equal laws, all privileges and franchises of persons and corporations.”]

### **Exemptions From and Additional Adjustments To Ad Valorem Property Taxation**

1a. Notwithstanding the provisions of sections one and one-b of this article, household goods and personal effects, if such household goods or personal effects are not held or used for profit, and all intangible personal property shall be exempt from ad valorem property taxation: *Provided*, That intangible personal property may be made subject to such taxation only to the extent provided by the Legislature by general law not inconsistent with this section.

The Legislature shall not impose ad valorem property taxation upon money, bank deposits and other investments determined by such law to be in the nature of deposits in a bank or other financial institution, or upon pensions, moneys or investments determined by the Legislature in such law to be in lieu of or otherwise in the nature of pensions.

The Legislature by general law may exempt from such taxation any amount of the value of all or certain intangible personal property and any type, group or class of such intangibles but such exemptions shall be uniform throughout the state. No tax imposed upon such intangibles shall be at a rate or rates in excess of the maximum rate permitted to be imposed upon personal property employed exclusively in agriculture as provided in sections one, one-b or ten of this article, as the case may be, in the county wherein the intangible personal property has situs, as such situs is determined by the Legislature in such general law.

The valuations with respect to property acquired or created subsequent to any statewide reappraisal and the valuations with respect to any intangible personal property subjected to ad valorem property taxation pursuant to this section shall be

allocated and phased-in over a period of years and be valued with respect to the same base year as other property subject to ad valorem property taxation in order to provide for equitable and similar treatment of such property subsequently acquired or created or such intangible personal property as compared to similarly situated previously existing property of similar value whose owner is receiving the benefit of any allocation and phase-in allowed pursuant to section one-b of this article.

Any intangible personal property which would be subject to ad valorem property taxation under prior provisions of this Constitution shall continue to be subjected to such taxation as provided by and in accordance with current statutory law for the assessment of such taxes upon such property, which laws are hereby validated for such purpose or purposes, until the first day of July in the year one thousand nine hundred eighty-five, or until the first statewide reappraisal of property pursuant to section one-b of this article shall be first implemented and employed to fix values for ad valorem property taxation, whichever shall last occur, and thereafter no intangible personal property shall be subject to such taxation save for and except as provided by the Legislature by general law enacted after the ratification of the amendment of this section in the year one thousand nine hundred eighty-four.

[This section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 4, Acts, Regular Session, 1957, p. 839; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1957, c. 16; and ratified November 4, 1958. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 401,086; Against ratification, 102,265; Majority, 298,821.

The first amendment of the section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 11, Acts, Regular Session, 1972, p. 737; and ratified November 7, 1972. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 500,805; Against ratification, 100,567; Majority, 400,238.

It inserted the exemption of "household goods and personal effects if such household goods and personal effects are not held or used for profit" from ad valorem property taxation.

The second amendment of this section was proposed by Committee Substitute for House Joint Resolution No. 21, Acts, Regular Session, 1984; p. 1113; and ratified November 6, 1984. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 451,488; Against ratification, 195,172; Majority, 256,316.

The section prior to this amendment read:

Notwithstanding the provisions of the preceding section, bank deposits, money, and household goods and personal effects if such household goods and personal effects are not held or used for profit, shall be exempt from ad valorem property taxation.

This section was amended to read as set out above.]



**1b. Property Tax Limitation and Homestead Exemption Amendment of 1982.**

Ad valorem property taxation shall be in accordance with this section and other applicable provisions of this article not inconsistent with this section.

**Subsection A—Value; Rate of Assessment; Exceptions**

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Constitution and except as otherwise provided in this section, all property subject to ad valorem taxation shall be assessed at sixty percent of its value, as directed to be ascertained in this section, except that the Legislature may from time to time, by general law agreed to by two thirds of the members elected to each house, establish a higher percentage for the purposes of this paragraph, which percentage shall be uniform as to all classes of property defined in section one of this article, but not more than one hundred percent of such value.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, for the first day of July, one thousand nine hundred eighty-two, and the first day of July of each year thereafter until the values may be fixed as a result of the first statewide reappraisal hereinafter required, assessments shall be made under the provisions of current statutory law, which is hereby validated for such purpose until and unless amended by the Legislature. Assessment and taxation in accord with this section shall be deemed to be equal and uniform for all purposes.

**Subsection B—Determination of Value**

The Legislature shall provide by general law for periodic statewide reappraisal of all property, which reappraisal shall be related for all property to a specified base year which, as to each such reappraisal, shall be uniform for each appraisal for all classes of property and all counties. In such law, the Legislature shall provide for consideration of (1) trends in market values over a fixed period of years prior to the base year, (2) the location of the property, and (3) such other factors and methods as it may determine: *Provided*, That with respect to reappraisal of all property upon the base year of one thousand nine hundred eighty, such reappraisals are deemed to be valid and in compliance with this

section: *Provided, however,* That with respect to farm property, as defined from time to time by the Legislature by general law, the determination of value shall be according to its fair and reasonable value for farming purposes, as may be defined by general law.

