

H.R. ____

118th CONGRESS — 1st Session

A BILL

To establish term limits for federal elected and appointed offices, to impose lifetime limits on cumulative federal service, to prevent indefinite career advancement within the federal government, to provide enforcement mechanisms and remedies, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr./Ms. [Sponsor Name] introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Clerk for placement on the floor calendar.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the **Lifetime Politician Act**.

SECTION 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) Findings. Congress finds that:

- (1) Long continuous service in federal office increases the risk of entrenchment, undue influence, and corruption.
- (2) Regular turnover in public office strengthens representative government and public trust.
- (3) Lifetime accumulation of federal power undermines accountability and responsiveness to the electorate.
- (4) Clear, enforceable limits on cumulative federal service serve the public interest and restore confidence in representative institutions.

(b) Purpose. The purpose of this Act is to:

- (1) Establish term limits for federal elected offices that do not currently possess them.
- (2) Establish term limits for federal appointed offices requiring Senate confirmation.
- (3) Impose a lifetime cap on cumulative federal service to prevent indefinite career advancement.
- (4) Provide administrative and judicial mechanisms for verification, enforcement, and public transparency.
- (5) Apply these limits immediately and uniformly without grandfathering, subject only to narrow fraud exceptions.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this Act:

- (1) **Federal elected office.** The term means service as a Member of the House of Representatives, a

Senator, the Vice President, or any other federal office filled by popular election, excluding the Presidency as governed by the Constitution and the Twenty-Second Amendment.

(2) **Federal appointed office.** The term means any position requiring Presidential appointment with the advice and consent of the Senate under Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution, including positions established under Title 5, United States Code, and other statutory authorities.

(3) **Term of service.** The term means any period during which an individual occupies an office covered by this Act, whether full or partial.

(4) **Lifetime federal service.** The term means the cumulative total of years served in any combination of federal elected or appointed offices.

(5) **Acting service.** The term means service performed in an acting capacity under statutory or regulatory authority, including under the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998 (5 U.S.C. 3345 et seq.) or other applicable law.

(6) **Effective date.** The term means January 1 of the first calendar year beginning after the date of enactment of this Act.

SECTION 4. TERM LIMITS FOR FEDERAL ELECTED OFFICES.

(a) **House of Representatives.** No person shall serve more than six terms as a Member of the House of Representatives.

(b) **Senate.** No person shall serve more than two terms as a United States Senator.

(c) **Vice President.** No person shall serve more than two terms as Vice President of the United States.

(d) **Presidency.** Nothing in this Act shall be construed to alter the Presidential term limits established by the Twenty-Second Amendment to the Constitution.

(e) **Partial terms.** Any portion of a term served shall count as a full term for purposes of this section.

(f) **Counting prior service; no grandfathering.** Service performed prior to the effective date shall be counted in full for purposes of determining whether an individual has reached the term limits set forth in this section. Any person who has reached or exceeded the term limits in this section on or before the effective date shall be ineligible, as of the effective date, to seek, hold, or be appointed to any other federal elected or appointed office after that date.

SECTION 5. TERM LIMITS FOR FEDERAL APPOINTED OFFICES.

(a) **Single-office limit.** No person shall serve more than eight years in any single federal appointed office that requires Senate confirmation.

(b) **Multiple appointments.** Time served in different appointed offices shall be counted separately for each office under subsection (a) but shall be included in the lifetime cap established in section 6.

(c) **Acting service.** Time served in an acting capacity shall count toward the limits established in this section, subject to applicable law governing acting appointments (including the Federal Vacancies

Reform Act of 1998).

(d) **Counting prior service; no grandfathering.** Service performed prior to the effective date shall be counted in full for purposes of determining whether an individual has reached the appointed-office limits in this section. Any person who has reached or exceeded the appointed-office limits in this section on or before the effective date shall be ineligible, as of the effective date, to seek, hold, or be appointed to any other federal elected or appointed office after that date.

SECTION 6. LIFETIME LIMITS ON FEDERAL SERVICE.

(a) **Lifetime cap.** No person shall serve more than twenty total years in federal elected and appointed offices combined.

(b) **Counting of service.** All years of service, whether consecutive or nonconsecutive, shall count toward the lifetime cap. Service performed prior to the effective date shall be counted in full for purposes of determining compliance with this Act.

(c) **Prohibition on further service; no grandfathering.** Any person who has reached or exceeded the lifetime cap at any time on or before the effective date shall be ineligible, as of the effective date, to seek, hold, or be appointed to any federal elected or appointed office after that date. Any person who reaches the lifetime cap after the effective date shall be ineligible to seek, hold, or be appointed to any federal elected or appointed office thereafter.

