

Issue 3

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

3 To amend Article II, Section 2 of the Ohio Constitution by the addition of the following paragraphs:

No person shall hold the office of State Senator for a period longer than two successive terms of four years. No person shall hold the office of State Representative for a period longer than four successive terms of two years. Terms shall be considered successive unless separated by a period of four or more years. Only terms beginning on or after January 1, 1993 shall be considered in determining an individual's eligibility to hold office.

In determining the eligibility of an individual to hold an office in accordance with this article, (A) time spent in an office in fulfillment of a term to which another person was first elected shall not be considered provided that a period of at least four years passed between the time, if any, in which the individual previously held that office, and the time the individual is elected or appointed to fulfill the unexpired term; and (B) a person who is elected to an office in a regularly scheduled general election and resigns prior to the completion of the term for which he or she was elected, shall be considered to have served the full term in that office.

If adopted by a majority of electors voting on this amendment, each provision of this amendment shall be deemed severable from the others, and finding that a provision is invalid shall not affect the other provisions.

A majority yes vote is necessary for passage.

	Yes	SHALL THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT BE ADOPTED?
	No	

EXPLANATION AND ARGUMENT FOR PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Issue 3 will limit the terms of the Ohio Senate to two consecutive four-year terms. Members of the Ohio House of Representatives will be limited to four consecutive two-year terms. Since 1951 the terms of the President has been limited. Ohioans have limited the Governor's terms since 1954.

No current incumbents will be immediately thrown out of office as the result of this amendment. The terms that count toward limitation will begin with this election.

This amendment does not prohibit an incumbent state legislator from running for other offices. It simply prohibits members of the Ohio House of Representatives and Ohio Senate from making a career out of holding the same office for a lifetime. If the voters choose to return an incumbent to a position previously held for eight consecutive years, they may do so after the incumbent has sat out of office for a four-year "rest period."

This amendment, as well as Issues 2 and 4, are designed to promote rotation in office and give more Ohioans an opportunity to serve in public office. By limiting terms, open-seat elections will occur more frequently. These elections provide more opportunities for new people to run for office without having to challenge well-financed veteran legislators.

Committee For the Amendment

John J. Jazwa
Suzanne Robbins
Kenneth M. Lahn

ARGUMENTS AGAINST PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Myth of Citizen Legislator

- Term Limits won't guarantee competitive elections; they simply guarantee turnover. Turnover, however, is not the real problem. In that last 10 years, 70% of our state Senators have been replaced at least once, as have 68% of our state Representatives.
- Term Limits won't guarantee responsible legislation. They only guarantee that our legislature will have limited experience and a limited memory of successful and failed policies of the past.
- A short-term legislature will tend to adopt short-term solutions to long-term problems.
- The goal of a citizen legislature comprised of idealistic people interested in public service won't be achieved through term limits. The same sorts of people who are in the legislature now are most likely to run and win-those who can afford to take a break from their lives and jobs and who are motivated enough to campaign, raise money from friends and strangers, and withstand intense scrutiny of their personal lives.

Pay-to-play politics

- Term Limits will force dependency upon staff, bureaucrats, and lobbyists who will, in turn, be the ones deciding public policy rather than our elected officials.
- Legislators may not be effective or responsive to the electorate in their last allowable terms.
- Lame duck legislators could be tempted with offers of future jobs or other benefits.

Power of elections

- Re-election pressure is a necessary component of our democratic system. Facing the voters at election time forces accountability.
- Term Limits will discourage competition. Incumbents will still have extraordinary advantages in elections like free mailings, name recognition, and media access. Why run against an incumbent when you can wait and run for an open seat?

Prepared by Ohio League of Women Voters, Marilyn Shearer, President