The results of each statewide appraisal shall upon completion be certified and published and errors therein may be corrected, all as provided by general law. The first such statewide appraisal shall be completed, certified and published on or before the thirty-first day of March, one thousand nine hundred eighty-five, for use when directed by the Legislature.

The Legislature shall further prescribe by general law the manner in which each statewide reappraisal shall be employed to establish the value of the various separately assessed parcels or interests in parcels of real property and various items of personal property subject to ad valorem property taxation, the methods by which increases and reductions in value subsequent to the base year of each statewide reappraisal shall be ascertained, and require the enforcement thereof.

### **Subsection C—General Homestead Exemption**

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Constitution to the contrary, the first twenty thousand dollars of assessed valuation of any real property, or of personal property in the form of a mobile home, used exclusively for residential purposes and occupied by the owner or one of the owners thereof as his residence who is a citizen of this state and who is sixty-five years of age or older or is permanently and totally disabled as that term may be defined by the Legislature, shall be exempt from ad valorem property taxation, subject to such requirements, limitations and conditions as shall be prescribed by general law.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution to the contrary, the Legislature shall have the authority to provide by general law for an exemption from ad valorem property taxation in an amount not to exceed the first twenty thousand dollars of value of any real property, or of personal property in the form of a mobile home, used exclusively for residential purposes and occupied by the owner or one of the owners thereof as his resi-

dence who is a citizen of this state, and who is under sixty-five years of age and not totally and permanently disabled: *Provided*, That upon enactment of such general law, this exemption shall only apply to such property in any county in which the property was appraised at its value as of the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred eighty, or thereafter, as determined by the Legislature, and this exemption shall be phased in over such period of time not to exceed five years from the date such property was so appraised, or such longer time as the Legislature may determine by general law: *Provided, however*, That in no event shall any one person and his spouse, or one homestead be entitled to more than one exemption<sup>P</sup> under these provisions: *Provided further*, That these provisions are subject to such requirements, limitations and conditions as shall be prescribed by general law.

The Legislature shall have the authority to provide by general law for property tax relief to citizens of this State who are tenants of residential or farm property.

#### **Subsection D—Additional Limitations on Value**

With respect to the first statewide reappraisal, pursuant to this section, the resulting increase in value in each and every parcel of land or interest therein and various items of personal property subject to ad valorem property taxation over and above the previously assessed value shall be allocated over a period of ten years in equal amounts annually.

The Legislature may by general law also provide for the phasing in of any subsequent statewide reappraisal of property.

#### **Subsection E—Levies for Free Schools**

In equalizing the support of free schools provided by state and local taxes, the Legislature may require that the local school districts levy all or any portion of the maximum levies allowed under section one of this article which has been allocated to such local school districts.

Within the limits of the maximum levies permitted for excess levies for schools or better schools in sections one and ten of this article, the Legislature may, in lieu of the exercise of such powers by the local school districts as heretofore provided, submit to

the voters, by general law, a statewide excess levy, and if it be approved by the required number of voters, impose such levy, subject however to all the limitations and requirements for the approval of such levies as in the case of a district levy. The law submitting the question to the voters shall provide, upon approval of the levy by the voters, for the assumption of the obligation of any local excess levies for schools then in force theretofore authorized by the voters of a local taxing unit to the extent of such excess levies imposed by the state and so as to avoid double taxation of those local districts. The Legislature may also by general law reserve to the school districts such portions of the power to lay authorized excess levies as it may deem appropriate to enable local school districts to provide educational services which are not required to be furnished or supported by the state. If a statewide excess levy for the support of free schools is approved by the required majority, the revenue from such a statewide excess levy shall be deposited in the state treasury and be allocated first for the local obligations assumed and thereafter for such part of the state effort to support free schools, by appropriation or as the law submitting the levy to the voters shall require, as the case may be.

The defeat of any such proposed statewide excess levy for school purposes shall not in any way abrogate or impair any local existing excess levy for such purpose nor prevent the adoption of any future local excess levy for such purpose.

#### **Subsection F—Implementation**

In the event of any inconsistency between any of the provisions of this section and other provisions of this Constitution, the provisions of this section shall prevail. The Legislature shall have plenary power to provide by general law for the equitable application of this article and, as to taxes to be assessed prior to the first statewide reappraisal, to make such laws retroactive to the first day of July, one thousand nine hundred eighty-two or thereafter.

[This section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 7, Acts, Regular Session, 1973, p. 582; and ratified at a special election November 6, 1973. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 202,407; Against ratification, 31,665; Majority, 170,742.

The first amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 39, Acts, Regular Session, 1980, p. 740; and ratified November 4, 1980. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 498,495; Against ratification, 88,330; Majority, 410,165.

The purpose of this section is to increase the allowable homestead exemption on real property or mobile home to the first ten thousand dollars of assessed valuation of a residence occupied by the owner thereof who is sixty-five years of age or older or permanently and totally disabled.

This section, prior to its amendment read:

"Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution to the contrary, the first five thousand dollars of assessed valuation of any real property used exclusively for residential purposes and occupied by the owner or one of the owners thereof as his residence who is a citizen of this State and who is sixty-five years of age or older shall be exempt from ad valorem property taxation, subject to such requirements, limitations and conditions as shall be prescribed by general law."