(d) **Partial years.** Any portion of a year served shall count as one full year for purposes of this section.

SECTION 7. PROHIBITION ON CIRCUMVENTION.

(a) **Resignation.** A resignation from office shall not be used to evade the limits established by this Act; any resignation intended to avoid applicable limits shall not reset or extend those limits.

(b) **Reclassification of positions.** No federal agency, commission, or office may create, reclassify, redesignate, or otherwise restructure positions for the purpose of circumventing this Act. Any such action taken with the intent to evade this Act shall be void for that purpose.

(c) **Acting service.** Service in an acting capacity shall not be used to evade the limits established herein; acting service shall be counted as provided in sections 5 and 6.

(d) **Interagency coordination.** The Federal Election Commission and the Office of Personnel Management shall coordinate with the Secretary of the Senate, the Clerk of the House, and other relevant offices to prevent circumvention and to ensure consistent counting and reporting.

SECTION 8. ENFORCEMENT, VERIFICATION, AND REMEDIES.

(a) **Elected office enforcement.** The Federal Election Commission (FEC) shall administer and enforce the provisions of this Act that apply to federal elected offices, including maintaining a public registry of

service time for Members of Congress and the Vice President. The FEC shall have authority to issue notices, assess civil penalties, and seek injunctive relief in federal court to enforce compliance with this Act.

(b) **Appointed office enforcement.** The Office of Personnel Management (OPM), in coordination with the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Secretary of the Senate, shall administer and enforce the provisions of this Act that apply to federal appointed offices. OPM shall have authority to issue notices, assess administrative sanctions, and refer matters to DOJ for civil or criminal enforcement where appropriate.

(c) **Verification and reporting.** The FEC and OPM shall establish procedures for verifying cumulative service, shall publish guidance for counting service, and shall maintain publicly accessible records and dashboards reflecting service time and compliance. The registry shall include, for each individual covered by this Act, the offices held, dates of service, and cumulative years counted under this Act.

(d) **Disqualification and remedies.** Any person found to be in violation of this Act shall be disqualified from holding the office in question and shall be barred from future federal service to the extent provided herein. Remedies may include declaratory and injunctive relief, removal from office pursuant to applicable law, civil fines, and referral for criminal prosecution where appropriate.

(e) **Private right of action.** Any citizen of the United States who is a resident of the district or State represented by an individual covered by this Act, or any organization with standing under Article III, may bring a civil action in the United States district court for declaratory and injunctive relief to enforce the provisions of this Act. The court shall expedite such actions and shall have authority to award reasonable attorneys' fees to prevailing plaintiffs.

(f) **Expedited judicial review.** Any final agency action under this Act (including a determination of ineligibility or imposition of civil penalties) shall be subject to judicial review in the United States district court under an expedited schedule: the complaint shall be filed within 30 days of the agency action, the agency shall file the administrative record within 30 days of service, and the court shall issue a decision within 120 days of filing unless the court finds good cause to extend.

(g) **Criminal and civil penalties for falsification.** Any person who willfully falsifies, conceals, or materially misrepresents information required under this Act, or who willfully submits false service records to the FEC, OPM, or any other agency for the purpose of evading the limits of this Act, shall be subject to civil penalties up to \$250,000 and, upon conviction, a fine not to exceed \$250,000, imprisonment for not more than 5 years, or both. Nothing in this subsection limits prosecution under other applicable criminal statutes.

(h) **Rulemaking authority.** The FEC and OPM are authorized to promulgate regulations and issue guidance necessary to implement and enforce this Act, consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 551 et seq.). Regulations implementing counting rules, acting service, partial years, and verification procedures shall be issued within 90 days of the effective date.

(i) **Interim enforcement.** Pending final regulations, the FEC and OPM shall issue interim guidance to effectuate the purposes of this Act and shall accept public comment for 30 days following publication of interim guidance.

SECTION 9. EFFECTIVE DATE; TRANSITIONAL IMPLEMENTATION.

(a) **Effective date.** This Act shall take effect on January 1 of the first calendar year beginning after the date of enactment.

(b) **Counting prior service; no grandfathering.** Service performed prior to the effective date shall be counted in full toward the term and lifetime limits established by this Act. No credit cap, exemption, or grandfathering shall apply. Any person who has reached or exceeded any limit established by this Act on or before the effective date shall be ineligible, as of the effective date, to seek, hold, or be appointed to any other federal elected or appointed office after that date.

(c) **Notification and registry.** The FEC and OPM shall publish the consolidated public registry required by section 8(c) and shall provide written notice to each individual identified as ineligible under subsection (b) within 90 days of the effective date. Notice shall include the factual basis for the determination and information on administrative and judicial remedies.

