



Board of
Reno County Commissioners

RENO COUNTY
206 West First Ave.
Hutchinson, Kansas 67501-5245
620-694-2929
Fax: (620) 694-2928

Some people believe having a vote on term limits is a solution waiting for a problem.

The problem is with a minority of county commissioners who choose to serve more than two or three terms (8 to 12 years) and don't allow for others to step forward with new ideas and fresh thinking than often comes with change.

In Hutchinson and Reno County we are only seeking authority to allow a vote on county commission term limits as a means of improving local government. Cities in Kansas have long had this option and several, including Hutchinson, Wichita and Lawrence, have done so. Hutchinson city council members have been subject to term limits since 1994 when 85% of those voting agreed to a limit of two consecutive 4-year terms for those elected from district and 3 consecutive two-year terms for those elected on a city at-large basis. The system has worked well in Hutchinson the past 18 years and our goal, through this proposed legislation, is to allow the same voting opportunity for county commissioners.

Those of us who believe in term limits feel persons serving 16, 20 or more year in the same office tend to become a part of the bureaucracy rather than a check and balance on government and its' powers. They often resist change, defend the status-quo, are far less likely to tackle problems and new opportunities, and generally blend with a pattern of mediocrity rather than embrace the ideas and enthusiasm that come with "new blood".

While a long time incumbent can be challenged every 4 years it is difficult for any challenge, without raising a great deal of money or without some scandal or controversy, to succeed in being elected. If a county commissioner knew they had a reasonable maximum number of years to serve their community and make desired accomplishments, we believe government and citizens would be better served. Term limits will assist in providing more focused service and lead to more citizens with fresh ideas and open minds to serve.

As originally introduced last year, this bill has statewide implications for allowing all counties to move toward commission term limits if they so desire. While we think this is the type of progressiveness that will benefit the entire state, our primary desire is to allow this to happen in Reno County, where the 1994 vote by Hutchinson residents and door to door campaigning responses has indicated a strong desire for local term limits. Therefore, we would have no objections to amendments or changes that would restrict HB 2190 only to Reno County. If it goes forward as a statewide authority bill, we would suggest the number of consecutive terms be decided by each individual county asking for a term limit vote (section e of the bill) with the same decision also allowed for any elector petition (mentioned in the following paragraph).

Respectfully submitted by Dan Deming, Hutchinson, Reno County Commissioner.

Dan Deming
District 1

James D. Schlickau
District 2

Brad D. Dillon
District 3