

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.J.R. 7
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DIGEST

Currently, elected officials in Texas may serve an unlimited number of terms in public office. Proponents of term limits believe that term limits are necessary to keep elected officials more responsive to the communities they serve. S.J.R. 7 requires the submission to the voters of a constitutional amendment authorizing term limits for all statewide elected officials, with the exception of the judiciary.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.J.R. 7 requires the submission to the voters of a constitutional amendment to limit the time a person may serve in legislative office or in certain elective executive offices.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Article III, Texas Constitution, by adding Section 7a, as follows:

Sec. 7a. (a) Provides that a person is ineligible to be elected to the house of representatives if, before the date of the election, the person has previously served as a member of the house during all or part of six regular sessions of the legislature.

(b) Provides that a person is ineligible to be elected to the senate if, before the date of the election, the person has served as a member of the senate during all or part of six regular sessions of the legislature, with an exception.

(c) Provides that legislative service before the legislature convenes in regular session in 1999 is not counted in determining whether a person is disqualified from election to office.

SECTION 2. Amends Article IV, Texas Constitution, by adding Section 2a, as follows:

Sec. 2a. (a) Provides that a person is ineligible to a full or partial term in certain elective offices if on the date the term begins the person has served in the office during any part of each of 12 or more calendar years, with exceptions.

(b) Provides that a person is ineligible for a full or partial term on certain statewide elected governing bodies if on the date that the term begins the person has served as a member of the board, commission, or body during any part of each of 12 or more calendar years.

(c) Authorizes a person to continue to serve in an office covered by this section after the end of a term as a holdover under Section 17, Article XVI, of this constitution until a successor is qualified.

(d) Provides that the calendar year begins January 1 and ends December 31.

(e) Provides that service in office before January 1, 1999, does not count for purposes of determining whether a person is disqualified from office.

SECTION 3. Requires this proposed constitutional amendment to be submitted to the voters at an election to be held November 4, 1997. Sets forth the required language for the ballot.