

To: Town Clerk, Council President
From: Dennis Turano
Date: 3-16-2023

Middletown Town Council Term Limits

A Charter Amendment Establishing Term Limits for Members of the Town Council

Purpose of Request:

I respectfully request that the Town Council place on its November 2026 upcoming legislative docket a proposal to establish term limits for elected members of the Town Council.

Summary of Proposal:

This proposal would amend the Town Charter limit to members of the Town Council to:

- Two consecutive four-year terms, with eligibility to run again after a one-term break

Rationale:

The purpose of introducing term limits is to:

- Encourage broader civic participation and leadership opportunities
- Promote fresh perspectives and new policy ideas
- Reduce concentration of political power
- Strengthening public trust through periodic leadership transition

Term limits are used in many municipalities as a tool to balance experience with accountability.

Requested Action:

I request that the Council:

1. Place this item on the legislative agenda for discussion.
2. Refer to the proposal to the appropriate committee
3. Initiate the process required to adopt a charter amendment, including public hearing procedures.

Supporting Materials:

- Draft ordinance language

PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENT

TOWN OF MIDDLETOWN, RHODE ISLAND

AN AMENDMENT TO THE MIDDLETOWN TOWN CHARTER

ESTABLISHING TERM LIMITS FOR MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

SECTION 1. Amendment to Charter.

The Town Charter of the Town of Middletown is hereby amended by adding a new section to Article II (Town Council), to read as follows:

Term Limits for Town Council Members.

(a) Limitation on Consecutive Terms.

No person shall serve more than two (2) consecutive four-year terms as a member of the Town Council.

(b) Eligibility Following Interruption of Service.

A person who has served two (2) consecutive four-year terms shall not be eligible to serve again as a member of the Town Council until at least one (1) full four-year term has elapsed following completion of the second consecutive term.

(c) Partial Terms.

Service of more than two (2) years of a four-year term to fill a vacancy shall be deemed a full term for purposes of this section. Service of two (2) years or less shall not be deemed full term.

(d) Prospective Application.

This section shall apply only to terms of office commencing after the effective date of this amendment. Terms completed prior to the effective date shall not be counted toward the term limits established herein.

(e) Severability.

If any provision of this section is adjudged invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such judgment shall not affect the remaining provisions, which shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 2. Submission to the Electors.

This amendment shall be submitted to the electors of the Town of Middletown at a duly authorized municipal or general election and shall take effect upon approval by a majority of those voting thereon and certification of the results.

Suggested Ballot Question Language

Shall the Charter of the Town of Middletown be amended to limit members of the Town Council to two (2) consecutive four-year terms, with eligibility to serve again after a break in service of one full term?

