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**Shifting Power in Sacramento: The Effects of
Term Limits on Legislative Staff**

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Abstract

Does legislative staff become more powerful when state legislators are term limited? This article explores the impact of term limits on the power and duties of staff. Staff play an important role in today's politics, and this study seeks to contribute qualitative and quantitative data on the changes in California's legislative staff since the passage of term limits in 1990. I obtained data through interviews with senior staff in Sacramento, an online survey created for the study, and staff salary and staff turnover data from both the California and Illinois state legislatures.

I find that term limits have changed the duties of staff, made staff jobs less stable, and affected the relationship between legislators and staff. Levels of staff experience have gone down in the State Senate and risen slightly in the Assembly, but do not vary considerably from staff levels of experience in the Illinois State Legislature in 2009 and 2010. Staff salaries increased at a faster rate in the California Legislature than in the Illinois Legislature between 2006 and 2009. I conclude that term limits have made staff potentially more powerful, but less competent.

Keywords: California, term limits, staff, Proposition 140, legislature

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Shifting Power in Sacramento: The Effects of Term Limits on Legislative Staff

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I.

Introduction

“One of the first things I did when I first came up [to Sacramento] was look for members I could trust on certain issues. . . . These are high-caliber, experienced legislators who have developed an expertise on particular subjects. Then I wonder, if I were coming here in 1996 as a new legislator, who could I turn to in the legislature? Would I have to go to someone in the administration for that kind of expertise?”—Assemblyman Ted Lempert

The British satirical sitcom *Yes, Minister*, which aired on the BBC in the 1980s, follows the career of a British cabinet minister and his personal staff. The sitcom centered around the veteran personal staff’s ability to manipulate the newly appointed cabinet minister, poking fun at the fact that parliamentary staff is relatively permanent, staying on from administration to administration as cabinet ministers cycle in and out, and therefore potentially hold more practical power than the cabinet ministers themselves. The manipulative relationship between government cabinet minister Jim Hacker MP and his permanent secretary Sir Humphrey Appleby is, of course, completely fictional. However, there is an element of truth to this idea that senior staff could hold inordinate power over rookie politicians, especially in term limited legislatures where politicians are continually circulating through offices. The sitcom explores an area of politics that has gone relatively unstudied: the relationship and power dynamic between legislative staff and their elected legislators.

This article attempts to study legislative staff, more specifically how the power, competence, and responsibilities of legislative staff have changed with the passage

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of term limits in the state of California in 1990. I focus on the changes in duties and responsibilities of staff in Sacramento after the passage of Proposition 140, which instituted term limits for all elected employees in the state. I attempt to further explore Brian Weberg and Karl T. Kurtz's claim that legislative staffers have been forced to take on new roles as teachers and institutional councilors (Weberg and Kurtz 2007). I also compare California and Illinois staff on the basis of years of experience in an effort to determine how the professional quality and level of competence of legislative staff have changed in California. Lastly, I compare the growth of staff salaries in California to that of Illinois in an attempt to measure changes in the relative value of staff since term limits while controlling for cost of living increases.

California possesses many important attributes that make it a good test case for observing the effects of term limits. As the nation's largest state, studying term limits in California may serve as a model for term limits on a national scale (Price 1992). California also ranks extremely highly in professionalization, ranking number one in both total compensation for its elected officials and in total number of staff per legislator, and number two in session length (Kousser 2005). Additionally, exploring the impact of term limits on staff in one state may serve as a launching pad for studies about the changing role of staff in other states. If we can better understand how the relatively new phenomenon of term limits interacts with the staff/legislator power structure in the California State Legislature, it may inform our discussion of how term limits affect staff power in other states.

I remain acutely aware of the difficulty of measuring the effects of term limits on staff. Changes in staff power since 1990 might be caused by a variety of different factors, not exclusively term limits. To control for some of these potential outside factors, I use the state of Illinois as a control state for data collection. Illinois, too, boasts a highly professionalized state legislature, ranking fifth in member compensation and eighth in staffers per legislator. However, unlike California the state has never passed term limits legislation (Kousser 2005).

A Brief History of Term Limits: The Crusade for a Citizen Legislature

Two key aspects of a legislature's design can serve to lock in a polity's decisions about the nature of its leaders. The most direct mechanism is to place a formal limit on the number of terms for which representatives may serve. The Athenians did this, and Aristotle argued explicitly for term limits that placed 'All over each and each in turn over all. . . . Another way to enforce a decision is to provide legislators with the resources to make politics their professional career or to deny them that ability.' —Thad Kousser

During the 1990s, a wave of political reform swept the United States, leaving legislators from 21 states with term limits. Five of those states would eventually

overturn their term limits. Nevertheless, the wave of reform significantly altered how many state legislatures function in a way that neither supporters nor critics of term limits had expected. Term limits have been a topic of debate in the United States since the founding of the nation. Legislators were term limited to a single three-year term under the Articles of Confederation (Copeland 1992). The United States' recent bout with term limits has caught the interest of scholars in the last two decades, as evidenced by the voluminous literature available on the subject. Most literature on term limits is concerned with answering questions about the effects of these modern term limits on legislators and state governments, or with answering more normative questions about whether term limits are good or bad. Rarely do any of these articles make an effort to quantify the effects of term limits on legislative staff.

