

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5226

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS,
MARCH 5, 1991**

Brief Description: Limiting terms of state offices to twelve years.

SPONSORS: Senators Thorsness, Saling, Amondson and Metcalf.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chairman; Roach, Vice Chairman; and Matson.

Staff: Martin Lovinger (786-7443)

Hearing Dates: February 7, 1991; March 5, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Active efforts to curb what is perceived as entrenched incumbency by public office holders are receiving considerable attention and support around the United States. Presently the state of Washington has no limitation on the number of years that can be served by elected officials.

SUMMARY:

No person may serve as Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Auditor, Attorney General, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Commissioner of Public Lands, Insurance Commissioner, state senator or state representative or any combination of such offices for more than 12 years, whether such office or offices are held consecutively or nonconsecutively. No person can file for or be appointed to any of the above offices if serving the term or remainder of the term would violate the 12-year limitation. Service in any office listed above prior to the second Monday in January 1993 is not to be applied to the 12-year limit.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

Limiting terms in some form has a longstanding history dating back to George Washington. Term limitations support the conception of a citizen legislature. States should set an example for the United States Congress. Limiting state office

terms could pressure Congress to set congressional limitations on terms.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

Limiting terms is an untested concept which does not guarantee a citizen legislature or result in proportional representation. Reform will not be achieved by term limitations unless term limitations and campaign finance reforms are enacted together.

TESTIFIED: Senator Jack Metcalf, sponsor; Robert Richie, Citizens for Proportional Representation (con); Colleen Morse, National Federation of Independent Business (pro)