

Amendment 9_Constitution

Term limits for AFT-W officers

ARTICLE VI: Officer Duties and Authority

Section 9. Term limits

- (a) No AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board member may stand for election if this could result in their serving for a total of more than six (6) consecutive years in the same position.
- (b) No AFT-Wisconsin Executive Board member may stand for election if this could result in their serving on the Board in any capacity for a total of more than ten (10) consecutive years.

Submitted by,
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<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted
<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted as Amended
<input type="checkbox"/> Defeated

The Executive Board recommends defeat

Rationale

Incumbency is a powerful force. Incumbents have name recognition, opportunities to communicate directly with their constituents, and the ability to deliver resources to their supporters and deny them to their critics. These benefits are intrinsic to incumbency, so they accrue to incumbents whether they wish them to or not. The cumulative effect of these benefits is to consolidate leadership in a small group and make it more difficult for new leaders to come forward. This has an overall negative impact on the organization for two reasons. First, it creates an impediment to democracy because unpopular incumbents can use the advantages of their position to maintain that position. Second, even if an incumbent is doing a good job and has the support of their constituents, it's not healthy for an organization to have a small group of leaders because this leads to insularity and a lack of accountability. A healthy organization allows for a give and take of ideas, which becomes more difficult when power remains in the hands of the same people year after year.

Finally, term limits create a natural process of leaders cycling back into rank-and-file status, a fundamental component of creating a union led by and for the rank-and-file members, rather than union bureaucrats. While individual leaders will face challenges in returning to rank-and-file status, these challenges make it all the more imperative for those leaders to spend their terms building a union that supports rank-and-file members.