

An Amendment to the State Constitution

To Be Submitted to the Qualified Electors of the State for Their Approval
or Rejection at the

GENERAL ELECTION

TO BE HELD ON

Tuesday, November 2, 1948

CONCISE STATEMENT

PROPOSED AMENDMENT to the Constitution repealing Section 7, Article XI,
which existing section renders any county officer ineligible to
hold his office more than two terms in succession.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 4

Be It Resolved, By the House of Representatives and the Senate of the State of Washington in legislative session assembled:

That, at the general election to be held in this state on the Tuesday next succeeding the first Monday in November, 1948, there shall be submitted to the qualified voters of this state, for their adoption or rejection, the following proposed amendment to the Constitution of the State of Washington:

Section 7, Article XI, Constitution of the State of Washington is hereby repealed.

Be It Further Resolved, That the Secretary of State shall cause the foregoing constitutional amendment to be published for at least three (3) months preceding the election in a weekly newspaper in every county where a newspaper is published throughout the state.

Adopted by the House February 5, 1947.

HERBERT M. HAMBLIN,
Speaker of the House.

Adopted by the Senate March 6, 1947.

VICTOR A. MEYERS,
President of the Senate.

STATE OF WASHINGTON—ss.

Filed in the office of the Secretary of State, March 10, 1947.

EARL COE,
Secretary of State.

ARGUMENT FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT
(House Joint Resolution No. 4)

ABOLISHING THE TWO-TERM LIMITATION ON COUNTY OFFICIALS

Deleting ARTICLE XI, SECTION VII, of the Constitution, which reads, "no county official shall be eligible to hold the same office more than two terms in succession."

I. TWO-TERM LIMIT DEPRIVES THE COUNTY OF A MAXIMUM OF EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT

It throws away the experience you have paid for.

County government is big business, comparable to leading banks and industrial units. It requires men of ability and training. In no field of business is ability and training limited to 8 years. Private business encourages long term employment. It recognizes the value of experience. Ability and experience are just as valuable to the taxpayer as they are to private business.

This limitation discourages people of ability from entering public service, either as elected officials or as appointees.

II. PUBLIC SAFEGUARDS

Instead of imposing the limitation on other officials, the people have wisely built safeguards against abuses by public officials. They are as follows:

- (a) You still must vote for and elect your county officials.
- (b) Direct primary (thus destroying party controlled nominations).
- (c) Recall (giving the people power to remove incompetent or corrupt officials).
- (d) Indictment by grand jury. Each county official is accountable to the courts for misconduct.
- (e) All county officials are bonded.
- (f) All county officials are subject to audit, and biennial check by the legislature.

THESE ARE THE REAL SAFEGUARDS AGAINST ANY ABUSES BY COUNTY OFFICIALS.

III. THIS LIMITATION IS DISCRIMINATORY

County officials are limited to two terms in office. If this limitation had merit, the people would have extended it to all other elected officials.

IV. THIS AMENDMENT REMOVES AN OUT OF DATE RESTRICTION

Only two states have failed to abolish the two-term limit, Washington and New Mexico. Both are voting on abolishing the limitation during this election year.

CONCLUSION

People and organizations with widely different views have endorsed this constitutional amendment. Among these are the Washington State Taxpayers' Association, various labor organizations and many other groups.

These groups have concluded that this section of the State Constitution, placed there in 1889, is obsolete; that it is detrimental to good government; that it deprives the county of trained and efficient working personnel; that it discourages people of ability from entering government service; and that the limitation, therefore, should be removed.

THERE IS NO ORGANIZED OPPOSITION TO THIS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

STATE COMMITTEE OF COUNTY OFFICERS

STATE OF WASHINGTON—ss.

Filed in the office of the Secretary of State March 6, 1946.

EARL COE,
Secretary of State.