The second amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 1, Second Extraordinary Session, 1982; and ratified at the General Election, November 2, 1982. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 410,619; Against ratification, 102,146; Majority, 308,473.

The purpose of this section is to provide for assessment of property for purposes of ad valorem taxation at sixty percent of its value upon statewide reappraisal; to provide for assessment of property under current statutory law until the results of such reappraisal and to validate such law; to provide for the determination of market value, and to permit the Legislature by a vote of two thirds of the members elected to each house to set higher percentages for all classes of property; to authorize the Legislature by general law to permit the results of any reappraisal to be phased in over such period of time after the year in which the reappraisal is completed in such manner as the Legislature may specify; to provide the Legislature with the power to protect the levies for free schools and to provide for statewide levies for such purpose; to require an exemption from ad valorem taxation amounting to twenty thousand dollars of assessed value of any real property or mobile home occupied as a resident by persons who are sixty-five years of age or older or permanently disabled; to authorize an exemption of up to twenty thousand dollars of value for owners of homes or mobile homes who are under sixty-five years of age and not disabled; and to provide for a phase-in period for the latter exemption after appraisal of property at its value as of the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred eighty or thereafter, as determined by the Legislature.

This section, prior to its amendment read:

"Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution to the contrary, the first ten thousand dollars of assessed valuation of any real property, or of personal property in the form of a mobile home, used exclusively for residential purposes and occupied by the owner or one of the owners thereof as his residence who is a citizen of this State and who is sixty-five years of age or older or is permanently and totally disabled as that term may be defined by the Legislature shall be exempt from ad valorem property taxation, subject to such requirements, limitations and conditions as shall be prescribed by general laws: *Provided*, That the Legislature annually shall appropriate state funds in an amount sufficient to pay to each levying body in this State the amount of tax revenue lost by reason of this amendment to such body during the preceding year: *Provided, however*, That such levy-

ing bodies shall be reimbursed by the Legislature only for that portion of the ad valorem taxation exemption above and beyond the exemption for the initial five thousand dollar valuation of real property owned and occupied by a citizen who is sixty-five years of age or older.”

This section was amended to read as set out above.]

### **1c. Exemption from ad valorem taxation of certain personal property of inventory and warehouse goods, with phase in to full exemption over five-year period.**

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Constitution, tangible personal property which is moving in interstate commerce through or over the territory of the State of West Virginia, or which was consigned from a point of origin outside the State to a warehouse, public or private, within the State for storage in transit to a final destination outside the State, whether specified when transportation begins or afterward, but in any case specified timely for exempt status determination purposes, shall not be deemed to have acquired a tax situs in West Virginia for purposes of ad valorem taxation and shall be exempt from such taxation, except as otherwise provided in this section. Such property shall not be deprived of such exemption because while in the warehouse the personal property is assembled, bound, joined, processed, disassembled, divided, cut, broken in bulk, relabeled, or repackaged for delivery out of state, unless such activity results in a new or different product, article, substance or commodity, or one of different utility. Personal property of inventories of natural resources shall not be exempt from ad valorem taxation unless required by paramount federal law.

The exemption allowed by the preceding paragraph shall be phased in over a period of five consecutive assessment years, at the rate of one fifth of the assessed value of the property per assessment year, beginning the first day of July, one thousand nine hundred eighty-seven.

[This section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 1, Second Extraordinary Session, 1986, submitted in accordance with article eleven, chapter three of the code of West Virginia, one thousand nine hundred thirty-one, as amended; and ratified November 4, 1986. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 214,597; Against ratification, 158,942; Majority, 55,655 (Unofficial).]

## Capitation Tax

### 2. Repealed.

[This section was repealed by virtue of the Capitation Tax Repeal Amendment, proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 6, Acts, Regular Session, 1970, p. 455; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1970, c. 21; and ratified November 3, 1970. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 253,638; Against ratification, 117,660; Majority, 135,978.

This section, prior to its repeal, read:

“The Legislature shall levy an annual capitation tax of one dollar upon each male inhabitant of the State who has attained the age of twenty-one years, which shall be annually appropriated to the support of free schools. Persons afflicted with bodily infirmity may be exempted from this tax.”]

## Receipts and Expenditures of Public Moneys

3. No money shall be drawn from the treasury but in pursuance of an appropriation made by law, and on a warrant issued thereon by the Auditor; nor shall any money or fund be taken for any other purpose than that for which it has been or may be appropriated or provided. A complete and detailed statement of the receipts and expenditures of the public moneys shall be published annually.

## Limitation on Contracting of State Debt

4. No debt shall be contracted by this State, except to meet casual deficits in the revenue, to redeem a previous liability of the State, to suppress insurrection, repel invasion or defend the State in time of war; but the payment of any liability other than that for the ordinary expenses of the State, shall be equally distributed over a period of at least twenty years.

## Power of Taxation

5. The power of taxation of the Legislature shall extend to provisions for the payment of the state debt, and interest thereon, the support of free schools, and the payment of the annual estimated expenses of the State; but whenever any deficiency in the revenue shall exist in any year, it shall, at the regular session thereof held next after the deficiency occurs, levy a tax for the ensuing year, sufficient with the other sources of income, to meet such deficiency, as well as the estimated expenses of such year.

