

Amy Waychoff
Term Limits Resolution
Favorable
16 July 2024

Good afternoon, members of the Montgomery County Council. Thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Amy Waychoff and I have been a Montgomery County resident for almost 37 years. I am testifying in favor of the resolution to place on the November ballot a question of whether to amend Section 202 of the County Charter to decrease the term limit that applies to the County Executive from the current three consecutive terms to two consecutive terms. The resolution was introduced in response to a voter petition sponsored by the Committee for Better Government.

I believe there are many advantages to term limits:

1. Term limits prevent a single individual from accumulating massive power. Part of the rationale for the founding of America was the repudiation of the divine right of English kings to rule for their entire lives. We must restore the principle of “citizen representation” and rid ourselves of long-term “career politicians.” Such career politicians are surrounded by a cadre of staff and outside supporters who care only about the status quo and their special interests. The current County Executive has already spent 12 years in the County Council and at the end of his second term as Executive will have spent 20 years at the height of power in the county.
2. Thanks to the tremendous advantage of incumbency — for example, in the U.S. Congress, incumbents win 95 percent of the time — newcomers must

wait twelve years to seriously consider running for office in our county. With reduced term limits, voters will have more choice at the ballot box. New office holders will bring a fresh set of eyes to old problems. The reduction to two terms may also bring in candidates from different geographical areas and with different ideological perspectives.

3. Reducing the period of office to two terms is good governance. Some of the largest counties in the State use two terms, as does the Governor and the President. If it's good enough for Governor Moore and President Biden, it's good enough for Montgomery County.
4. Leaving office does not mean the end of one's political career. Former officeholders are available to advise and consult — on local and State boards, task forces, and commissions. They can also seek office at the State level, using the knowledge of local problems as a strong foundation.
5. Finally, according to the Pew Research Center, an overwhelming majority of adults in the United States — 87 percent! — favor term limits. That number is roughly the same regardless of party affiliation. Furthermore, polls show that the voters in states with term limits still support those limits.

Given that the 2016 referendum that ushered in the three-term limit passed by nearly 70 percent of the electorate, I believe that Montgomery County residents will be eager to limit the office of the County Executive to two consecutive terms.

Thank you for listening to my testimony.