

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2056

To establish a national advisory referendum on limiting the terms of Members of Congress at the general election of 1998.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 25, 1997

Mr. HOEKSTRA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on House Oversight

A BILL

To establish a national advisory referendum on limiting the terms of Members of Congress at the general election of 1998.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “National Voter Oppor-
5 tunity To Inform Congress Effectively (V.O.I.C.E.) on
6 Term Limits Act of 1997”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

8 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that—

9 (1) the right of citizens of the United States to
10 vote is a fundamental right;

1 (2) the right of citizens of the United States to
2 have an effective voice in the decisionmaking pro-
3 cesses of the Congress is grounded in the right to pe-
4 tition and is a fundamental part of American democ-
5 racy, and Congress should provide an opportunity
6 for citizens to express their views on important pub-
7 lic issues;

8 (3) there is an increasing public sentiment and
9 demand for limiting the terms of Members of Con-
10 gress; and

11 (4) voters in 23 States have already voted and/
12 or approved State laws to limit the terms of their
13 congressional delegations, and voters in other States
14 have expressed their interest in having the oppor-
15 tunity to also vote on term limits for Members of
16 Congress.

17 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

18 (1) to give the citizens of every State the oppor-
19 tunity to have a voice on whether or not the terms
20 of Members of Congress should be limited; and

21 (2) to conduct a national nonbinding referen-
22 dum on term limits at the 1998 general election,
23 thereby having an opportunity to study the feasibil-
24 ity of conducting national nonbinding referenda on
25 other important issues in the future.

1 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

2 As used in this Act—

3 (1) the term “nonbinding referendum” means
4 the placing on the general election ballot in every
5 congressional district and delegate or resident com-
6 missioner district in 1998 the advisory question de-
7 fined below, the results of which shall be properly
8 tabulated and certified as described herein, but
9 which results shall not be legally binding on any per-
10 son or institution;

11 (2) the term “advisory question” means the
12 National Advisory Referendum on Term Limits, the
13 language of which is contained in section 4(b) of this
14 Act;

15 (3) the term “general election” means the elec-
16 tion at which Federal officers are elected in 1998;

17 (4) the term “Federal office” means Members
18 of the United States House of Representatives and
19 Senators, Delegates to the United States Congress,
20 and Resident Commissioners of the territories of the
21 United States; and

22 (5) the term “State election agency” means the
23 official agency of each State and territory charged
24 with the legal responsibility for conducting general
25 elections within that jurisdiction.

1 **SEC. 4. PROCEDURES FOR NATIONAL VOTER OPPORTUNITY**
 2 **TO INFORM CONGRESS EFFECTIVELY ON**
 3 **TERM LIMITS NONBINDING REFERENDUM.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—This Act shall have the effect of
 5 placing on the 1998 general election ballot in every con-
 6 gressional district, and delegate and/or resident commis-
 7 sioner district, in the United States, the District of Colum-
 8 bia and the territories of the United States, the advisory
 9 question concerning term limits for Members of Congress.

10 (b) ADVISORY QUESTION; BALLOT TITLE AND LAN-
 11 GUAGE.—Not later than June 1, 1998, the Clerk of the
 12 United States House of Representatives and the Secretary
 13 of the United States Senate shall jointly certify to the ap-
 14 propriate State election agencies for inclusion on the 1998
 15 general election ballot in each congressional district, the
 16 following ballot title and question:

“NATIONAL ADVISORY REFERENDUM ON TERM LIMITS

“Should Congress approve a constitutional amend-
 ment to limit the number of terms that a Member of the
 United States House of Representatives and United
 States Senator can serve in office?

“Yes No”.

17 (c) PREPARATION OF BALLOTS.—

18 (1) PROCEDURES.—The procedures for printing
 19 and preparation of the ballots containing the advi-
 20 sory questions shall be the same as provided in each

1 State and territory for conducting the elections of
2 the Members of the United States House of Rep-
3 resentatives and Senators, and Delegates or Resi-
4 dent Commissioners.

5 (2) ADVISORY QUESTIONS.—In each congres-
6 sional and delegate district, every general election
7 ballot shall include the advisory questions contained
8 in subsection (b). Should there be no general elec-
9 tion scheduled to be held in any particular congres-
10 sional or delegate district, a ballot shall nonetheless
11 be prepared for the voters of said district to be able
12 to participate in the nonbinding referendum in the
13 same manner as all other districts where a general
14 election is being held. States shall be reimbursed at
15 4 cents per voter, or an estimated \$5,000,000 for
16 the costs incurred in placing the questions in sub-
17 section (b) on the ballots in November 1998. There-
18 fore, this bill authorizes \$5,000,000 for these pur-
19 poses. All reimbursements to State election agencies
20 for the costs of conducting the nonbinding referen-
21 dum shall be made from the franking accounts of
22 the Congress, with funds drawn from the franking
23 accounts of the House of Representatives and the
24 Senate in proportion to the total funds appropriated
25 to each House for franking, to reimburse the States

1 for such expenses. The Clerk of the United States
2 House of Representatives and the Secretary of the
3 United States Senate shall be responsible for ensur-
4 ing the proper application for and reimbursement of
5 said expenses.

6 (d) TABULATION AND CERTIFICATION OF VOTING
7 RESULTS.—The State election agencies shall tabulate the
8 results of the voting on the advisory questions in the same
9 manner as is customary for tabulating the results of elec-
10 tions of the Members of the United States House of Rep-
11 resentatives and Senators. Said results shall be officially
12 certified pursuant to the customary laws and procedures
13 of each jurisdiction.

14 (e) TRANSMISSION OF CERTIFIED RESULTS TO THE
15 CONGRESS, ALL MEMBERS, AND COMMITTEES ON THE
16 JUDICIARY.—The official, certified election results of each
17 jurisdiction's nonbinding referenda on the advisory ques-
18 tions shall be certified by the State election agency to the
19 Clerk of the United States House of Representatives and
20 the Secretary of the United States Senate in the same
21 manner and at the same time of the certification of elec-
22 tion of Members of the House of Representatives and Sen-
23 ate at the 1998 general election, said results to be certified
24 by county, congressional district and statewide totals. The
25 Clerk and the Secretary shall be responsible for transmit-

1 ting to each Member of the respective House of Congress
2 the results of the nonbinding referenda from all jurisdic-
3 tions. The results shall also be taken under advisement
4 by the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Rep-
5 resentatives and the Committee on the Judiciary of the
6 Senate, with recommendations for response reported back
7 to the full House and Senate within 6 months of the gen-
8 eral election.

9 (f) COMMENTS REGARDING PROCEDURES FOR FU-
10 TURE NONBINDING REFERENDA.—Within 90 days of the
11 date of the general election, the State election agencies
12 shall forward to the Clerk of the United States House of
13 Representatives and the Secretary of the United States
14 Senate their comments or suggestions regarding changes
15 or improvements in procedures for conducting national
16 nonbinding referenda in future general elections. All such
17 comments shall be referred to the respective committees
18 on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and Sen-
19 ate.

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