

From: Elizabeth Lincoln
Sent: Saturday, May 18, 2019 1:56 PM
To:
Cc: Reference Desk <refdesk@lrl.leg.mn>
Subject: extra vs. special

The name used in the *House Journals*, *Senate Journals*, and the *Laws of Minnesota* changed from “extra session” in 1971 to “special session” in 1979. (There were no special sessions between 1971 and 1979.)

It doesn't appear that the use of **extra** was changed to **special** through a constitutional amendment or through the 1974 revision of the Constitution.

There was [a constitutional amendment on the ballot in 1962](#) that added the language, “A **special** session of the legislature may be called as otherwise provided by this constitution,” in Article 4 section 1. Until the 1974 revision of the Constitution, there was a provision in Article V section 4 that mentions special sessions but not by a name: “He [the governor] may on extraordinary occasions convene both house of the legislature.”

Upon revision of the constitution in 1974 the language changed a little bit but continued using “**special**.” [Article 4 section 12](#) of the *Constitution of the State of Minnesota* stated, “A **special** session of the legislature may be called by the governor on extraordinary occasions.”

The [Constitutional Study Commission's Legislative Branch Committee Report](#) (1972) does not address this semantic difference and refers to special/extra sessions throughout the report as “special sessions.”

There are several statutory references to special/extra sessions and some of them have changed:

“**Extra** session” was used in [Minnesota Statute 4.03](#). when it was first introduced in [1858](#) and has **not** been changed.

“**Special** session” was used in [Minnesota Statute 3.95](#) when it was first introduced in [1961](#).

“**Special** session” was used in [Minnesota Statute 3.06 subdivision 2](#) when it was first introduced in [1987](#).

“**Special session**” was used in [Minnesota Statute 3.073](#) when it was first introduced in [1978](#).

“**Extra**” was changed to “**special**” in Minnesota Statute 3.01 (renumbered [Minnesota Statute 3.011](#)) in [1988](#). (The word “extra” in this statute goes back to [at least 1866](#).) The 1988 change was part of a [Revisor's bill](#), “revising the text of certain laws to remove redundant and obsolete language.”

I searched old newspapers online and in our paper newspaper files between 1971 and 1979 (when the switch seemed to happen) and I wasn't able to find any explanation. Also, throughout time, “extra” and “special” are used interchangeably, often in the same article.

So, as far as I can tell, I think the switch from “extra session” to “special session” was based on custom and usage.

Elizabeth Lincoln
Minnesota Legislative Reference Library
645 State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
651-296-0594
elincoln@lrl.leg.mn
<https://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/lrl>