

*Twentieth
Amendment
“Lame Duck”
to the
U.S. Constitution
Proposed 1931
Passed 1933*

Twentieth Amendment

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Transcript

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Courtesy National Archives and Records Administration

S. J. Res. 14

**Seventy-second Congress of the United States of America;
At the First Session,**

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Monday, the seventh
day of December, one thousand nine hundred and thirty-one.

JOINT RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States
fixing the commencement of the terms of President and Vice
President and Members of Congress and fixing the time of the
assembling of Congress.

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United
States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House
concurring therein), That the following amendment to the Consti-
tution be, and hereby is, proposed to the States, to become valid as
a part of said Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of the
several States as provided in the Constitution:*

“ARTICLE —

“SECTION 1. The terms of the President and Vice President shall
end at noon on the 20th day of January, and the terms of Senators
and Representatives at noon on the 3d day of January, of the years
in which such terms would have ended if this article had not been
ratified; and the terms of their successors shall then begin.

“SEC. 2. The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year,
and such meeting shall begin at noon on the 3d day of January,
unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

“SEC. 3. If, at the time fixed for the beginning of the term of
the President, the President elect shall have died, the Vice President
elect shall become President. If a President shall not have been
chosen before the time fixed for the beginning of his term, or if the
President elect shall have failed to qualify, then the Vice President
elect shall act as President until a President shall have qualified;
and the Congress may by law provide for the case wherein neither
a President elect nor a Vice President elect shall have qualified,
declaring who shall then act as President, or the manner in which
one who is to act shall be selected, and such person shall act accord-
ingly until a President or Vice President shall have qualified.

“SEC. 4. The Congress may by law provide for the case of the
death of any of the persons from whom the House of Representatives
may choose a President whenever the right of choice shall have
devolved upon them, and for the case of the death of any of the
persons from whom the Senate may choose a Vice President when-
ever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them.

Courtesy National Archives and Records Administration

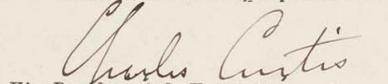
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“SEC. 5. Sections 1 and 2 shall take effect on the 15th day of October following the ratification of this article.

“SEC. 6. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission.”



Speaker of the House of Representatives.



*Vice President of the United States and
President of the Senate.*

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assembling of Congress.

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“Article –

“Section 1. The terms of the President and Vice President shall end at noon on the 20th day of January, and the terms of Senators and Representatives at noon on the 3d day of January, of the years in which such terms would have ended if this article had not been ratified; and the terms of their successors shall then begin.

“Sec. 2. The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall begin at noon on the 3d day of January, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

“Sec. 3. If, at the time fixed for the beginning of the term of the President, the President elect shall have died, the Vice President elect shall become President. If a President shall not have been chosen before the time fixed for the beginning of his term, or if the President elect shall have failed to qualify, then the Vice President elect shall act as President until a President shall have qualified; and the Congress may by law provide for the case wherein neither a President elect nor a Vice President elect shall have qualified, declaring who shall then act as President, or the manner in which one who is to act shall be selected, and such person shall act accordingly until a President or Vice President shall have qualified.

“Sec. 4. The Congress may by law provide for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the House of Representatives may choose a President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them, and for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the Senate may choose a Vice President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them.

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S. J. Res. 14-2

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Mr. (?) N. (Nance) Garner
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Charles Curtis
Vice President of the United States and
President of the Senate.