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*Dallas Morning News
February 23, 1951*

Texas Votes Term Limit Of President

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AUSTIN, Texas, Feb. 22.—Texas rushed a 2-term limit on Presidents nearer to becoming a part of the Federal Constitution Thursday.

Senators chose George Washington's birthday to chalk up Texas as the thirty-third state to approve of putting into the Constitution the custom set by Washington. It lasted until the era of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Three more states must agree to it by March 24, 1954. That many of the other fifteen states have advanced ratification through one or the other of the two houses of their Legislatures. They are South Carolina, North Carolina and Minnesota.

Twenty-five Senators voted for ratifying, with hardly a word of discussion. Four opposed it. They were Senators A. M. Aikin of Paris, Howard Carney of Atlanta, Kilmer Corbin of Lubbock and Jimmy Phillips of Angleton.

The vote completed the process of giving Texas' consent to the federal change without submitting it to a vote of the people.

The resolution will go to Gov. Allan Shivers but whether he signs it or not makes no difference. Give

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ing him a chance to sign it in approval is merely a courtesy.

The quiet and brief action by the Senate completed a campaign which in two previous Legislatures had met with failure. Rep. Max Smith of San Marcos, an ardent sponsor of it all along, piloted it to House approval, 120 to 23, on Monday.

Two years ago he was able to round up only 63 of the 150 Representatives to favor it.

In the past faithful followers of Roosevelt had rallied to the cry that it would be a slap at his memory. This year the same cry was made in House debate but it was ignored. It was not mentioned in the Senate.

Sen. Searcy Bracewell of Houston steered the resolution through the Senate. He got unanimous agreement of Senators to interrupt scheduled business to suspend rules and pass it.

"Today is George Washington's birthday," interjected Sen. Keith Kelly of Fort Worth, a cosponsor of ratification with Bracewell.

"Don't you think it is an appropriate day to write into the Constitution, a good old American custom?"

A big majority agreed. But it almost didn't work. On the first vote to suspend rules, there were only twenty-three votes for it and twenty-five were needed. Two absent Senator were hurriedly brought in to add to the majority.

"Does this exempt Senator Taft?" facetiously inquired Phillips in reference to the GOP presidential possibility, Sen. Robert A. Taft of Ohio.

Bracewell told him it did not while Sen. Rudolph Weinert of Seguin assured him:

"You don't have to worry about a Republican for even one term."

President Truman is specifically exempt from the limit. Had he not been President when it was submitted in 1947 however he would have been barred. The amendment would prevent a person from serving more than two 4-year terms plus over two years of a term to which another had been elected.

The Republican Eightieth Congress, which submitted the proposed amendment, excluded from its terms the President then in office. Another 4-year term for President Truman would keep him in office more than eleven years.

In some political schools of thought, adoption of the limit before the 1952 national conventions could be taken as a strong hint to Democrats not to run counter to the public will even though President Truman would be technically eligible for another term.

Interest in ratifying the amendment has picked up sharply this year compared to the last three. In fifty days nine states have approved it. Sixteen ratified it soon after it was submitted in 1947, but only eight more acted on it in the following three years.

Fifteen states yet to act are Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, Washington and West Virginia.

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