### **Credit of State Not to Be Granted in Certain Cases**

6. The credit of the State shall not be granted to, or in aid of any county, city, township, corporation or person; nor shall the State ever assume, or become responsible for the debts or liabilities of any county, city, township, corporation or person. The investment of state or public funds shall be subject to procedures and guidelines heretofore or hereafter established by the Legislature for the prudent investment of such funds.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 4, Acts, 1997, p. 1780; and ratified at the special election held on September 27, 1997. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 77,257; Against ratification, 22,579; Majority, 54,678.]

The purpose of the amendment was to authorize the investment of state or public funds in common stocks and other equity investments and to further require the Legislature to establish guidelines and procedures for the prudent investment of such funds.

This section, prior to its amendment read:

“The credit of the State shall not be granted to, or in aid of any county, city, township, corporation or person; nor shall the State ever assume, or become responsible for the debts or liabilities of any county, city, township, corporation or person; nor shall the State ever hereafter become a joint owner, or stockholder in any company or association in this State or elsewhere, formed for any purpose whatever.”

### **Appropriations and Taxation for the Benefit of Counties, Municipalities or Other Political Subdivisions of the State**

6a. Notwithstanding the provisions of section six of this article, (1) the Legislature may appropriate state funds for use in matching or maximizing grants-in-aid for public purposes from the United States or any department, bureau, commission or agency thereof, or any other source, to any county, municipality or other political subdivision of the State, under such circumstances and subject to such terms, conditions and restrictions as the Legislature may prescribe by law, and (2) the Legislature may impose a state tax or taxes or dedicate a state tax or taxes or any portion thereof for the benefit of and use by counties, municipalities or other political subdivisions of the State for public purposes, the proceeds of any such imposed or dedicated tax or taxes or portion thereof to be distributed to such counties, municipalities or other political subdivisions of the State under such circumstances and subject to such terms, conditions and restrictions as the Legislature may prescribe by law.

[This section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 18, Acts, Regular Session, 1972, p. 734; and ratified November 7, 1972. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 330,829; Against ratification, 204,492; Majority, 126,337.]



### **Duties of County Authorities in Assessing Taxes**

7. County authorities shall never assess taxes, in any one year, the aggregate of which shall exceed ninety-five cents per one hundred dollars' valuation, except for the support of free schools; payment of indebtedness existing at the time of adoption of this Constitution; and for the payment of any indebtedness with the interest thereon, created under the succeeding section, unless such assessment, with all questions involving the increase of such aggregate, shall have been submitted to the vote of the people of the county, and have received three fifths of all the votes cast for and against it.

### **Bonded Indebtedness of Counties, etc.**

8. No county, city, school district, or municipal corporation, except in cases where such corporations have already authorized their bonds to be issued, shall hereafter be allowed to become indebted, in any manner, or for any purpose, to an amount, including existing indebtedness, in the aggregate, exceeding five per centum on the value of the taxable property therein to be ascertained by the last assessment for state and county taxes, previous to the incurring of such indebtedness; nor without, at the same time, providing for the collection of a direct annual tax on all taxable property therein, in the ratio, as between the several classes or types of such taxable property, specified in section one of this article, separate and apart from and in addition to all other taxes for all other purposes, sufficient to pay, annually, the interest on such debt, and the principal thereof, within, and not exceeding thirty-four years. Such tax, in an amount sufficient to pay the interest and principal on bonds issued by any school district not exceeding in the aggregate three per centum of such assessed value, may be levied outside the limits fixed by section one of this article: *Provided*, That no debt shall be contracted under this section, unless all questions connected with the same, shall have been first submitted to a vote of the people, and have received three fifths of all the votes cast for and against the same.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by Committee Substitute for Senate Joint Resolution No. 1, Acts, Regular Session, 1949, p. 716; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1949, c. 18; and ratified November 7, 1950. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 340,054; Against ratification, 150,251; Majority, 189,803.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

"No county, city, school district, or municipal corporation, except in cases where such corporations have already authorized their bonds to be issued, shall hereafter be allowed to become indebted, in any manner, or for any purpose, to an amount, including existing indebtedness, in the aggregate, exceeding five per centum on the value of the taxable property therein to be ascertained by the last assessment for state and county taxes, previous to the incurring of such indebtedness; nor without, at the same time, providing for the collection of a direct annual tax, sufficient to pay, annually, the interest on such debt, and the principal thereof, within, and not exceeding thirty-four years: *Provided*, That no debt shall be contracted under this section, unless all questions connected with the same, shall have been first submitted to a vote of the people, and have received three fifths of all the votes cast for and against the same."]

**Issuance of Bonds or Other Obligations Payable from  
Property Taxes on Increases in Value Due to  
Economic Development or Redevelopment Projects  
in Counties and Municipalities**

8a. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution to the contrary, the Legislature by general law may authorize the issuance of revenue bonds or other obligations by counties and municipalities to assist in financing qualified economic development or redevelopment projects that benefit public health, welfare and safety subject to conditions, restrictions or limitations as the Legislature may prescribe by general law.

