



**League of Women Voters of New Hampshire**

February 19, 2015

Rep. Andrew Christie, Chair

NH House Executive Departments and Administration

Re: CACR 10, PROVIDING THAT: beginning with the 2018 general election, there shall be a 4-year term of office for governor.

Dear Chairman Christie and members of the committee,

Since 1919, the League of Women Voters New Hampshire has been advocating for government laws and policies that benefit the citizens of our state. LWVNH supports legislation only if it fits within stringent guidelines established after intensive study, research and then agreement by our members. After a study by local Leagues in NH, agreement was reached that New Hampshire would be best served with a 4 year term for governor.

Forty-eight states have four-year terms for their Governors. Only New Hampshire and Vermont have two-year terms. While we appreciate the unique nature of New Hampshire's government, in this case, setting ourselves apart from other states does not lead to efficiency and effectiveness.

We believe two years does not give the Governor enough opportunity to determine long-term goals; identify long-term problems and strategies to alleviate them; consider investments in New Hampshire's growth and development; and then, implement long-term solutions. We're also concerned that Governors who want to serve more than two years tend not to take on major issues, preferring instead to maintain a status quo. The first year of a Governor's term is spent learning about the role and preparing the two-year budget within the first couple of months of taking office. At the beginning of the second year, it's already time to initiate a campaign for re-election.

When Governor Lynch won his third term and decided to hold a reception in the State House rather than an inaugural ball due to the economic crisis facing our state and nation, it brought to light the very real costs of a two-year term. The League study did not consider the escalating costs of a gubernatorial campaign. Now, the cost for a statewide campaign is so high, it requires a significant effort to raise the funds and can take time away from the role and responsibilities of the office.

New Hampshire residents expect our Governors to serve at least four years. Since 1941, we've had 16 Governors, three who served for six years, 10 who served for four years and only two who served just two years. Governor John Lynch served for eight years and Governor Maggie Hassan has just begun her second term.

In 1964, the legislature was given the power and responsibility to propose constitutional amendments to be placed as a referendum to voters. There have been three constitutional amendments for a four-year term for governor on the ballot but they all included a provision to limit Governors to two terms. Even so, the proposed amendments gained increasing support in each elections. In 1983 the issue garnered 63.6% of the required 66% for passage.

It's time now for the voters to decide whether the Governor of New Hampshire should serve for a four-year term. The League of Women Voters NH urges the committee to support placing this issue in the capable hands of New Hampshire voters.

Thank you,

Liz Tentarelli, co-president

Sally Davis, co-president

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