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RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Increase the Length of Terms of Senators

Constitutional amendment. Resolved: Two thirds of each branch of the Legislature concurring, that the following amendment to the Constitution of Maine be proposed:

Constitution, Art. II, §4 is amended to read:

Section 4. Time of state election; absentee voting. The election of Senators and members of the House of Representatives shall be on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November biennially ~~forever and the~~, except as provided in this section. Beginning with the general election held in 2016, the election of Senators must be held on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November every 4 years except that, of the Senators elected in 2016, those Senators who are from odd-numbered districts serve until 2018, and, beginning with the general election held in 2018, the election of those Senators must be held on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November every 4 years. The election of Governor shall be on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November every 4 years. The Legislature under proper enactment shall authorize and provide for voting by citizens of the State absent therefrom in the Armed Forces of the United States or of this State and for voting by other citizens absent or physically incapacitated for reasons deemed sufficient.

Constitution, Art. IV, Pt. Second, §1 is amended to read:

Section 1. Number of Senators. The Senate shall consist of an odd number of Senators, not less than 31 nor more than 35, elected ~~at the same time and for the same term as Representatives for 4-year terms~~ by the qualified electors of the districts into which the State shall be from time to time divided.

Constitution, Art. IV, Pt. Second, §5 is amended to read:

Section 5. Determination of Senators elected; procedure for filling vacancies. The Senate shall, on said first Wednesday of December, biennially determine who is elected by a plurality of votes to be Senator in each district in which an election was held. All vacancies in the Senate arising from death, resignation, removal from the State or like causes, and also vacancies, if any, which may occur because of the failure of any district to elect by a plurality of votes the Senator to which said district shall be entitled shall be filled by an immediate election in the unrepresented district. The Governor shall issue a proclamation therefor and therein fix the time of such election.

Constitution, Art. X, §4 is amended to read:

Section 4. Amendments to Constitution. The Legislature, whenever 2/3 of both Houses shall deem it necessary, may propose amendments to this Constitution; and when any amendments shall be so agreed upon, a resolution shall be passed and sent to the selectmen of the several towns, and the assessors of the several plantations, empowering and directing them to notify the inhabitants of their

respective towns and plantations, in the manner prescribed by law, at the next biennial meetings in the month of November, or to meet in the manner prescribed by law for calling and holding biennial meetings of said inhabitants for the election of ~~Senators and~~ Representatives, on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November following the passage of said resolve, to give in their votes on the question, whether such amendment shall be made; and if it shall appear that a majority of the inhabitants voting on the question are in favor of such amendment, it shall become a part of this Constitution.

; and be it further

Constitutional referendum procedure; form of question; effective date.

Resolved: That the municipal officers of this State shall notify the inhabitants of their respective cities, towns and plantations to meet, in the manner prescribed by law for holding a statewide election, at a statewide election held in the month of November following the passage of this resolution, to vote upon the ratification of the amendment proposed in this resolution by voting upon the following question:

"Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to change the term of office for State Senators from 2 years to 4 years, beginning with the Senators from even-numbered districts in 2016 and Senators from odd-numbered districts in 2018?"

The legal voters of each city, town and plantation shall vote by ballot on this question and designate their choice by a cross or check mark placed within the corresponding square below the word "Yes" or "No." The ballots must be received, sorted, counted and declared in open ward, town and plantation meetings and returns made to the Secretary of State in the same manner as votes for members of the Legislature. The Governor shall review the returns. If it appears that a majority of the legal votes are cast in favor of the amendment, the Governor shall proclaim that fact without delay and the amendment becomes part of the Constitution of Maine on the date of the proclamation; and be it further

Secretary of State shall prepare ballots. Resolved: That the Secretary of State shall prepare and furnish to each city, town and plantation all ballots, returns and copies of this resolution necessary to carry out the purposes of this referendum.

SUMMARY

This constitutional resolution increases the length of the terms of State Senators from 2 years to 4 years, beginning with the Senators elected in 2016 except that, in order to stagger the elections so that roughly half of the Senate is up for election every 2 years, Senators from odd-numbered districts will not begin serving a 4-year term until the 2018 election.