



The League of Women Voters of New York State  
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## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

### MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF:

**A.1224-A/Jeffries**

**S.1536-A/Parker**

**TO: ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS COMMITTEE**

**DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2009**

*Subject: An act to amend the election law, in relation to requiring voter approval for the abolition or modification of term limits for certain elected offices.*

*The League of Women Voters urges that you support this important legislation.*

The bill would amend the Election Law to add a new Section 1-108 that would require that in any political subdivision where the term of office of an elected official has been limited as a result of voter initiative or referendum, the legislative body with jurisdiction over the term limited elected office may adopt a resolution to abolish or modify the term limit with such resolution to be submitted to the relevant voters for approval or disapproval. The resolution would have to be adopted by the appropriate legislative body at least 90 days prior to the date of the referendum required by this legislation. The resolution to abolish or modify the term limit would only be effective if approved by a majority of the votes cast. The referendum would have to be held no later than the first Tuesday of May in the year the general election is scheduled for the term-limited office.

The League of Women Voters opposes term limit laws because we firmly believe that our democracy already provides for term limits through regularly held elections. Term limit laws limit voter choice and expel exemplary public servants as well as ineffective ones. However, it is the League's position that reconsideration of term limits laws *previously approved through the ballot box* should be done by an expert, disinterested Commission whose recommendations are then presented to voters in a new referendum. Term limit laws directly enacted through voters casting their ballots should not be overturned by interested lawmakers in the legislative process.

When voters are asked to directly resolve important public policy matters through initiative or referendum, they understandably expect that their will as expressed in the ballot outcome will not be overridden through the everyday legislative process. This legislation honors that understanding by ensuring that term limit laws put in place by ballot can only be amended or undone through the same means as they were adopted.

*For the above reasons, the League of Women Voters urges that you support this important legislation.*