

# Charter Reform Proposals for

## 4 YEAR TERMS

by Council Member Laure Quinlivan

# PURPOSE

- IMPROVE COUNCIL PRODUCTIVITY
- REDUCE PARTISANSHIP
- SAVE MONEY
- HELP CINCINNATI COMPETE WITH PEER CITIES ALREADY ON 4 YEAR TERMS

## Nationwide

62% of American cities that elect council at large have 4-year terms.

# Peer Cities with 4 Year Terms

Louisville	4 years	Staggered
Pittsburgh	4 years	Staggered
St. Louis	4 years	Staggered
Minneapolis	4 years	Same year
Indianapolis	4 years	Same year
Denver	4 years	Same year
Atlanta	4 years	Same year

# Ohio & Neighboring Communities

Cleveland	4 years	Same Year
Columbus	4 years	Staggered
Toledo	4 years	Staggered
Hamilton County	4 years	Staggered
Hamilton, OH	4 years	Staggered
West Chester	4 years	Staggered

The City of Silverton will have 4-year terms on the ballot in November, 2012

(All Ohio townships have 4 year terms)

# Current Council Supports Two Options for 4 Year Terms

- All run same year (9 members)
- Staggered terms (5 or 4 members run every 2 years)

## OPTION #1- All Run Same Year

- Voters elect nine council members to 4 year terms, the same year as mayoral elections, beginning in 2013.

## 8 YEAR TERM LIMIT REMAINS

- Transition to 4 year terms means some current members might serve 10 years. (Qualls, Seelbach, Young, Simpson, Sittenfeld, Smitherman)
- Thomas not eligible to run in 2013.
- Quinlivan and Winburn eligible for one 4 year term, and would not serve more than 8 years total.



## Benefits of Running Same Year

- Saves taxpayer money (\$250,000) every 4 years
- Fewer elections mean less political grandstanding, greater collaboration

## OPTION #2 Staggered 4 year terms

- Voters elect half the council members to 4 year terms beginning in 2013.
- Every other year, 5 or 4 members will be elected to 4 year terms.

# Full Transition to 4 year terms by the 2015 elections

- 2013- 5 members elected to 4 year terms and 4 members elected to 2 year terms.
- 2015, 4 members elected to 4 year terms.
- 2017, 5 members elected to 4 year terms

## 8 Year Term Limit Remains

- Council candidates choose term to run for in 2013. May run only if eligible to serve entire length of term.
- No current council members would serve more than 8 years.
- Transition issue: person elected to first 2 year term in 2013 could serve up to ten years.

## Benefits of Staggered Terms

- Gives voters ability to change council every other year.
- Prevents current members from serving more than 8 years total.

## If A Member Resigns

- Both ordinances contain a provision to allow a mid-term election if a Council seat is vacated in the early portion of a 4-year term, consistent with the mayoral mid-term election provision.

# Main Benefit & Difference Same Year vs. Staggered Terms

- Same Year council elections saves taxpayers \$250,000 every 4 years.
- Staggered terms allows voters to change council every other year.

# Timeline for Feedback & Passage

- Govt. Operations passes both options in Feb 2012, and arranges four public hearings to occur March - May.
- Community and Civic groups debate both options in their meetings, give feedback.
- Full council votes in August to put one option on the November 2012 ballot for voters to decide.



# Endorsements for 4 Year Terms

- Supporters include citizen activists, members of all three political parties, leaders in the business and faith communities, and media outlets.

# Supporters of 4 Year Terms

## NEWS OUTLETS

Cincinnati Enquirer

Cincinnati Business Courier

## RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Rev. KZ Smith, Corinthian Baptist Church

Pastor Chuck Mingo, Crossroads Church

# Supporters of 4 Year Terms

## COMMUNITY LEADERS

Ozie Davis, Avondale Community Leader

David White, Pendleton Community Council

Rick Dieringer, Invest in Neighborhoods

Terry Grundy, University of Cincinnati Professor

Gene Beaupre, Xavier University Professor

Marge Hammelrath, Former OTR Foundation Dir.

Eve Bolton, Cincinnati School Board President

Lincoln Ware, WBDZ "The Buzz" Radio Host

Dave Meier, OKI Council of Carpenters Rep.

Gwen Robinson, Community Action Agency

# Supporters of 4 Year Terms

## BUSINESS & POLITICAL LEADERS

Otto Budig, Business Owner, Port Authority Board

Lydia Jacobs-Horten, Port Authority Board

Joe Straka, Developer

Mike Allen, Former Hamilton Co. Republican Chair

Robert Wile, Hamilton City Council

Charlie Luken, Former Cincinnati Mayor

Shawn Baker, Charter Party Board Member

Tim Burke, Hamilton County Democratic Chair

Chris Dalambakis, Businessman/ Arts Patron

Tom Besanceney, Business Owner

# Charlie Luken, Former Mayor

“Councilwoman Quinlivan's proposal for four year terms just makes common sense. We all get tired of the constant grandstanding brought on by two year terms. This proposal, if passed, would give members time to focus on important City issues without the stress of an election every two years.”

## Rev. KZ Smith, CRC Board Chair

“This is a very good and timely idea...This will allow the city and the citizens of Cincinnati to use their money in other ways to help departments and programs to meet their budgets. You have my support.”

