



Boston City Council

Committee on Government Operations

Maureen Feeney, *Chair*

December 15, 2009

Dear Councillors:

The Committee on Government Operations held a hearing on an order approving a petition for a special law re: mayoral term limits in the city of Boston (Docket #1007). This matter was sponsored by Councilor Yoon, referred to this Committee on Wednesday, July 29, 2009, and heard at a public hearing on Monday, December 14, 2009 at which public comment was taken.

The proposed home rule petition would limit anyone from serving in the office of the mayor to two consecutive four year municipal terms. It would not preclude someone from running again after a break from the two consecutive four year terms. At the hearing several individuals testified, including representatives MassVote, several citizens and individuals who have run for elected positions within the City of Boston. Many sides of the issue were discussed. Many voiced their support of term limits citing that it would lead to increased voter turnout and provide more opportunities for candidates. Opposing views cited the successful history of long-term office holders and argued that term limits would hamper democracy by taking away voter choice. This issue has value and the discussion yielded interesting insight. Although I am not prepared to recommend that this ought to pass, out of respect to the differing viewpoints I believe that the matter be afforded an opportunity for a vote.

By the Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, to which the following was referred:

Docket #1007 Order approving a petition for a special law re: mayoral term limits in the city of Boston

based on information presented at the hearing and public comment gathered by the Committee and having considered the same, respectfully recommends that this matter ought to be brought out of committee for a vote.

For the Chair:

Maureen Feeney, *Chair*
Committee on Government Operations

Offered by Councilor SAM YOON



**CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL**

HOME RULE PETITION

WHEREAS, Term limits ensure a healthier democracy and fresh leadership as well as greater civic engagement when more people contribute to the public discourse and offer innovative solutions to community issues; and,

WHEREAS, The Mayors of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and New York, New York cannot be elected more than three consecutive times; and,

WHEREAS, Cincinnati, Ohio enacted a law that limits the Mayor to serve only two successive terms; and,

WHEREAS, Los Angeles, California sets a limit of two terms for any person serving as Mayor; and,

WHEREAS, The City of Boston has had only three different Mayors serve during the same time span as the last nine United States Presidents, and therefore bold and creative leadership should reclaim the Office of the Mayor of the City of Boston with new ideas and lively debate. **THEREFORE BE IT**

ORDERED, That a petition to the General Court, accompanied by a bill for a special law relating to the City of Boston to be filed with an attested copy of this order be, and hereby is, approved under Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article II, as amended, of the Articles of Amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to the end that legislation be adopted precisely as follows, except for clerical or editorial changes of form only:

PETITION FOR A SPECIAL LAW RE:

MAYORAL TERM LIMITS IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

Section 1.
Section 12 of chapter 452 of the acts of 1948 as most recently amended by section 1 of chapter 376 of the acts of 1951 is hereby amended by adding the following immediately after the last sentence:- "However, no mayor shall serve for more than two consecutive four municipal year terms."

Section 2.

The provisions of this act shall take effect upon its passage.

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17th City Council REFERRED TO
COMMITTEE ON

JUL 29 2009

Government Operations

CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL

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THE COMMITTEE/CHAIR
RESPONDING TO FULLY REPORTS THAT THE MATTER
WAS BROUGHT

Maureen Haney
CHAIR

ACCEPTED,

CITY CLERK

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CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
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BOSTON, MA