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Alaska State Legislature

Sponsor Statement for SJR 1

Senate Joint Resolution 1 seeks to put on the next general election's ballot the question of term limits for legislators. This resolution should pass the Legislature and be put to a vote of the people.

Term limits would work like so:

Representatives will be limited to four terms, while senators will be limited to two. Thus, legislators in both houses will have eight years to serve in their respective house. After a legislator terms out, he or she must wait until one complete term intervenes before they can run for office again.

Alaska's Legislature was created with a citizen legislator in mind. The state's founders never intended for citizens to become career politicians. By limiting the terms of lawmakers others in the state who are qualified will have a better chance to use their skills for the betterment of Alaska.

Typically, an incumbent in a House or Senate race has the upper hand. It is unreasonable for legislators to think they are the only ones who can do the job. Furthermore, term limits end the perpetual election cycle, causing legislators to concentrate on decisions that are best for the state as opposed to their reelection chances..

If enacted by voters in the next general election, lawmakers elected before the 2010 election would be grandfathered in, meaning their previous terms would not be counted against the term limit.

Realistically, this issue should pass the Legislature and be put to a vote of the people. Since we as legislators work for the people, the term limits decisions should be left to them.