

## The Legislature



*Reps. Don Dawkins (D-Richmond) and Alex Warner (D-Cumberland) discuss legislation in the House.*

*In 1982, North Carolina voters were asked to determine whether the term of office for state legislators should be extended from two to four years. Such a change requires voter approval of an amendment to the state constitution. The voters turned it down, but in 1989, the measure was proposed again as a means of maintaining the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of state government as the legislature considered giving the governor veto power.*

*Proponents contend that four-year terms will strengthen the legislature, specifically its nature as a citizen legislature rather than as a professional body. Opponents insist the measure will make the legislature less accountable to voters and will not make it easier for the average citizen to serve. In the following pages, two experts on the legislative process lay out the arguments for and against longer terms for legislators.*