



NEWS:

General Assembly to Continue "Flawed Practice" of Working into the Wee Hours

JUNE 30, 2019 -- Barring any unforeseen complications, the 150th General Assembly will end its 2019 regular legislative session late tonight -- then continue passing bills well into the early morning hours tomorrow.

The legislature will work until 11:59 p.m. on June 30th and end the regular session. At 12:01 a.m. on July 1st, lawmakers will resume their work in "special session."

Under Delaware law, if the legislature were to close out their work while still in regular session, the authority to call lawmakers back to the capitol for the remainder of the year would rest with the governor. By extending their work into a special session, the Speaker of the House and the Senate President Pro Tem have the purview to recall their respective chambers.

The practice has long been criticized.

"Our last day is structured and delayed so that we have bills remaining to be worked after midnight," said State House Minority Leader Danny Short, R-Seaford. "Sometimes we find ourselves dealing with controversial measures deep into the wee hours when most of the public is asleep. That was the case last year when a minimum wage bill was run through the House at 3:40 a.m."

State House Minority Whip Tim Dukes, R-Laurel, said there is another compelling reason to change the status quo. "Outside of the public transparency issue, I think we'll save lives," he said. "More than one person has told me they dozed off behind the



State Rep. Tim Dukes

wheel while driving home from here at 4 a.m. It's a flawed practice that needs to be fixed."

Two months ago, House and Senate Republicans introduced [a bill](#) seeking to require that the regular session end no later than 7 p.m. on June 30th. Additionally, legislators would be prohibited from convening in special session prior to 9 a.m.

No General Assembly Democrat has chosen to support the bill as a sponsor or co-sponsor. The measure has been bottled-up in the Democratic-controlled House Administration Committee since its introduction.

Thus far, more than 70 bills have been scheduled to be worked in the House tonight.