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**Ohio Farm Bureau Federation Testimony Before
The Legislative Branch And Executive Branch Committee On The Subject Of Term Limits
Tony Seegers, Director Of State Policy
April 9, 2015**

Chairman Mills, Vice Chair Brooks, and members of the Legislative Branch and Executive Branch Committee, my name is Tony Seegers and I am the director of state policy for the Ohio Farm Bureau. Thank you for the opportunity to provide what will prove to be brief testimony today on Farm Bureau's policy regarding term limits for members of the General Assembly.

Before I discuss our position on the subject, it is important to have an overview of how Farm Bureau develops its policies. Our public policy development process allows our members to fully engage in shaping Farm Bureau's objectives. We have county farm bureaus representing members in all 88 counties. These county farm bureaus submit public policy recommendations covering county, state and federal issues that are approved at their annual meetings held August through October. Once approved, the county farm bureaus submit these recommendations to be reviewed by the state policy development committee and then they are voted on at OFBF's annual meeting.

From this process, an extensive policy book is developed which covers issues ranging from nutrient management to food quality and safety to the topic at hand, term limits. This is a yearly practice and our policy book sets forth the positions to pursue so we can fulfill our mission for that year. It is what guides OFBF's advocacy at the statehouse and in the halls of congress.

Our policy on term limits states,

We support extending the term limit for state legislators to 12 years.

We support extending the term length for a state representative from two years to four years and extending the term length for a state senator from four to six years.

- Term Limits # 121, lines 1-3.

As you can see, Farm Bureau supports the overall concept of extending term limits for members of the General Assembly from the current eight year structure to twelve years. However, this policy does not speak to a lifetime limit of twelve years of service in the legislature.

Additionally, our policy supports extending the actual length of the individual terms for representatives from the current two years per election to four years. For senators, we support increasing the individual term length per election from four years to six years. The aggregate limit remains twelve years.

Our overall support for increasing term limits to twelve years is based on the recognition that limiting the number of years of service reduces the expertise that is developed with longevity in the House and Senate. It is more difficult for members to become "subject-matter experts" under our current constitutional framework. The General Assembly, and ultimately the public, has lost the institutional memory that years of service brought. In fact, when they became effective in 2001, term limits resulted in approximately 648 years of combined service to leave with those members.

As the Committee continues to review this issue, it is important to consider that other factors, such as the redistricting process, could impact Farm Bureau's position on term limits.

Thank you again Mr. Chairman and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Farm Bureau. I will be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.