

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SJ-14

RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE

Title: CONSTITUTION INCREASING THE LEGISLATIVE TERM OF OFFICE.

Vote Date: 3/26/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/21/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee
Sen. MD Rahman, 4th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would increase the term that legislators in Connecticut serve from two years to four years. As campaign fundraising becomes ever-more time consuming and a growing lack of positive responses towards the effectiveness of the General Assembly by some constituents continues to fester, this bill aims to allow more time to go into the legislative process. This could benefit the needs of the people of Connecticut, all while reducing the costs of campaigns and elections management, utilizing the resources and talent of legislators more effectively.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language amends the term length to be in a two-year, four-year, four-year, cycle following the decennial United States census. There was cause for concern that under the original proposal of four years, when the census was taken, there would occasionally be a period where legislators would be representing districts that were no longer under their assigned representation. This change would make it so that following the decennial census, legislators would be assigned two-year terms so that when the redistricting was complete, they would be able to run for the newly assigned districts.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

No state agency provided testimony on the bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

MD Rahman, State Senator, Connecticut General Assembly

Senator Rahman supports the bill, recognizing the importance of having elected leaders regularly stand before the electorate in an election. However, he argues the increased level of social media has correlated with an increase in partisanship, and ineffective governance as a result. He feels that increasing the term of office will reduce partisanship and allow legislators to understand the needs of people in Connecticut and allow candidates to think long term. He doesn't like the fact that when "one campaign ends, the next begins." He also argues the state would save money with fewer campaigns, that the need to use the Connecticut Citizens Election Program will decrease, and that the people will receive less campaign materials providing needed relief from politics.

Samuel Gold, Executive Director, Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments

Mr. Gold supports the bill and finds the concept interesting but proposes several changes that he feels the committee should consider. He suggests making the General Assembly a year-round unicameral legislature (allowing for fewer and more resourceful legislators), staggering four-year terms, and holding legislator elections in the first year of the biennium budget, allowing legislators to work one year before having to craft a budget.

Claire Walsh, DWA Indivisible

Ms. Walsh supports the bill, believing it will help improve the efficiency of campaigns and elections while reducing costs. It will allow legislators to meaningfully address issues with more valuable resources. She believes that the time used for fundraising should be better spent on legislative proposals, which will translate into better policy management and legislative skills.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Linda Dalessio

Ms. Dalessio opposes the bill, citing broad opposition to increasing terms as she feels legislators do not pass good policies with their current term length and has serious concerns about the integrity of elections in Connecticut.

Reported by: Patrick Riley

Date: 4/2/2025