

Capitol Reform Proposal Launched

Stricter But Smarter Term Limits, Plus Accountability and Integrity

A coalition of business, civic and labor leaders is being formed to promote the Capitol Reform Proposal, a proposed constitutional amendment that would enact stricter, but smarter term limits, along with additional accountability provisions. Bob LaBrant, senior Vice President and General Counsel of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, released the following statement:

"Voters put term limits in our constitution to get the career politicians out, and bring new ideas in. In that respect, term limits accomplished its mission. But it did some things nobody intended. Under these term limits, legislators are always hopping from one office to the next, from House to Senate, and sometimes back again. And with all the time legislators spend campaigning for their next job, they're missing important votes, and not learning how to do their current job. Too often, after they've left office, former legislators stay in Lansing as lobbyists, instead of going back home to the real world. The Capitol Reform Proposal we intend to propose to the legislature and hope is submitted to voters at the earliest possible date, makes term limits stricter -- but smarter too. Instead of the 14-year limit we currently have, the Capitol Reform Proposal includes a 12-year limit on serving in the legislature. But your elected officials could serve the 12 years in either the House or the Senate, so there would be less hopping from office to office, and more experience actually doing their job. Capitol Reform also docks the pay of legislators who miss roll call votes, and it makes it illegal for former legislators to become lobbyist agents for two years after they leave office. So the Capitol Reform Proposal gives us stricter -- but smarter -- term limits, plus more accountability and more integrity too. We look forward to making our case for the passage of this proposal to the Michigan Legislature and to the people of Michigan."

Paid for with regulated funds by Capitol Reform, 600 S. Walnut Street, Lansing, MI 48933.

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Key Facts About the Capitol Reform Proposal

- The Michigan constitution currently limits legislators to serving no more than three 2-year terms in the State House, and two 4-year terms in the Michigan Senate, for a total of 14 years of service. The Capitol Reform Proposal reduces the total limit of service to 12 years, but allows legislators to serve those 12 years entirely in the House, or entirely in the Senate, or any combination of the two.
- This 12-year limit is stricter -- but smarter -- because it allows legislators to build up experience governing, instead of just experience campaigning for their next office.
- The proposal provides for a transition period where current legislators are afforded the opportunity to serve up to 12 years in the chamber in which they currently serve, just as newly elected members would be able to do, regardless of previous service in another chamber.
- The Capitol Reform Proposal also includes provisions that would reduce the pay of legislators who are absent from roll call votes, unless those absences are excused by record roll call vote of the House or Senate. And the proposal prohibits former legislators from being hired as lobbyist agents for two years after they have left office.
- This proposal could be presented to voters as soon as the January 15, 2008 Presidential primary ballot.

SOURCE: Michigan Chamber of Commerce

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