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# FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

**BILL NUMBER:** Senate Joint Resolution 2

**SHORT TITLE:** Legislative Term Limits & Salaries, CA

**SPONSOR:** Brandt/Boone

**LAST ORIGINAL**  
**UPDATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** 02/08/2026 **ANALYST:** Hanika-Ortiz

## ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT\* (dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
SOS election costs	No fiscal impact	\$35.0	No fiscal impact	\$35.0	Recurring	General Fund
If enacted, commission per diem	No fiscal impact	No fiscal impact	At least \$6.8	At least \$6.8	Recurring	General Fund

Parentheses ( ) indicate expenditure decreases.

\*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

### Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency or Agencies Providing Analysis  
Secretary of State

## SUMMARY

### Synopsis of Senate Joint Resolution 2

Senate Joint Resolution 2 (SJR2) asks voters to approve or reject an amendment to Article IV, Section 4, of the Constitution of New Mexico to limit legislative members to 12 years elected service; creates an independent citizen commission to establish, adjust, or limit salaries for legislators; and proposes to amend Section 10 to remove restrictions for paying them a salary.

The commission would be an independent state agency with nine citizens, no more than four of whom could be from the same political party. Citizen appointments, terms, and qualifications would be a multi-branch effort, to ensure independence. The commission could be housed with the Legislature for administrative support purposes only. The commission would submit its findings to the Secretary of State (SOS) on October 1, 2029, and every four years thereafter. If approved by voters this coming November 2026, the resolution would allow legislator pay to begin in July 2030.

The joint resolution provides the amendment be put before the voters at the next general election (November 2026) or a special election called for the purpose of considering the amendment. The amendment would only be effective if approved by voters.

## **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

SJR2 establishes an independent commission to decide how much to pay legislators and establishes term limits for those legislators. The “citizen commission” would receive per diem and mileage. LFC staff assume the commission would initially meet four or more times, and those per diem costs are reflected in the table above.

Under Section 1-16-4 NMSA 1978 and the New Mexico Constitution, the Secretary of State (SOS) is required to print samples of the text of each constitutional amendment in both Spanish and English in an amount equal to 10 percent of the registered voters in the state. SOS is required to publish the samples once a week for four weeks preceding the election in newspapers in every county in the state. The number of constitutional amendments on the ballot may impact the ballot page size or cause the ballot to be more than one page, also increasing costs. The estimated cost per constitutional amendment is \$35 thousand to \$50 thousand, depending on the size and number of ballots and if additional ballot stations are needed.

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

Voters may be more ready to accept paying legislators a salary if it includes term limits. Under SJR2, if ratified by voters, a legislator may only serve a total of 12 years during their lifetime. The total time may be split between the two chambers or spent in its entirety in a single chamber.

Presumably, service would start counting after the effective date the amendment was approved by voters. If so, current legislators would be able to complete their existing terms. The resolution also blocks a person from running for legislative office if the next term pushes them over 12 years.

SJR2 may make public office more accessible to those who cannot afford to serve unpaid. This may support greater legislative capacity relative to the executive branch which is salaried. Debate on term limits often contrast members with legislative experience and institutional memory against members with experience and knowledge outside the institution and a fresh perspective.

## **TECHNICAL ISSUES**

The resolution most likely applies prospectively, although that is not specifically addressed.

## **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

According to the National Conference of State Legislators, 16 states have limited terms for legislators. The list includes Arizona, California, Colorado, Montana, and Nevada in the West. Among those 16, the most common threshold is eight years per chamber. Oklahoma, Florida, and North Dakota have also adopted this model. The second most common model is 12 years in total for both chambers. This is now used by California and Nevada because history showed time limits that were too restrictive resulted in less legislative capacity.