

December 20, 2013

Hon. Kamala D. Harris
Attorney General
1300 I Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

Attention: Ms. Ashley Johansson
Initiative Coordinator

Dear Attorney General Harris:

Pursuant to Elections Code Section 9005, we have reviewed the proposed initiative related to term limits for county officers (A.G. File No. 13-0044).

Current Law

Constitution Establishes County Officials. The State Constitution requires that each county have an elected sheriff, elected district attorney, and elected assessor. The basic duties of these officials are as follows:

- ***Sheriff.*** A sheriff is tasked with preserving peace within a county. A sheriff is responsible for prevention, detection, and investigation of crimes in unincorporated areas of the county.
- ***District Attorney.*** A district attorney is the public prosecutor for all crimes committed in a county.
- ***Assessor.*** An assessor is responsible for determining the assessed value of all taxable property located within a county.

Each county's board of supervisors determines the level of resources available for the operations of these elected officials.

Term of Service. For most counties, state law establishes that sheriffs, district attorneys, and assessors serve four-year terms. State law does not limit the number of terms these elected officers may serve. Counties that have adopted a charter have greater authority to set the term of service of these officials.

Proposal

This measure amends the constitution to (1) require all county sheriffs, district attorneys, and assessors to serve four-year terms and (2) limit an individual to a maximum of three four years terms as a county sheriff, district attorney, or assessor.

Fiscal Effect

By limiting the number of terms a sheriff, district attorney, or assessor may serve, this measure could change the individuals serving in these offices at any given time. This would not have a direct effect on state or local government finances. However, different individuals may make different decisions about how to carry out the duties of these offices. In some cases, these decisions could affect state and local government revenues and costs. Any such indirect fiscal effects on state and local governments are unknown.

Summary of Fiscal Effect

This measure would have the following fiscal impact:

- No direct fiscal effect on state or local governments.

Sincerely,

Mac Taylor
Legislative Analyst

Michael Cohen
Director of Finance