LC003901

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2018

JOINT RESOLUTION

TO APPROVE AND PUBLISH AND SUBMIT TO THE ELECTORS A PROPOSITION OF AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION -- SENATE TERMS FOR FOUR (4) YEARS

Introduced By: Senators Pearson, Quezada, Gallo, Satchell, and Lombardo

Date Introduced: February 01, 2018

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

1	WHEREAS, The proposed amendment to Article IV, Section 1 of the Constitution of the
2	State is intended to increase the terms of senators in the general assembly to four (4) years; and
3	WHEREAS, Increasing the term of senators in the general assembly to terms of four (4)
4	years will provide greater stability for the senate membership; and
5	WHEREAS, Greater stability in the senate membership will allow development of
6	expertise; and
7	WHEREAS, Greater stability in senate membership will allow senators to focus on long-
8	term solutions to problems; and
9	WHEREAS, Extending the time between elections to four (4) years allows senators
10	greater time to focus on the work of the public prior to the next election; and
11	WHEREAS, Extending the period between elections can raise the standard of political
12	debate; now, therefore be it
13	RESOLVED, That a majority of all members elected to each house of the general
14	assembly voting therefor, the following amendment to the Constitution of the state be proposed to
15	the qualified electors of the state in accordance with the provisions of Article XIV of the
16	Constitution, for their approval and the following Section is hereby amended, effective on
17	January 1, 2018, to read as follows:
18	ARTICLE IV
19	OF ELECTIONS AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Section 1. Election and terms of governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney-general, general treasurer, and general assembly members.

The governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general and general treasurer shall be elected on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November, quadrennially commencing A.D. 1994, and every four (4) years thereafter, and shall severally hold their offices, subject to recall as provided for herein, for four (4) years from the first Tuesday of January next succeeding their election and until their successors are elected and qualified. No person shall serve consecutively in the same general office for more than two (2) full terms, excluding any partial term of less than two (2) years previously served.

Senators in the general assembly shall be elected on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November, quadrennially commencing A.D. 2020 and every four (4) years thereafter, and shall severally hold their offices until successors are elected and qualified.

The senators and representatives in the general assembly shall be elected on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November, biennially in even numbered years, and shall severally hold their offices for two (2) years from the first Tuesday of January next succeeding their election and until their successors are elected and qualified.

Recall is authorized in the case of a general officer who has been indicted or informed against for a felony, convicted of a misdemeanor, or against whom a finding of probable cause of violation of the code of ethics has been made by the ethics commission. Recall shall not, however be instituted at any time during the first six (6) months or the last year of an individual's term of office.

Such a recall may be instituted by filing with the state board of elections an application for issuance of a recall petition against said general officer which is signed by duly qualified electors equal to three percent (3%) of the total number of votes cast at the last preceding general election for that office. If, upon verification, the application is determined to contain signatures of the required number of electors, the state board of elections shall issue a recall petition for circulation amongst the electors of the state. Within ninety (90) days of issuance, recall petitions containing the signatures of duly qualified electors constituting fifteen percent (15%) of the total number of votes cast in the last preceding general election for said office must be filed with the state board of elections.

The signatures to the application and to the recall petition need not all be on one (1) sheet of paper, but each such application and petition must contain an identical statement naming the person to be recalled, the general office held by said person, and the grounds for such recall set forth in a statement of one hundred (100) words or less approved by the board of elections. Each

signatory must set forth his or her signature as it appears on the voting list, the date of signing,
and his or her place of residence. The person witnessing the signatures of each elector on said
petition must sign a statement under oath on said sheet attesting that the signatures thereon are
genuine and were signed in his or her presence.

If the requisite number of signatures are not obtained within said ninety (90) days period, the recall effort shall terminate. Upon verification of the requisite number of signatures, a special election shall be scheduled at which the issue of removing said office holder and the grounds therefor shall be placed before the electors of the state. If a majority of those voting support removal of said office holder, the office shall be immediately declared vacant and shall be filled in accordance with the constitution and laws of the state. The person so removed shall not be eligible to fill the unexpired portion of the term of office. The general assembly shall provide by statute for implementation of the recall process; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the said proposition of amendments shall be submitted to the electors for their approval or rejection at the next statewide general election. The voting places in the several cities and towns shall be kept open during the hours required by law for voting therein for general officers of the state; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the secretary of state shall cause the said proposition of amendments to be published as a part of this resolution in the newspapers of the state prior to the date of the said meetings of the said electors; and the said proposition shall be inserted in the warrants or notices to be issued previous to said meetings of the electors for the purpose of warning the town, ward, or district meetings, and said proposition shall be read by the town, ward, or district meetings to be held as aforesaid; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the town, ward, and district meetings to be held aforesaid shall be warned, and the list of voters shall be canvassed and made up, and the said town, ward, and district meetings shall be conducted in the same manner as now provided by law for the town, ward, and district meetings for the election of general officers of the state.

LC003901

LC003901 - Page 3 of 3