

HCS HJR 69 -- TERM LIMITS FOR MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SPONSOR: Stephens

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elections and Elected Officials by a vote of 15 to 1.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HJR 69.

Currently, members of the General Assembly can serve no more than eight years total in any one chamber of the legislature, nor more than 16 total in both chambers.

Upon voter approval and beginning on December 5, 2030, this resolution would remove the single chamber prohibition, allowing members of the General Assembly to serve no more than 16 years total in either chamber of the legislature.

This resolution would also prohibit any individual from serving as Speaker of the House of Representative for more than three terms or as President Pro Tempore of the Senate for more than two terms.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that Missouri has suffered from a severe drain on governing experience since term limits took effect. It often takes several years for an elected official to get the necessary experience to gain proficiency in the tasks required of them, after which they will quickly be termed out and have to leave. Institutional knowledge disappears, giving legislators a limited perspective of long term problems and the origins of different policies. Inadvertently, by shortening the length of time a legislator can serve, knowledge and expertise is shifted to unelected actors like lobbyists and bureaucrats.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Stephens; Missouri Farm Bureau; and Winston Apple.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that term limits are broadly popular with the public. Term limits were enacted by popular vote, and to remove them would be to reverse the will of the people. The people want a citizen legislature, not a body of career politicians.

Testifying in person against the bill were Jobs With Justice Voter Action; Arnie C. Dienoff; Joseph A. Jefferies; Joshua Vroman; and Armorvine LLC.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.