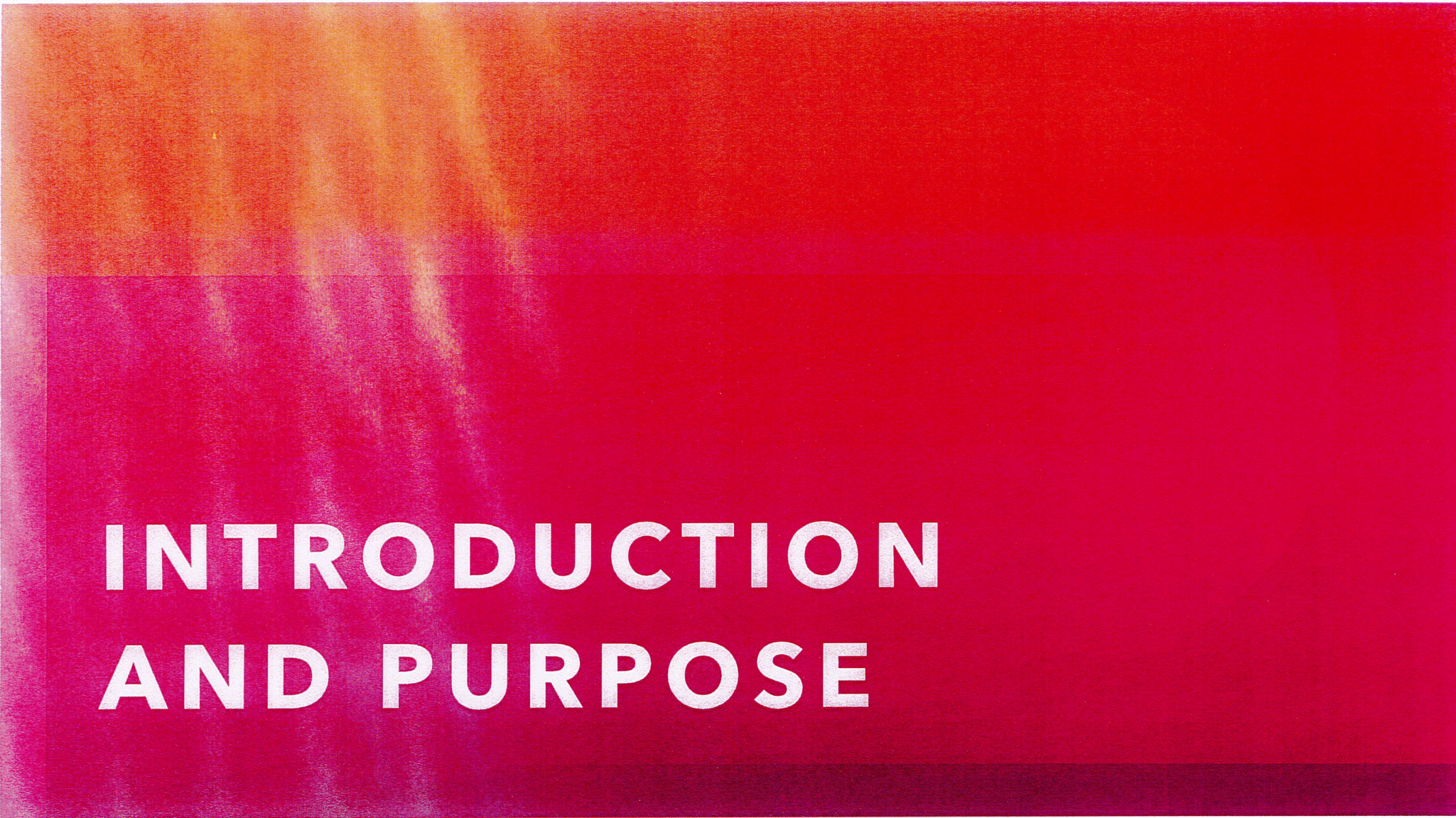
Yes

No



**TERM LIMITS FOR TOWN COUNCIL:
PROS, CONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

ANALYZING IMPACTS AND OFFERING STRATEGIC ADVICE



**INTRODUCTION
AND PURPOSE**

Purpose of Discussing Term Limits

Definition and Purpose

Term limits restrict the number of consecutive terms an elected official can serve to promote governance fairness and transparency.

Impact on Leadership

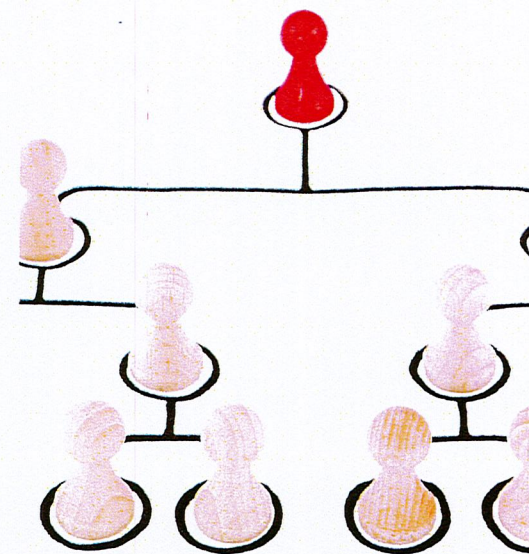
Term limits affect leadership continuity and can encourage the influx of new ideas in local government.

Community Engagement

Term limits influence community involvement by encouraging civic participation and policy effectiveness.

Balanced Recommendation

The presentation recommends balancing innovation with stability for effective governance and sustained civic participation.





**PROS AND CONS
OF TERM LIMITS**

Advantages and Disadvantages Overview

ASPECT	PROS	CONS
Innovation	Fresh perspectives and new ideas	Loss of experienced leadership
Power Dynamics	Prevents entrenched power	Potential instability in governance
Civic Engagement	Encourages community participation	Higher transition and training costs
Policy Focus	Accountability and responsiveness	Short-term thinking and lame duck periods



**RECOMMENDATION
AND RATIONALE**

Balanced Approach to Term Limits

Term Limit Structure

Implement two 4 years consecutive terms with a mandatory one-term break before re-election eligibility to balance experience and renewal.

Preserving Institutional Knowledge

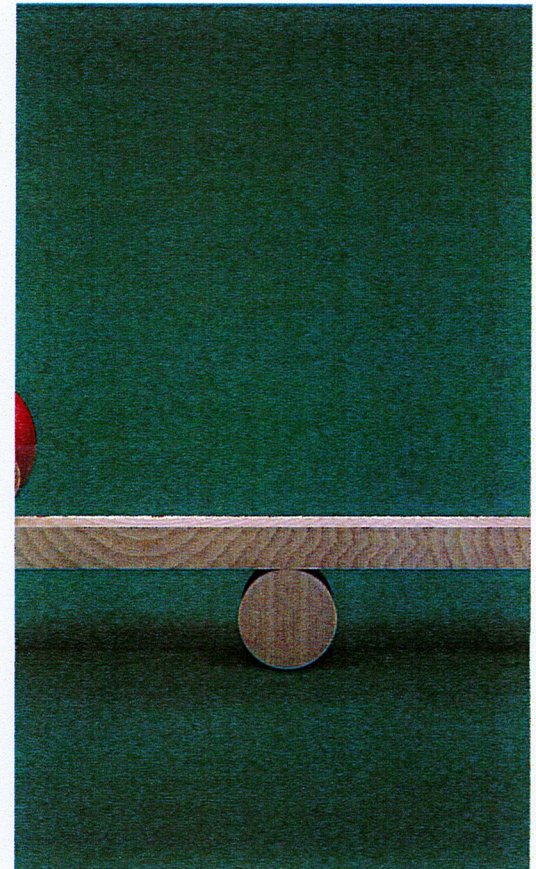
Allow seasoned members to return after a hiatus, preventing loss of valuable experience and maintaining stability.

Leadership Development Programs

Pair term limits with leadership training to support new members and reduce challenges of frequent turnover.

Governance Continuity and Fairness

This approach promotes innovation, civic engagement, accountability, and sustainable governance for community needs.



NEXT STEPS

Action Plan for Implementation

Drafting Formal Policy

Begin by creating a formal policy for term limits and eligibility criteria with legal review for compliance.

Community Engagement

Engage the community through public forums and surveys to gather feedback and build consensus.

Leadership Training Program

Develop training programs to support new council members and reduce turnover impact.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Establish a framework to monitor and evaluate term limit effectiveness and make adjustments as needed.