(d) **No retroactive removal from current office except for fraud.** Except as provided in subsection (e), this Act does not by its terms remove an individual from the federal office they hold on the effective date solely because prior service counted under this Act would render them ineligible to hold other federal offices; however, such individuals shall be barred from seeking or assuming any other federal elected or appointed office after the effective date.

(e) **Fraud or willful misrepresentation.** Notwithstanding subsection (d), an individual who willfully misrepresented or concealed material facts to obtain or retain office may be subject to disqualification, removal, and other remedies under section 8(d) and (g).

SECTION 10. CONFORMING AND TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 2 AND TITLE 5.

(a) **Insertion into title 2, United States Code.** The following new chapter is enacted in title 2, United States Code, to read as follows:

CHAPTER 46 — LIFETIME SERVICE LIMITS

§ 4601. Short title. This chapter may be cited as the “Lifetime Service Limits Act of 2026.”

§ 4602. Definitions. For purposes of this chapter, the terms defined in section 3 of the Lifetime Politician Act apply.

§ 4603. Term limits for Members of Congress and the Vice President. (a) House of Representatives. No person shall serve more than six terms as a Member of the House of Representatives. Any portion of a term counts as a full term. Service performed prior to the effective date shall be counted in full. (b) Senate. No person shall serve more than two terms as a United States Senator. Any portion of a term counts as a full term. Service performed prior to the effective date shall be counted in full. (c) Vice President. No person shall serve more than two terms as Vice President of the United States. Any portion of a term counts as a full term. Service performed prior to the effective date shall be counted in full. (d) Effect of limits. Any person who has reached or exceeded the limits in this section

on or before the effective date shall be ineligible, as of the effective date, to seek, hold, or be appointed to any other federal elected or appointed office after that date.

§ 4604. Records, verification, and reporting. (a) The Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate shall provide to the Federal Election Commission, upon request and in the form and manner the FEC requires, certified records of service for Members of the House, Senators, and the Vice President, including dates of service and any acting service. (b) The FEC shall maintain and publish a consolidated public registry of service time for Members of Congress and the Vice President consistent with section 8(c) of the Lifetime Politician Act.

§ 4605. Enforcement authority. The Federal Election Commission is authorized to determine compliance with the term limits in this chapter, issue notices of ineligibility, assess civil penalties, and seek injunctive relief in the United States district courts to enforce this chapter. The FEC shall adopt regulations necessary to implement this chapter consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act.

§ 4606. Private right of action. A person described in section 8(e) of the Lifetime Politician Act may bring a civil action in United States district court to enforce the provisions of this chapter. The court shall have authority to grant declaratory and injunctive relief and to award reasonable attorneys' fees to prevailing plaintiffs.

§ 4607. Coordination and anti-circumvention. The Clerk of the House, the Secretary of the Senate, and the FEC shall coordinate to prevent circumvention of the limits in this chapter and shall adopt procedures for timely exchange of records and verification.

(b) Insertion into title 5, United States Code. The following new subchapter is enacted in title 5, United States Code, to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER IX — LIFETIME SERVICE LIMITS FOR APPOINTED OFFICES

§ 9901. Short title. This subchapter may be cited as the “Lifetime Service Limits for Appointed Offices.”

§ 9902. Definitions. For purposes of this subchapter, the terms defined in section 3 of the Lifetime Politician Act apply.

§ 9903. Term limits for appointed offices. (a) Single-office limit. No person shall serve more than eight years in any single federal appointed office that requires Senate confirmation. Any portion of a year counts as one full year. Service performed prior to the effective date shall be counted in full. (b) Multiple appointments. Time served in different appointed offices shall be counted separately for each office for purposes of the single-office limit but shall be included in the lifetime cap established in § 9904. (c) Acting service. Time served in an acting capacity shall count toward the limits established in this subchapter, subject to applicable law governing acting appointments. (d) Effect of limits. Any person who has reached or exceeded the appointed-office limits in this subchapter on or before the effective date shall be ineligible, as of the effective date, to seek, hold, or be appointed to any other federal elected or appointed office after that date.

§ 9904. Lifetime cap. (a) Cap. No person shall serve more than twenty total years in federal elected and appointed offices combined. Any portion of a year counts as one full year. Service performed prior to the effective date shall be counted in full. (b) Effect of cap. Any person who has reached or exceeded the lifetime cap on or before the effective date shall be ineligible, as of the effective date, to seek, hold, or be appointed to any other federal elected or appointed office after that date.