California was one of the first states to pass term limits in 1990 (Kousser 2005). Term limits evolved in California as a natural reaction to the increase of careerism in the state legislature, a particularly nasty FBI investigation in the 1980s, and the national movement against the newly discovered potency of the "incumbency advantage." In the late 1980s, career politics had reached an all-time high in California. Professionalization had been on the rise in state legislatures across America since the 1960s and higher salaries, better benefits, more staff, improved facilities, and lengthened legislative sessions all acted as incentives for careerism in state politics (Squire 1992). This push for professionalization had come from inside the state legislatures themselves, in most cases in an attempt to help the legislative branch match the power of the executive branch, which had grown significantly in power over the course of the first half of the century (Everson 1992). In 1966, Assembly Speaker Jesse Unruh was the primary force behind the passage of Proposition 1A, California's professionalization bill, which gave the California State Legislature control over its own salary and calendar (Kousser 2005).

With the highest salaries, highest number of staffers per legislator, and second longest session lengths, there is little dispute that California's state legislature was the most professionalized in America by the 1980s (Kousser 2005). Member turnover in the California State Assembly had sunk from 31% in 1978 to 9% in 1988 (Dillon 1990). In addition, the California State Legislature had suffered from a particularly bad decade in the press. Two FBI investigations in the 1980s ended in the conviction of several legislators, staffers, and a prominent businessman working in and around the state capitol on charges of extortion and racketeering (Price 1992). The public was becoming discontent, convinced by advocates of reform that California's career politicians were corrupt and no longer answered to the people. In 1990, retired Los Angeles County Supervisor and former Assemblymember Peter F. Schabarum drafted Proposition 140 in response to a public opinion poll that showed that 71% of Californians favored some form of term limits (Sweeny 1990).

Proposition 140 limited the terms of elected officials in California. Members of the State Assembly were limited to three two-year terms, six years in all, and members of the State Senate were limited to two four-year terms, eight years in all. All other elected representatives were limited to two four-year terms. Once termed out, former legislators could not seek the same office again in later years. Proposition 140 appeared on the general-election ballot in November of 1990 and passed with 52.17% of the vote.

The consequences of term limits on democracy in California have been mixed and surprising. As term limits could not be applied retroactively, the public had to wait until 1996 to see if Proposition 140 would reform the state legislature as the initiative's authors intended. But once term limits began to take effect, scholars of term limits quickly realized that the byproducts would be different than anyone had anticipated (Cain and Kousser 2004).

Proposition 140 did not result in the "citizen legislature" supporters had envisioned. Although incumbent legislators were forced to leave office, the incoming freshmen were no less professionalized than the incumbents. Lawyers and businessmen still dominated the ranks and political careerism showed itself in the number of legislators with local-government experience, which rose from 52% to 64% after term limits (Kousser 2005, 35). The leadership ability of the legislature, particularly the Assembly, and the quality of legislation were both negatively impacted by term limits as well (Kousser 2005).

This is not to say that term limits did not have lasting, positive effects on the California State Legislature. Term limits resulted in an increase in the number of females and minorities in office, though this may only have been an acceleration of a preexisting trend toward more diversity in the legislature (Cain and Kousser 2004). And in some ways, term limits may have had a negative impact on lobbyists. Term limits have changed the relationship between lobbyists and legislators, forcing lobbyists to spend more money getting to know new members and educating them in their issue areas with less predictable results (Kousser 2005, 30).

II.

"Power is derived from two things: authority and influence. We [staff] don't have authority, but we sure have influence."—Committee Consultant for the California Assembly

This section focuses on the impact of term limits on legislative staff in Sacramento as perceived by the staff themselves. I will first give a brief overview how staff is viewed in the academic world to give us a better understanding of how staff duties have changed since the passage of term limits. I will follow with a brief description of the initial impacts of term limits on legislative staff in California. I will

then detail my interview conditions, explain how I obtained my sample population, and offer some limitations to my interview data. Next, I will discuss the effects of term limits as voiced by California Senate and Assembly staffers during my interviews. These effects include changes in the duties of staff, an increase in job instability, staff mobility, and “job hopping,” the institutionalization of the chief of staff position, a change in the relationship between staff and legislators, and a shift in staff demographics similar to the shift in legislator demographics. Lastly, I will take a moment to outline the efforts that the state legislature has taken to retain senior staff in the last two decades, particularly under Speaker Hurtzberg in the Assembly.