The bonds or other obligations are payable from property tax revenue generated by the increases in value of property located within the development or redevelopment project area or district due to capital investment in the project. The Legislature shall prescribe by general law the manner in which these increases are determined.

The term for any bonds or other obligations issued may not exceed thirty tax years. The bonds or other obligations may not be deemed to be general obligations of the issuing county or municipality or of this state. The bonds or other obligations may provide for the pledge of any other funds as the owner of the improvements may by contract or otherwise be required to pay. Upon payment in full of the bonds, the increased tax revenues shall revert to the levying bodies authorized under the provisions of this Constitution to receive the revenues. The bonds or other obligations may not be paid from excess levy, bond levy or other special levy revenues.

[This section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 201, 2nd Extraordinary Session, 2002; and ratified at the General Election held on November 5, 2002.]

Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 217,589; Against ratification, 164,621; Majority, 52,968.]

The purpose of this section is to authorize the issuance of revenue bonds or other obligations payable from property taxes on increases in value due to economic development or redevelopment projects in counties and municipalities.

### **Municipal Taxes to be Uniform**

9. The Legislature may, by law, authorize the corporate authorities of cities, towns and villages, for corporate purposes, to assess and collect taxes; but such taxes shall be uniform, with respect to persons and property within the jurisdiction of the authority imposing the same.

### **School Levy and Bond Amendment**

10. Notwithstanding any other provision of the Constitution to the contrary, the maximum rates authorized and allocated by law for tax levies on the several classes of property for the support of public schools may be increased in any school district for a period not to exceed five years, and in an amount not to exceed one hundred percent of such maximum rates, if such increase is approved, in the manner provided by law, by at least a majority of the votes cast for and against the same.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the Constitution to the contrary, the maximum rates provided for tax levies by school districts on the several classes of property may be used entirely for current expense purposes; and all levies required for principal and interest payments on any bonded indebtedness, now or hereafter contracted, not to exceed five percent on the value of the taxable property therein, the value to be ascertained in accordance with section eight of this article, shall be laid separate and apart and in addition to such maximum rates, but in the same proportions as such maximum rates are levied on the several classes of property.

Notwithstanding the provisions of section eight of this article relating to a vote of the people or any other provisions of this Constitution, a county board of education may contract indebtedness and issue bonds for public school purposes as provided by law, if, when submitted to a vote of the people of the county, in the manner provided by law, the question of contracting indebtedness and issuing bonds is approved by a majority of the votes cast for and against the same.

[This section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 8, Acts, Regular Session, 1957, p. 840; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1957, c. 17; and ratified November 4, 1958. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 282,423; Against ratification, 165,741; Majority, 116,682.

The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 14, Acts, 1982, p. 785; and ratified at the General Election, November 2, 1982. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 248,912; Against ratification, 240,905; Majority, 8,007.

The purpose of this section is to permit county school levies, indebtedness and bonds to be approved by a simple majority of the votes cast for and against the same.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“Notwithstanding any other provision of the Constitution to the contrary, the maximum rates authorized and allocated by law for tax levies on the several classes of property for the support of public schools may be increased in any school district for a period not to exceed five years, and in an amount not to exceed one hundred percent of such maximum rates, if such increase is approved, in the manner provided by law, by at least sixty percent of the qualified voters of the school district.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the Constitution to the contrary, the maximum rates provided for tax levies by school districts on the several classes of property may be used entirely for current expense purposes; and all levies required for principal and interest payments on any bonded indebtedness, now or hereafter contracted, not to exceed five per centum on the value of the taxable property therein, the value to be ascertained in accordance with section eight of this article, shall be paid separate and apart and in addition to such maximum rates, but in the same proportions as such maximum rates are levied on the several classes of property.”]

### **County and Municipal Excess Levy Amendment**

11. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution to the contrary, the maximum rates authorized and allocated by law for tax levies on the several classes of property by county commissions and municipalities may be increased in any county or municipality, as provided in section one of this article for a period not to exceed five years.

[This section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 202, 2nd Extraordinary Session, 2002 and ratified at the General Election held on November 5, 2002. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 196,928 Against ratification, 182,656; Majority, 14,272.]

The purpose of this section is to increase from three to five the number of years of county and municipal excess levies.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **Corporations**

1. The Legislature shall provide for the organization of all corporations hereafter to be created, by general laws, uniform as

to the class to which they relate; but no corporation shall be created by special law: *Provided*, That nothing in this section contained, shall prevent the Legislature from providing by special laws for the connection, by canal, of the waters of the Chesapeake with the Ohio River by the line of the James River, Greenbrier, New River and Great Kanawha.

[Under the Constitution of 1863, corporations were created by special acts of the Legislature.]

### **Corporate Liability of Indebtedness**

2. The stockholders of all corporations and joint stock companies, except banks and banking institutions, created by laws of this State, shall be liable for the indebtedness of such corporations to the amount of their stock subscribed and unpaid, and no more.

### **Exclusive Privileges Prohibited**

3. All existing charters or grants of special or exclusive privileges under which organization shall not have taken place, or which shall not have been in operation within two years from the time this Constitution takes effect, shall thereafter have no validity or effect whatsoever: *Provided*, That nothing herein shall prevent the execution of any bona fide contract heretofore lawfully made in relation to any existing charter or grant in this State.

