

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews

Mike Mansfield Papers

1-29-1959

Four Year Term for Congressman

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Mansfield, Mike 1903-2001, "Four Year Term for Congressman" (1959). *Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews*. 337.

https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches/337

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Mike Mansfield Papers at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

*extra copies
in office
in books*

FOR RELEASE JANUARY 29, 1959

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D. MONTANA)
FOUR-YEAR TERM FOR CONGRESSMAN

Mr. President, I have sent to the desk a Joint Resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States providing that the term of office of Members of the House of Representatives shall be for four years.

Proponents of a four-year term for our Congressman on the other side of the Capitol have often been accused of tampering with the Constitution and our American traditions. I find that 170 years ago there was no majority of opinion in favor of a two-year term and I feel that the supporting arguments for a four-year term have advanced in this modern and more complex age.

A four-year term would provide for a greater harmony between the President and the House of Representatives. Many argue that a four-year term will keep the Representative away from his constituents. I do not think a Congressman's closeness to his constituents is dependent upon his short term of office, but on the generally smaller and more compact size of his District as opposed to a Senator who represents in many cases States with large land areas and millions of people.

A four-year term would give a Representative an opportunity to perform a greater service to his constituents, devoting more time to legislative duties. Under the present system a Congressman must devote the early part of his term to organization and then it seems that he must

begin thinking about getting re-elected and this problem of re-election looms very large during the second year of his term.

Biennial elections result in the loss from the House of Representatives of many experienced men. Our society is now so complex that we can ill afford to be without their wisdom and experience. In addition, two years is by no means long enough for a Representative to learn his job, which is one of the most complicated, demanding and responsible tasks in the world. I think that those of us here in the Senate who have served in the House can testify to that. I am confident that a four-year term would make it possible for each Congressman to become more effective in serving the people of his District.

Campaign and election costs have grown steadily and there is no reason to think they will decrease. Good men may be discouraged from running for the House of Representatives because they feel they cannot afford it. If a Representative knew he would not have to run every two years, it certainly would reduce the costs.

My proposal provides for the election of half of the House Members every two years and the provisions of this Joint Resolution meet the problems of redistricting.

A four-year term for the members of the House of Representatives would in my opinion enhance and contribute to the legislative process.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have the text of my Joint Resolution printed at the conclusion of my remarks in the Congressional Record.