§ 9905. Agency reporting and OPM verification. (a) Each executive department and agency shall provide to the Office of Personnel Management, upon request and in the form

and manner OPM requires, certified records of service for any individual who has served or is serving in an appointed office, including dates of service and any acting service. (b) OPM shall maintain a consolidated service registry for appointed offices and shall publish the registry consistent with section 8(c) of the Lifetime Politician Act.

§ 9906. Enforcement and sanctions. (a) OPM shall have authority to determine compliance with the appointed-office limits and the lifetime cap, issue notices of ineligibility, impose administrative sanctions, and refer matters to the Department of Justice for civil or criminal enforcement where appropriate. (b) OPM shall adopt regulations necessary to implement this subchapter consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act.

§ 9907. Criminal and civil penalties for falsification. Any person who willfully falsifies, conceals, or materially misrepresents information required under this subchapter, or who willfully submits false service records to OPM or any agency for the purpose of evading the limits of this subchapter, shall be subject to civil penalties and criminal prosecution as provided in section 8(g) of the Lifetime Politician Act.

§ 9908. Coordination with FEC and other offices. OPM shall coordinate with the Federal Election Commission, the Clerk of the House, the Secretary of the Senate, and other relevant offices to ensure consistent counting, verification, and publication of service records.

(c) Technical instruction. The Office of the Legislative Counsel shall insert the new chapter and subchapter described in subsections (a) and (b) at appropriate locations in titles 2 and 5, United States Code, and shall make any technical, conforming, or clerical changes necessary to effectuate the amendments made by this Act, including appropriate section numbering and internal cross-references.

SECTION 11. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of this Act, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the remainder of this Act and the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected.

SECTION 12. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this Act, including funds for the FEC and OPM to implement verification, reporting, rulemaking, and enforcement obligations.

SECTION 13. CONGRESSIONAL DIRECTIONS, LEGAL REVIEW, AND IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS.

(a) Legal review and constitutional analysis. Within 60 days of enactment, the Attorney General, in coordination with the Office of Legal Counsel and the Department of Justice, shall submit to the

Speaker of the House and the President pro tempore of the Senate a written legal analysis addressing constitutional issues reasonably anticipated to arise under this Act, including but not limited to: separation of powers, the Appointments Clause, Qualifications Clauses, due process and retroactivity concerns, and any other relevant constitutional provisions. The analysis shall be published in the Congressional Record.

(b) GAO report. Within 120 days of enactment, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report assessing the administrative feasibility of implementing this Act, including recommendations for additional statutory clarifications, estimated costs, and suggested timelines for agency action.

(c) Implementation timeline. The FEC and OPM shall:

- (1) within 30 days of enactment, publish an initial implementation plan and timeline;
- (2) within 90 days of the effective date, publish final regulations, the consolidated public registry required by section 8(c), and the written notices required by section 9(c); and
- (3) within 180 days of the effective date, complete initial verification of records and publish a public summary of verification results.

(d) Report language for the Record. The sponsor's statement for the Record shall include: (1) the policy rationale for immediate application and no grandfathering; (2) an explanation of enforcement mechanisms and the private right of action; (3) a summary of the constitutional analysis provided under subsection (a); and (4) an explanation of the criminal and civil penalties for falsification.

SECTION 14. MODEL REGISTRY FORMAT.

The consolidated public registry required by section 8(c) shall include, at minimum, for each individual covered by this Act: (A) full name; (B) offices held and dates of service; (C) cumulative years counted under this Act; (D) the statutory basis for counting any acting service; (E) the date of any agency determination of ineligibility; and (F) a link to the administrative record supporting the determination, subject to applicable privacy and security laws.

SECTION 15. EFFECT ON OTHER LAWS.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit or supersede any other statutory or constitutional provision that imposes additional qualifications, restrictions, or requirements on federal officeholders, except to the extent necessary to give effect to the limits established by this Act.

SECTION 16. EFFECT OF ENACTMENT ON PENDING MATTERS.

All pending nominations, elections, or appointments shall be evaluated under the terms of this Act as of the effective date. Agencies and the FEC shall apply the counting rules set forth in this Act and implementing regulations to determine eligibility.

SECTION 17. SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT (FOR THE RECORD).

It is the intent of the sponsor that this Act be applied uniformly and immediately to prevent the creation of a permanent exemption class and to restore regular turnover in federal offices. The sponsor recognizes the significant constitutional and administrative questions this Act raises and directs the agencies and Congress to act promptly to implement the Act in a manner consistent with constitutional requirements and the public interest.

SECTION 18. FINAL TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

The Office of the Legislative Counsel is directed to prepare final conforming statutory language for insertion into titles 2 and 5, United States Code, consistent with section 10(c), and to prepare the formal bill cover page and short title line for submission.

End of bill text.