

February 14, 2011

EXHIBIT #4
DATE 2-14-11
HB 418

HB418: Revise term limits

Introduced by: C Edmunds

To prepare my testimony for this hearing, I headed to the State Law Library to research how and when term limits came into being.

When the current constitution was written in the early 1970s, it had no term limits. Constitutional initiative 64 to implement the current term limits was presented to the voters in the 1992 general election.

A librarian retrieved a copy of the Voter's Guide which contained the arguments for and against term limits. Some of them aren't applicable and the statistics are outdated now, but some of the arguments are still valid for keeping the current term limits.

The current term limits:

- could discourage incumbent abuses
- lead the legislature to resolve problems and legislate more in the public interest
- bring more private sector know-how and expertise to legislating
- encourage more people to run for office...and these people will view the job as a time of service, not a career.

"Today's mass media allows the candidate with the most money to dominate political campaigns...Ordinary citizens who are willing and able to contribute, are discouraged from challenging incumbents."

Maybe new legislators have a steep learning curve, but I would hope (and their constituents expect) they can make their own decisions and not simply 'go with the flow' determined by senior legislators.

To maintain a citizen legislature as the founding fathers intended, we need to allow opportunities for citizens to be elected. The last thing we need is more career politicians.

How would Sections 2a and 2b affect, or be affected by, the proposed SB311 that says

8(a) A term of office for an official serving in the office and or a candidate seeking the office is considered to begin on January 1 of the term for which the official is elected or the candidate seeks election and end on December 31 of the term for which the official is elected or the candidate seeks election.

(b) A year is considered to start on January 1 and end on the following December 31."?

I urge the committee to vote no on this bill to pursue a constitutional amendment initiative to revise term limits.

Thank you,

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