## David White, Pendleton C.C. VP

“Four-year City Council terms will allow our representatives to concentrate less on re-election and more on correcting problems and making our wonderful city even better. Please support Councilperson Laure Quinlivan's proposal to increase council terms to four years and help make our government more effective.”

# Gwen Robinson, CAA Director

- “Two year terms take away City Council’s ability to complete important projects.”



## Joe Straka, Developer

“I believe Cincinnati is one of the finest cities in the United States and have invested heavily in this city. Our city government needs leaders focused on civic results, not fundraisers focused on campaign donations. I firmly support Councilwoman Quinlivan’s charter change to 4 year terms and the respect it shows the people of Cincinnati by simply allowing them to vote on this change.”

# Otto Budig, Civic Leader

“I have long felt that City Council terms of 2-years have been inappropriate.

- The moment you are elected you begin fundraising for the next election.
- Projects of consequence for our City do not have an opportunity to be fully and thoughtfully vetted.
- Long range projects which can be so beneficial but are very complex are rarely contemplated because of the short election cycle.”

# Hamilton County Democratic Women's Caucus

“The Hamilton County Democratic Women's Caucus (HCDWC) supports and endorses an amendment to the Charter of the City of Cincinnati to provide that the members of City Council shall be elected at-large for staggered, four-year terms, as proposed by City of Cincinnati City Councilwoman Laure Quinlivan.”

# Mike Allen, Attorney

“As a former chair of the Hamilton County Republican Party, I know that two year council terms mean endless campaigning for council members. Four year terms would enable council members to study issues more deeply and would provide more time to develop new policies that do more than scratch the surface of the issues facing our city.”

# Shawn Baker, Charter Party Boardmember

"In continuation of political reforms beginning in the 1920's, it's critical for Cincinnatians to adopt four year terms for city council. Longer terms will allow members to concentrate on legislative and constituent service duties, rather than focusing on an election every other year. This reform will create greater accountability, election cost savings and greater service to the people of Cincinnati."

# Ozie Davis, Community Leader

“Continuity among leadership and consistency is best measured over time. With four years instead of two, I believe Council persons’ consistency would be best measured, where with two-years terms, inconsistency is begged for as the re-election year will always cause attention to be paid to being re-elected. At least with four-year terms, that would only happen every four years, with three years being measured for consistency. It serves the electorate better.”

# Terry Grundy, Professor & Urbanist

"Two year terms might have been O.K. back in the days right after the Reform Charter was adopted but it's just too short now. Let's make Council terms four years so the folks we elect will have enough time to focus on the critical issues facing Cincinnati."

# Rick Dieringer, Community Activist

“If we expect council to provide the government and services necessary for our city to thrive, then we must create an environment where they can make decisions objectively. A move to four year terms is a major piece of that puzzle.”



# Lydia Jacobs-Horten, Port Authority Board Member

“I support a term extension since decision making for Port Authority projects and issues benefits from background and longevity of service.”

# Robert Wile, Hamilton City Council

- “The pathway to success for many cities begins with a commitment by the city council to a clear strategic plan...which by its nature must be long term...
- In contradiction to a longer term planning process, the two year election cycle can force candidates to take almost exclusively a shorter term, problem solving posture.”

# Tom Besanceney, Business Owner

- “You are doing a service in taking steps towards an electoral system with Council terms reset to 4 years. Now campaigning is so expensive as well as distracting, that your effort is very 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

## Jack & Peg Wyant, Realtors

“The purpose of this is to convey 100% support for the proposed change from two year council term to a four year term. Our personal preference would be for staggered terms. However, we believe that decision is best made by council.”

# Dave Meier, OKI Carpenters Rep.

- “I have always thought 2 year terms for council was stupid. I support 4 year terms.”

## Cincinnati Enquirer

"A 4 year term would provide council members more time to learn about difficult issues... express opinions and make tough calls without worrying how it will play in the campaign...Don't lard it up with side issues -- council salaries, term limits, districts... Council should put such a measure on the fall ballot, encourage a full public debate and let voters decide.....A clear, simple plan has the best chance with the city's voters."

## Business Courier

“...electing Cincinnati City Council members to four-year terms would improve their ability to legislate and allow them to take a longer view. So we hope that council approves the measure and voters get a crack at it this fall.”

# Community Council Input

- Roselawn prefers same year elections 12-1
- Bond Hill prefers same year elections 23-4
- Columbia Tusculum prefers same year elections 9-4; approves of 4-year terms in general 13-0
- Carthage prefers staggered elections 15-6
- Pendleton voted 12-0 in favor of 4-year terms, either version
- Oakley heard Laure's presentation; no vote taken
- North Avondale, Downtown, Northside to discuss on upcoming agendas



# Additional Civic Input

- Quinlivan & Winburn to present 4-year terms proposals to Republican Party policy committee on May 29
- Will present to Democratic Policy Committee & Charter Party, dates TBA
- Quinlivan presented 4-year terms proposals to Cincinnati Association May 18<sup>th</sup>. Group plans June vote on whether to support
- Rookwood group researching 4-yr terms

# Latest Survey Results

289 responses so far

Responders prefer staggered elections 195-94

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/4-Year Terms Survey>

# Questions & Comments