

INITIATIVE 573  
to the People

Chapter 1, Laws of 1993

TERM LIMITS FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Approved by the  
People of the State of Washington  
in the General Election on  
November 3, 1992

ORIGINALLY FILED

January 14, 1992

**Secretary of State  
State of Washington**

1 AN ACT Relating to ballot access for elected officials; adding  
2 a new section to chapter 43.01 RCW; adding a new section to chapter  
3 44.04 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 29.68 RCW; adding a new  
4 section to chapter 29.51 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 29.15  
5 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 7.16 RCW; and creating a new  
6 section.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The people of the state of Washington  
9 find that:

10 (1) The people will best be served by citizen legislators who  
11 are subject to a reasonable degree of rotation in office;

12 (2) Entrenched incumbents have become indifferent to the  
13 conditions and concerns of the people;

14 (3) Entrenched incumbents have an inordinate advantage in  
15 elections because of their control of campaign finance laws and  
16 gerrymandering of electoral districts;

17 (4) Entrenched incumbency has discouraged qualified citizens

1 from seeking public office;

2 (5) Entrenched incumbents have become preoccupied with their  
3 own reelection and devote more effort to campaigning than to making  
4 legislative decisions for the benefit of the people;

5 (6) Entrenched incumbents have become closely aligned with  
6 special interest groups who provide contributions and support for  
7 their reelection campaigns, give entrenched incumbents special  
8 favors, and lobby office holders for special interest legislation to  
9 the detriment of the people of this state, and may create corruption  
10 or the appearance of corruption of the legislative system;

11 (7) The people of Washington have a compelling interest in  
12 preventing the self-perpetuating monopoly of elective office by a  
13 dynastic ruling class.

14 The people of the state of Washington therefore adopt this act  
15 to limit ballot access of candidates for state and federal  
16 elections.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.01  
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 (1) No person is eligible to appear on the ballot or file a  
20 declaration of candidacy for governor who, by the end of the then  
21 current term of office will have served, or but for resignation  
22 would have served, as governor during eight of the previous fourteen  
23 years.

24 (2) No person is eligible to appear on the ballot or file a  
25 declaration of candidacy for lieutenant governor who, by the end of  
26 the then current term of office will have served, or but for  
27 resignation would have served, as lieutenant governor during eight  
28 of the previous fourteen years.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 44.04  
30 RCW to read as follows:

31 (1) No person is eligible to appear on the ballot or file a  
32 declaration of candidacy for the house of representatives of the  
33 legislature who, by the end of the then current term of office will

1 have served, or but for resignation would have served, as a member  
2 of the house of representatives of the legislature during six of the  
3 previous twelve years.

4 (2) No person is eligible to appear on the ballot or file a  
5 declaration of candidacy for the senate of the legislature who, by  
6 the end of the then current term of office will have served, or but  
7 for resignation would have served, as a member of the senate of the  
8 legislature during eight of the previous fourteen years.

9 (3) No person is eligible to appear on the ballot or file a  
10 declaration of candidacy for the legislature who has served as a  
11 member of the legislature for fourteen of the previous twenty years.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 29.68  
13 RCW to read as follows:

14 No person is eligible to appear on the ballot or file a  
15 declaration of candidacy for the United States house of  
16 representatives who, by the end of the then current term of office  
17 will have served, or but for resignation would have served, as a  
18 member of the United States house of representatives during six of  
19 the previous twelve years.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 29.68  
21 RCW to read as follows:

22 No person is eligible to appear on the ballot or file a  
23 declaration of candidacy for the United States senate who, by the  
24 end of the then current term of office will have served, or but for  
25 resignation would have served, as a member of the United States  
26 senate during twelve of the previous eighteen years.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 29.51  
28 RCW to read as follows:

29 Nothing in sections 2 through 5 of this act prohibits a  
30 qualified voter of this state from casting a ballot for any person  
31 by writing the name of that person on the ballot in accordance with  
32 RCW 29.51.170 or from having such a ballot counted or tabulated, nor

1 does anything in sections 2 through 5 of this act prohibit a person  
2 from standing or campaigning for an elective office by means of a  
3 write-in campaign.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** A new section is added to chapter 29.15  
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 (1) The secretary of state or other election official  
7 authorized by law shall not accept or verify the signatures, nor  
8 accept a declaration of candidacy or a nomination paper, from or on  
9 behalf of a person who, by reason of sections 2 through 5 of this  
10 act, is ineligible for the office, nor allow the person's name to  
11 appear on the ballot.

12 (2) No terms or years served in office before November 3, 1992,  
13 may be used to determine eligibility to appear on the ballot.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** A new section is added to chapter 29.68  
15 RCW to read as follows:

16 Sections 4 and 5 of this act, regarding candidates for federal  
17 legislative office, are not effective until nine states other than  
18 Washington have passed laws limiting ballot access or terms of  
19 federal legislative office, or both, based on length of service in  
20 federal legislative office.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** A new section is added to chapter 7.16  
22 RCW to read as follows:

23 Any resident of this state may bring suit to enforce sections  
24 2 through 8 of this act. If the person prevails, the court shall  
25 award the person reasonable attorney's fees and costs of suit.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** If any provision of this act or its  
27 application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the  
28 remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other  
29 persons or circumstances is not affected.

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