
A BILL FOR AN ACT

PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE III, SECTION 4, OF THE
CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF HAWAII TO ESTABLISH
LEGISLATIVE TERM LIMITS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that a vast majority of
2 the residents of the state support term limits for legislators.
3 Concern regarding career politicians and the recent issues of
4 public corruption have many residents worried about the status
5 of legislative term limits. While the residents have often
6 called for legislative reform, one measure that has consistently
7 not been adopted is legislative term limits.

8 The legislature also finds that at least fifteen states
9 have legislative term limits, which range from six to twelve
10 years. Although the backing for enacting legislative term limits
11 does have merit in certain circumstances, to promote fairness
12 and equity between separate and co-equal branches of government
13 any term limits for legislators should be longer than the term
14 limit of the governor of the applicable state. Because of the
15 legislature's part-time nature and the differences between the
16 house of representatives and the senate, it would be most



1 equitable for the term limit to be set at twelve years total
2 between the two chambers.

3 The purpose of this Act is to propose an amendment to
4 article III, section 4, of the Constitution of the State of
5 Hawaii to limit the terms of members of the legislature to a
6 maximum of twelve years in the house of representatives or
7 senate, or both, for terms beginning on or after the general
8 election of 2024, and to include a grandfather clause as to not
9 disproportionately affect those legislators who have already
10 exceeded the proposed twelve year limit.

11 SECTION 2. Article III, section 4, of the Constitution of
12 the State of Hawaii is amended to read as follows:

13 **"ELECTION OF MEMBERS; TERM**

14 **Section 4.** Each member of the legislature shall be elected
15 at an election. If more than one candidate has been nominated
16 for election to a seat in the legislature, the member occupying
17 that seat shall be elected at a general election. If a
18 candidate nominated for a seat at a primary election is
19 unopposed for that seat at the general election, the candidate
20 shall be deemed elected at the primary election. The term of
21 office of a member of the house of representatives shall be two



1 years and the term of office of a member of the senate shall be
2 four years []; provided that for terms beginning on or after
3 the general election of 2024, no member of the legislature shall
4 serve for more than twelve years total between the house of
5 representatives or senate, or both. The exception for this limit
6 shall be for legislators who have already met or exceeded the
7 twelve year limit as of the general election in 2024. The term
8 of a member of the legislature shall begin on the day of the
9 general election at which elected or if elected at a primary
10 election, on the day of the general election immediately
11 following the primary election at which elected. For a member
12 of the house of representatives, the term shall end on the day
13 of the general election immediately following the day the
14 member's term commences. For a member of the senate, the term
15 shall end on the day of the second general election immediately
16 following the day the member's term commences."

17 SECTION 3. The question to be printed on the ballot shall
18 be as follows:

19 "Shall the Constitution of the State of Hawaii be amended
20 to limit the members of the Hawaii state legislature to
21 serving a maximum of twelve years in the Hawaii state house



H.B. NO. ~~626~~

1 of representatives or senate, or both, for terms beginning
2 on or after the general election of 2024?"

3 SECTION 4. Constitutional material to be repealed is
4 bracketed and stricken. New constitutional material is
5 underscored.

6 SECTION 5. This amendment shall take effect upon compliance
7 with Article XVII, section 3, of the Constitution of the State
8 of Hawaii.

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INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 20 2023

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H.B. NO. 626

Report Title:

Legislative Term Limits; Constitutional Amendment

Description:

Proposes a constitutional amendment to limit the terms of members of the legislature to a maximum of twelve years in the house of representatives or senate, or both, for terms beginning on or after the general election of 2024, with a grandfather clause for those in office who have already met the limit.

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