### **Rights of Stockholders**

4. The Legislature shall provide by law that every corporation, other than a banking institution, shall have power to issue one or more classes and series within classes of stock, with or without par value, with full, limited or no voting powers, and with preferences and special rights and qualifications, and that in all elections for directors or managers of incorporated companies, every stockholder holding stock having the right to vote for directors, shall have the right to vote, in person or by proxy, for the number of shares of stock owned by him, for as many persons as there are directors or managers to be elected, or to cumulate said shares, and give one candidate as many votes as the number of directors multiplied by the number of his shares of stock shall equal, or to distribute them on the same principle among as many

candidates as he shall think fit; and such directors or managers shall not be elected in any other manner.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 5, Acts, Regular Session, 1957, p. 839; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1957, c. 18; and ratified November 4, 1958. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 221,977; Against ratification, 154,175; Majority, 57,802.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“The Legislature shall provide by law that in all elections for directors or managers of incorporated companies, every stockholder shall have the right to vote in person or by proxy, for the number of shares of stock owned by him, for as many persons as there are directors or managers to be elected, or to cumulate said shares, and give one candidate as many votes as the number of directors multiplied by the number of his shares of stock, shall equal, or to distribute them on the same principle among as many candidates as he shall think fit; and such directors or managers shall not be elected in any other manner.”]

### **Street Railroads**

5. No law shall be passed by the Legislature, granting the right to construct and operate a street railroad within any city, town or incorporated village, without requiring the consent of the local authorities having the control of the street or highway proposed to be occupied by such street railroad.

### **Banks**

6. The Legislature may provide by general law for the creation, organization, and regulation of banking institutions.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 3, Acts, Regular Session, 1937, p. 581; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1937, c. 7; and ratified November 8, 1938. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 139,985; Against ratification, 62,241; Majority, 77,744.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

“The Legislature may provide, by general banking law, for the creation and organization of banks of issue or circulation, but the stockholders of any bank hereafter authorized by the laws of this State, whether of issue, deposit or discount, shall be personally liable to the creditors thereof over and above the amount of stocks held by them respectively to an amount equal to their respective shares so held, for all its liabilities accruing, while they are such stockholders.”]

### **Railroads**

7. Every railroad corporation organized or doing business in this State shall annually, by their proper officers, make a report under oath, to the auditor of public accounts of this State, or some

officer to be designated by law, setting forth the condition of their affairs, the operations of the year, and such other matters relating to their respective railroads as may be prescribed by law. The Legislature shall pass laws enforcing by suitable penalties the provisions of this section.

### **Rolling Stock Considered Personal Property**

8. The rolling stock and all other movable property belonging to any railroad company or corporation in this State, shall be considered personal property and shall be liable to execution and sale in the same manner as the personal property of individuals; and the Legislature shall pass no law exempting any such property from execution and sale.

### **Railroads Public Highways**

9. Railroads heretofore constructed, or that may hereafter be constructed in this State, are hereby declared public highways and shall be free to all persons for the transportation of their persons and property thereon, under such regulations as shall be prescribed by law; and the Legislature shall, from time to time, pass laws, applicable to all railroad corporations in the State, establishing reasonable maximum rates of charges for the transportation of passengers and freight, and providing for the correction of abuses, the prevention of unjust discriminations between through and local or way freight and passenger tariffs, and for the protection of the just rights of the public, and shall enforce such laws by adequate penalties.

### **Stations to Be Established**

10. The Legislature shall, in the law regulating railway companies, require railroads running through, or within a half mile of a town or village, containing three hundred or more inhabitants, to establish stations for the accommodation of trade and travel of said town or village.

### **Competing Lines—Legislative Permission**

11. No railroad corporation shall consolidate its stock, property or franchise with any other railroad owning a parallel or com-

peting line, or obtain the possession or control of such parallel or competing line, by lease or other contract, without the permission of the Legislature.

### **Right of Eminent Domain**

12. The exercise of the power and the right of eminent domain shall never be so construed or abridged as to prevent the taking, by the Legislature, of the property and franchises of incorporated companies already organized, and subjecting them to the public use, the same as of individuals.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **Education**

1. The Legislature shall provide, by general law, for a thorough and efficient system of free schools.

### **Supervision of Free Schools**

2. The general supervision of the free schools of the State shall be vested in the West Virginia Board of Education, which shall perform such duties as may be prescribed by law. The board shall consist of nine members to be appointed by the Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, for overlapping terms of nine years, except that the original appointments shall be for terms of one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight and nine years, respectively. No more than five members of the board shall belong to the same political party, and in addition to the general qualifications otherwise required by the Constitution, the Legislature may require other specific qualifications for membership on the board. No member of the board may be removed from office by the Governor except for official misconduct, incompetence, neglect of duty, or gross immorality, and then only in the manner prescribed by law for the removal by the Governor of state elective officers.

The West Virginia Board of Education shall, in the manner prescribed by law, select the State Superintendent of Free Schools who shall serve at its will and pleasure. He shall be the chief school officer of the State, and shall have powers and shall perform such duties as may be prescribed by law.



