



1995 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 27

May 10, 1995 – Introduced by Senators BUETTNER, DRZEWIECKI, ANDREA, BURKE, DARLING, HUELSMAN, LEEAN, C. POTTER and RISSER, cosponsored by Representatives KRUSICK, ALBERS, BOYLE, FOTI, GOETSCH, HAHN, HANDRICK, HARS DORF, F. LASEE, LEHMAN, MUSSER, OLSEN, OTTE, OURADA, RYBA, SCHNEIDERS, SERATTI, SPRINGER, WALKER, WILDER and ZUKOWSKI. Referred to Committee on Transportation, Agriculture and Local Affairs.

1 **To amend** section 4 (1) of article VI, section 12 of article VII and section 1 of article
2 XIII; and **to create** section 4 (1) (b) and (c) of article VI of the constitution;
3 **relating to:** 4-year terms of office for certain county officers (first
4 consideration).

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Currently, the constitution provides for the election every 2 years of county sheriffs, clerks of circuit court, registers of deeds and district attorneys, and, unless a county appoints a medical examiner, coroners. Under current law, county clerks and treasurers, and surveyors unless a county appoints a surveyor, are also elected every 2 years, except that under the constitution counties having a population of 500,000 or more do not elect a coroner or surveyor.

This constitutional amendment, proposed to the 1995 legislature on first consideration, requires counties to elect county clerks and treasurers, and changes the terms of office from 2 years to 4 years for sheriffs, elected coroners or surveyors, registers of deeds, district attorneys, treasurers, clerks and clerks of circuit court. For sheriffs, registers of deeds, clerks of circuit court and elected county surveyors, the first elections to 4-year terms will be held in 2002. For district attorneys, clerks, treasurers and elected coroners, the first elections to 4-year terms will be held in the year 2000.

The amendment does not change the existing spring or November election time for specific county offices, and does not affect the terms of office of elected county chief executive officers (they already serve 4-year terms ending on the 2nd Monday after the spring election) or the terms of office of county board members.

For officers elected on the partisan ballot at the general election in November, the constitution specifies a political year beginning on the first Monday of January in each year. For the county officers whose terms are changed by this amendment and who are elected on the nonpartisan ballot at the spring election, this

constitutional amendment specifies a political year beginning on the 3rd Monday after the spring election.

As a constitutional amendment, the proposal requires adoption by 2 successive legislatures, and ratification by the people, before it can become effective.

1 ***Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That:***

2 **SECTION 1.** Section 4 (1) of article VI of the constitution is amended to read:

3 [Article VI] Section 4 (1) ~~Sheriffs~~ (a) Except as provided in par. (b) or (c) and
4 sub. (2), sheriffs, coroners, registers of deeds, district attorneys, and all other elected
5 county officers, except judicial officers and chief executive officers, shall be chosen
6 by the electors of the respective counties once in every 2 years.

7 **SECTION 2.** Section 4 (1) (b) and (c) of article VI of the constitution are created
8 to read:

9 [Article VI] Section 4 (1) (b) Beginning in 2002, sheriffs and registers of deeds
10 shall be chosen by the electors of the respective counties for the term of 4 years and
11 surveyors in counties in which the office of surveyor is filled by election shall be
12 chosen by the electors of the respective counties for the term of 4 years.

13 (c) Beginning in the year 2000, district attorneys, clerks and treasurers shall
14 be chosen by the electors of the respective counties for the term of 4 years and
15 coroners in counties in which the office of coroner is filled by election shall be chosen
16 by the electors of the respective counties for the term of 4 years.

17 **SECTION 3.** Section 12 of article VII of the constitution is amended to read:

18 [Article VII] Section 12. ~~There~~ (1) Beginning in 2002, there shall be a clerk of
19 the circuit court chosen in each county organized for judicial purposes by the
20 qualified electors thereof, who shall hold his office for ~~two~~ 4 years, ~~subject to removal~~
21 as.

