



Florida School Boards Association

The voice of education in Florida.

Proposal 43 – School Board Member Term Limits

Proposal 43 – School Board Member Term Limits – Sponsored by [Erika Donalds](#)

The proposal amends Article IX, Section 4 of the Florida Constitution. The proposal would limit school board members to two consecutive four year terms in office. This provision would take effect upon approval by voters and provides that no service in a term of office which commenced prior to November 6, 2018 would count toward the eight year limit.

Key Points

- If imposing term limits is intended to encourage more competitive races and/or to reduce the power of incumbency, a review of school board election results for 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016 (**see table below**) clearly shows that these problems do not exist for school board races.
 - Most school board races (an average of 65%) are competitive. This is because, unlike most other elections in Florida, school board elections are non-partisan. As a result, school board races do not attract phantom or write-in candidates that only give the appearance of competition. Instead, school board races attract real candidates with real ideas and real competition.
 - A substantial number of all school board races (an average of 41%) result in the election of a new school board member. Clearly, the power of incumbency is significantly reduced in competitive, non-partisan local elections and there is no evidence that school board members are entrenched in their seats.
- This data shows that Proposal 43 is not necessary. Voters are already doing a good job imposing natural terms limits on school board races to provide a healthy balance of fresh, new perspectives and experienced veterans on our school boards.

YEAR	S.B. SEATS UP FOR ELECTION	QUALIFIED CANDIDATES	COMPETITIVE RACES	INCUMBENTS RE-ELECTED	NEW MEMBERS ELECTED
2010	210	463	143 – 68%	126	84 – 40%
2012	159	357	102 – 64%	97	62 – 39%
2014	210	444	144 – 69%	132	78 – 37%
2016	162	347	96 – 59%	87	75 – 46%

- Proposal 43 is not fair. This proposal applies term limits to only one group among several similar groups of local elected officials. It seems discriminatory and punitive to single out one group to be subjected to these limitations that are not applied equally to all similar groups.
- Proposal 43 may not have the desired effect. Imposing term limits on legislators does not appear to have successfully encouraged more competitive races nor have term limits effectively reduced the power of incumbency. Instead, term limits seem to encourage allowing a term-limited legislator to remain in office, unchallenged, until the term limit is reached.
- The CRC should focus on those proposals that are necessary, that are fair, that will have the desired effect, and, most important, that will make a meaningful and positive difference in the lives of all Floridians. Proposal 43 does not meet any of these criteria.

Additional Information

- There are 358 school board members serving in Florida's 67 school districts. In 43 school districts, school board members are elected by a district-wide vote of electors (at-large election). In 21 school districts, school board members are elected by a vote of the electors within their residence area (single member district election). In 4 school districts, school board members are elected by a combination of single member district election and at-large election.
- Pursuant to a citizens' initiative approved by voters in the 1992 General Election. Article VI, Section 4 of the Florida Constitution was amended to impose an eight year term limit on the office of Florida Representative, Florida Senator, Florida Lieutenant Governor, or any office of the Florida Cabinet.
- Term limits also have been applied in a few Florida counties to a small number of local elected officials, including the members of one school board. However, the decision to impose term limits in these cases was made at the local level.