The State Superintendent of Free Schools shall be a member of the Board of Public Works as provided by subsection B, section fifty-one, article six of this Constitution.\*

[The amendment of this section was proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 1, Acts, Regular Session, 1957, p. 837; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1957, c. 19; and ratified November 4, 1958. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 230,879; Against ratification, 206,201; Majority, 24,678.

[\*By virtue of the "Modern Budget Amendment," ratified November 5, 1968, reference to the "State Superintendent of Free Schools" and reference to the "Board of Public Works" was deleted. See Art. VI, §51.]

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

"The State Superintendent of Free Schools shall have a general supervision of free schools, and perform such other duties in relation thereto as may be prescribed by law. If in the performance of any such duty imposed upon him by the Legislature he shall incur any expenses, he shall be reimbursed therefor: *Provided*, The amount does not exceed five hundred dollars in any one year."

### County Superintendents

3. The Legislature may provide for county superintendents and such other officers as may be necessary to carry out the objects of this article and define their duties, powers and compensation.

### Existing Permanent and Invested School Fund

4. The existing permanent and invested school fund, and all money accruing to this State from forfeited, delinquent, waste and unappropriated lands; and from lands heretofore sold for taxes and purchased by the State of Virginia, if hereafter redeemed or sold to others than this State; all grants, devises or bequests that may be made to this State, for the purposes of education or where the purposes of such grants, devises or bequests are not specified; this State's just share of the literary fund of Virginia, whether paid over or otherwise liquidated; and any sums of money, stocks, or property which this State shall have the right to claim from the State of Virginia for education purposes; the proceeds of the estates of persons who may die without leaving a will or heir, and of all escheated lands; the proceeds of any taxes that may be levied on the revenues of any corporations; all moneys that may be paid as an equivalent for exemption from military duty; and such sums as may from time to time be appropriated by the Legislature for

the purpose, shall be set apart as a separate fund to be called the "School Fund," and invested under such regulations as may be prescribed by law, in the interest-bearing securities of the United States, or of this State, or if such interest-bearing securities cannot be obtained, then said "School Fund" shall be invested in such other solvent, interest-bearing securities as shall be approved by the Governor, Superintendent of Free Schools, Auditor and Treasurer, who are hereby constituted the "Board of the School Fund," to manage the same under such regulations as may be prescribed by law; and the interest thereof shall be annually applied to the support of free schools throughout the State, and to no other purpose whatever. But any portion of said interest remaining unexpended at the close of a fiscal year shall be added to and remain a part of the capital of the "School Fund": *Provided*, That all taxes which shall be received by the State upon delinquent lands, except the taxes due to the State thereon, shall be refunded to the county or district by or for which the same were levied.

[The "Irreducible School Fund Amendment," ratified November 4, 1902, and set forth at the end of the Constitution, provides that the accumulation of the school fund provided for in this section shall cease, that all moneys in the fund shall be used for support of the free schools, and that all money and taxes formerly payable into the treasury to the credit of the school fund shall be credited to the general school fund for the support of the free schools.]

### Support of Free Schools

5. The Legislature shall provide for the support of free schools by appropriating thereto the interest of the invested "School Fund," the net proceeds of all forfeitures and fines accruing to this State under the laws thereof; and by general taxation of persons and property or otherwise. It shall also provide for raising in each county or district, by the authority of the people thereof, such a proportion of the amount required for the support of free schools therein as shall be prescribed by general laws.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 6, Acts, Regular Session, 1970; p. 455; submitted by Acts, Regular Session, 1970, c. 21; and ratified November 3, 1970. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 253,638; Against ratification, 117,660; Majority, 135,978.

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

"The Legislature shall provide for the support of free schools by appropriating thereto the interest of the invested "School Fund" the net proceeds of all forfeitures and fines accruing to this State under the laws thereof; the state capitation tax, and by general taxation of persons and property or otherwise. It shall also provide for raising in each county or district, by the authority of the people thereof, such a proportion of the amount required for the support of free schools therein as shall be prescribed by general laws."

### School Districts

6. The school districts into which the state is now divided shall continue until changed pursuant to act of the Legislature: *Provided*, That the school board of any district shall be elected by the voters of the respective district without reference to political party affiliation. No more than two of the members of such board may be residents of the same magisterial district within any school district.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 6, Second Extraordinary Session, 1986, submitted in accordance with article eleven, chapter three of the code of West Virginia, one thousand nine hundred thirty-one, as amended; and ratified November 4, 1986. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 246,194; Against ratification, 139,762; Majority, 106,432 (Unofficial).

This section, prior to its amendment, read:

"The school districts into which any county is now divided shall continue until changed in pursuance of law."]

### Levies for School Purposes

7. All levies that may be laid by any county or district for the purposes of free schools shall be reported to the clerk of the county court, and shall, under such regulations as may be prescribed by law, be collected by the sheriff, or other collector who shall make annual settlement with the county court; which settlements shall be made a matter of record by the clerk thereof, in a book to be kept for that purpose.

