

HJR 5 -- GENERAL ASSEMBLY TERM LIMITS

SPONSOR: Redmon

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Emerging Issues by a vote of 9 to 0.

Upon voter approval, this proposed constitutional amendment prohibits a person from serving more than 16 years in the General Assembly. The service may be split between the House of Representatives and the Senate in any proportion as long as the individual serves no more than 16 years total. Currently, no one can serve more than eight years in any one house of the General Assembly or more than 16 years in both houses.

A person may not run for office in either house of the General Assembly if he or she cannot complete a full term in office because of term limits.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the amendment will allow additional service in one house of the legislature and give politicians more experience at their jobs in particular areas. It will still prevent the existence of career politicians as it retains the 16 year limit for total service in the legislature.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Redmon.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that term limits were favored by Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson and were present in the Articles of Confederation. In the 19th Century most legislators served only one term in office and there was no such thing as a career politician. Many of the founders supported unpaid legislators to reduce any incentive to hold a position in Congress for long periods of time.

Testifying against the bill was Larry Davis.