

2026 -- H 7983

LC005772

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY -- TERM LIMITS FOR MEMBERS OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Introduced By: Representatives Cotter, McGaw, Morales, and Stewart

Date Introduced: February 27, 2026

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Legislative findings and purpose.

2 The general assembly hereby finds and declares that reasonable term limits promote public
3 confidence in government, encourage civic participation, create opportunities for new leadership,
4 and preserve institutional knowledge while preventing the concentration of political power.

5 It is the intent of this act to limit service in each chamber of the general assembly to twelve
6 (12) years, prospectively, beginning on the effective date of this act.

7 SECTION 2. Title 22 of the General Laws entitled "GENERAL ASSEMBLY" is hereby
8 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

9 CHAPTER 20

10 TERM LIMITS FOR MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

11 22-20-1. Short title.

12 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Term Limits for Members of the
13 General Assembly".

14 22-20-2. Definitions.

15 As used in this chapter, the following word and term shall have the following meaning
16 unless the context shall clearly indicate another or different meaning or intent:

17 (1) "Years of service" or "service" means the years served in a respective chamber of the
18 general assembly as an elected official, whether consecutive or nonconsecutive.

1 **22-20-3. Term limits for members of the general assembly.**

2 (a) No person shall serve more than twelve (12) years in the house of representatives, and
3 no person shall serve more than twelve (12) years in the senate.

4 (b) Any partial term exceeding one year shall count as one year toward the twelve (12) year
5 limitation. Any partial term of one year or less shall not be counted.

6 (c) Service in the house of representatives shall be counted separately from service in the
7 senate, and service in the senate shall be counted separately from service in the house of
8 representatives. A person who has reached the twelve (12) year limitation in one chamber may seek
9 election to the other chamber, subject to the same twelve (12) year limitation applicable to that
10 chamber.

11 **22-20-4. Prospective application.**

12 (a) The twelve (12) year limitation established by this chapter shall apply only to service
13 occurring on or after the effective date of this chapter.

14 (b) No service completed prior to the effective date of this chapter shall be counted toward
15 the twelve (12) year term limitation.

16 **22-20-5. Severability.**

17 If any clause, sentence, paragraph, section, or part of this chapter shall be adjudged by any
18 court of competent jurisdiction to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, that judgment shall not
19 affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder of this chapter but shall be confined in its operation to
20 the clause, sentence, paragraph, section, or part directly involved in the controversy in which that
21 judgment shall have been rendered.

22 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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1 This act would establish a term limit of twelve years for members serving in the general
2 assembly as follows:

3 (1) Service in the house would be counted separately from service in the senate, and
4 service in the senate would be counted separately from service in the house. A person who has
5 reached the twelve-year limit in one chamber would be allowed to seek election to the other
6 chamber, subject to the same twelve-year limit.

7 (2) Any partial term of one year or less would not be counted.

8 (3) The twelve-year limitation would apply only to service occurring on or after the
9 effective date of this act.

10 (4) No service completed prior to the effective date of this act would be counted toward
11 the twelve- year term limit.

12 This act would take effect upon passage.

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