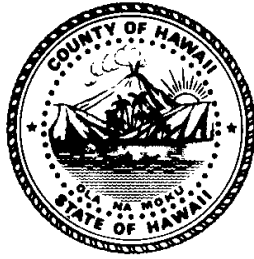


EDMUND HAITSUKA  
*Chairman*

DAVID FUERTES  
*Vice Chair*



DAPHNE HONMA  
CASEY JARMAN  
GUY KAULUKUKUI  
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ALAPAKI NAHALE-A  
SUSIE OSBORNE  
TODD SHUMWAY  
SCOTT UNGER

**2009-2010  
HAWAI‘I COUNTY  
CHARTER COMMISSION**

To: Edmund K. Haitsuka, Chair  
and Members of the Hawai‘i County Charter Commission

From: Levi K. Hookano, Attorney

Date: October 12, 2009

Re: History of County Council Term Limits

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Chair Haitsuka and Members of the Hawai‘i County Charter Commission,

This memo is provided pursuant from a commissioner request regarding the history of county council term limits in Hawai‘i County. This is a brief overview of the evolution of county council terms.

1969 – First County Charter is Approved With Four-Year Council Terms

The county’s first charter was approved in 1968 and became effective in 1969. At that time, the terms of the councilmembers were as follows:

- Four-year council term.
- Nine-member council.
- Six members represented districts:
  - One from the district of Puna;
  - One from the district of Ka‘u;
  - One from the combined districts of North and South Kona;
  - One from the combined districts of North and South Kohala;
  - One from the district of Hāmakua; and
  - One from the combined districts of North and South Hilo.
- Three members were elected at-large.
- Voters voted for all council seats.
- Term limits are not mentioned.

**COMM. 78**

### 1979 – Seven Member Council and Adjusted Term Limits are Rejected

In 1979, the charter commission proposed the following changes to the composition and terms of the county council:

- Reduction of the council to seven members.
- Four-year terms for at-large members.
- Two-year terms for district members.

This proposal was rejected by the electorate.

### 1990 – Single Member Districts and Reduced Council Terms are Approved

In 1990, the charter commission and subsequent vote by electorate approved the following changes to the composition and terms of the county council:

- Single member district representation (no at-large seats).
- Terms reduced from four-year terms to two-year terms.

### 1992 – Longer Council Terms and Term Limits are Rejected

In 1992, the county council proposed a charter amendment, via ordinance 92-80, to make the following changes to the council terms:

- Increase terms from two-years to four-years.
- Council terms will not be co-terminus with the mayor.
- Terms are limited to three consecutive four-year terms.

This proposal was rejected by the electorate.

### 1996 – Term Limits for Council Members are Approved

In 1996, the county council proposed, and the electorate approved, a charter amendment via ordinance 95-20 to limit council terms in the following manner:

- Council terms may not exceed four consecutive two-year terms.

### 1998 – Longer Terms for Council Members are Rejected

In 1998, the county council proposed, and the electorate rejected, a charter amendment to extend the terms of council members in the following manner:

- Increase council terms from two-years to four-years.

This was the last time the issue of council terms and term limits were addressed by the electorate. The current charter provides for nine single-member districts, each member serving a two-year term, with term limits of four consecutive two-year terms. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Levi K. Hookano", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Levi K. Hookano  
Commission Attorney

Cc: Karen Eoff, Commission Secretary