### Mixed Schools Prohibited

8. Repealed.

[This section was repealed by House Joint Resolution No. 13, Acts, Regular Session, 1994, p. 2230; and ratified November 8, 1994. Vote on the amendment: For ratification, 213, 956; Against ratification, 153, 369; Majority 59, 587.

This section, prior to its repeal, read:

White and colored persons shall not be taught in the same school.]

### Certain Acts Prohibited

9. No person connected with the free school system of the State, or with any educational institution of any name or grade under state control, shall be interested in the sale, proceeds or profits of any book or other thing used, or to be used therein, under such penalties as may be prescribed by law: *Provided*, That

nothing herein shall be construed to apply to any work written, or thing invented, by such person.

### **Creation of Independent Free School District**

10. No independent free school district, or organization shall hereafter be created, except with the consent of the school district or districts out of which the same is to be created, expressed by a majority of the voters voting on the question.

### **Appropriation for State Normal Schools**

11. No appropriation shall hereafter be made to any state normal school, or branch thereof, except to those already established and in operation, or now chartered.

### **Legislature to Foster General School Improvement**

12. The Legislature shall foster and encourage moral, intellectual, scientific and agricultural improvements; it shall, whenever it may be practicable, make suitable provisions for the blind, mute and insane, and for the organization of such institutions of learning as the best interests of general education in the State may demand.

## **ARTICLE XIII**

### **Land Titles**

1. All private rights and interests in lands in this State derived from or under the laws of the State of Virginia, and from or under the Constitution and laws of this State prior to the time this Constitution goes into operation, shall remain valid and secure and shall be determined by the laws in force in Virginia, prior to the formation of this State, and by the Constitution and laws in force in this State prior to the time this Constitution goes into effect.

### **Land Entry Prohibited**

2. No entry by warrant on land in this State shall hereafter be made.

[The amendment of this section was proposed by House Joint Resolution No. 113, Acts, Regular Session, 1992, p. 1623, and ratified at the General Election, November 3, 1992.

Vote on the Amendment: For Ratification, 339,433; Against Ratification, 202,434; Majority, 136,999.

This section prior to its amendment, read:

### **Forfeited Lands**

3. All title to lands in this State heretofore forfeited, or treated as forfeited, waste and unappropriated, or escheated to the State of Virginia, or this State, or purchased by either of said states at sales made for the nonpayment of taxes and become irredeemable, or hereafter forfeited, or treated as forfeited, or escheated to this State, or purchased by it and become irredeemable, not redeemed, released or otherwise disposed of, vested and remaining in this State, shall be, and is hereby transferred to, and vested in any person (other than those for whose default same may have been forfeited or returned delinquent, their heirs or devisees), for so much thereof as such person has, or shall have had, actual continuous possession of, under color or claim of title for ten years, and who, or those under whom he claims, shall have paid the state taxes thereon for any five years during such possession; or if there be no such person, then to any person (other than those for whose default the same may have been forfeited, or returned delinquent, their heirs or devisees), for so much of said land as such person shall have title or claim to, regularly derived, mediately or immediately from, or under a grant from the Commonwealth of Virginia, or this State, not forfeited, which but for the title forfeited would be valid, and who, or those under whom he claims has, or shall have paid all state taxes charged or chargeable thereon for five successive years, after the year 1865, or from the date of the grant, if it shall have issued since that year; or if there be no such person, as aforesaid, then to any person (other than those for whose default the same may have been forfeited, or returned delinquent, their heirs or devisees), for so much of said land as such person shall have had claim to and actual continuous possession of, under color of title for any five successive years after the year 1865, and have paid all state taxes charged or chargeable thereon for said period.

### **Waste and Unappropriated Lands**

4. All lands in this State, waste and unappropriated, or heretofore or hereafter for any cause forfeited, or treated as forfeited, or escheated to the State of Virginia, or this State, or purchased by either and become irredeemable, not redeemed, released, transferred or otherwise disposed of, the title whereto shall remain in this State till such sale as is hereinafter mentioned be made, shall by proceedings in the circuit court of the county in which the lands, or part thereof, are situated, be sold to the highest bidder.

### **Former Owner's Privilege**

5. The former owner of any such land shall be entitled to receive the excess of the sum for which the land may be sold over the taxes charged and chargeable thereon, or which, if the land had not been forfeited, would have been charged or chargeable thereon, since the formation of this State, with interest at the rate of twelve per centum per annum and the cost of the proceedings, if his claim be filed in the circuit court that decrees the sale, within two years thereafter.

### **Land Books—Taxes**

6. It shall be the duty of every owner of land, or of an undivided interest therein, to have such land, or such undivided interest therein, entered on the land books of the county in which it, or a part of it, is situated, and to cause himself to be charged with taxes legally levied thereon and pay the same. When, for any five successive years, the owner of any tract of land, or undivided interest therein, shall not have been charged on such land books with state, county and district taxes thereon, then, by operation hereof, the land, or undivided interest therein, shall be forfeited and the title vested in the State. But if, for any one or more of such five years, the owner of such land, or of any undivided interest therein, shall have been charged with state, county and district taxes on any part of such land, such part thereof, or undivided interest therein, shall not be forfeited for such cause. And any owner of land so forfeited or of any interest therein, at the time of the forfeiture