1. Theories about Staff: The Role of Legislative Staff in Information Gathering

In order to understand how the role of staff has changed since term limits, it is important to have a basic understanding of how staff is viewed in the academic world and the importance of staff to the political process. Though literature on staff is generally scant, a few studies help outline the general expectation of how staff is to function in the political system.

Barbara Romzek and Jennifer Utter released a study on the professionalism of Congressional staff in 1997. According to Romzek and Utter, staffers are not simply secretaries and paper sorters; staffers are individuals who possessed valuable skills, not available to the general public, which helped them uniquely further the work of elected officials. Further, Romzek and Utter asserted that congressional staff qualify as a “professional body,” and act as an integral part of the political system.

Similarly, scholars Paul Sabatier and David Whiteman (1985) argue that staff play an important role in the gathering of information in legislatures. According to Sabatier and Whiteman, it is a staffer’s job to gather information for legislators and filter important or relevant information through to the legislator. Staff, under this theory, holds the powerful role of the first barrier of entry to the legislative process. To access a legislator, you must first get through the legislator’s staff.

An insightful article written by Brian Weberg and Karl T. Kurtz and published in 2007 reminds scholars that staff was an integral part of the “professionalization” of legislatures in the late 1960s onward. Expanded staff services, especially the growth of nonpartisan staff services such as independent legal council and policy analysis, became marks of a truly professional legislature. Thus, after the 1960s nonpartisan staff began to advise legislators as “specialists” in some areas.

2. Initial Impact on Legislative Staff

Term limits had a marked impact on the California State Legislature. But how did term limits impact staff? Some consequences for legislative staff are concrete. Cuts to the legislative operating budget fell most heavily on staff. The Legislative Analyst's Office and the Assembly and Senate Research offices took huge cuts in staff. The Legislative Analyst's Office alone reduced its staff size from 98 to 43 between 1990 and 1992. Cuts to personal staff differed in the Assembly and Senate. Interestingly, the Assembly chose to cut mostly senior policy staffers, who received higher pay, and hire a greater number of inexperienced, inexpensive staffers. The Senate, conversely, chose to keep their talent and fire excess, inexperienced staff. Lobbyist Ken Emanuels comments that "the difference [between the Senate and Assembly] is like night and day" because of these initial choices about which staff to cut (Kousser 2005, 38). We will observe these differences more closely later.

Additionally, the percent of former legislative staff running for elected office dropped drastically after the passage of Proposition 140 from 40% to 16% (Barge 2001). This might seem counterintuitive if we believe that term limits should increase the power of legislative staff. If staff is becoming more powerful, shouldn't staffers be more likely to run for office? It is possible that term limits have changed the rules of the game when it comes to running for office. Staffers no longer have first dibs on open seats. Thad Kousser argues that before term limits, personal staffers were the first to know when a legislator was planning on retiring, enabling them to file for candidacy before any other candidates got wind of the retirement. Now, term limits allow all would-be competitors ample time to prepare to run for open seats (Kousser 2009). This may dissuade staff from running for office or dilute the number of staff that actually win election.

However, a decrease in the number of staff running for elected office might also strengthen the argument that staff has become more powerful under term limits. It's possible that staff jobs are more stable than term-limited elected positions, and many staffers I spoke with felt that they have more power as a staffer to influence legislation than they would have as elected officials. When I asked one Assembly committee consultant why he had never considered running for office, he quipped, "Raising money sucks. And why give up the power? I write most of the legislation that comes through this office." With term limits imposing additional stress on elected officials, perhaps the costs of running for office have outweighed the gains for political staffers who may have been interested in running for office in the past.

In addition to these documented consequences of term limits, I also expect to see other consequences. With inadequate time to develop expertise, I expect term limited legislators to turn more often to experienced legislative staffers for assistance in complex policy areas, such as the California budget or water policies. As a

result, I hypothesize that non-term limited actors in the political arena, like legislative staff, would gain more footing.

On the other hand, perhaps term limits have changed the member/staff dynamic all together. Before term limits, staff would work for the same member for upwards of 30 years, cultivating close bonds with the member and the office. But with term limits taking members out of the picture every six to eight years, these bonds between staff and legislators have surely altered in some way. It is plausible that legislators just don't listen to staff the way they did before term limits.

3. Interview Conditions: Sample Population and Interview Procedures

In an attempt to target staff who had been working in Sacramento since term limits took effect in 1996, I contacted the highest paid staff first. By interviewing staff who had been in Sacramento since before term limits, I hoped to gain some perspective on how the legislature had changed over time and to learn of their experience of the effects of term limits on legislative staff. I was only able to schedule 18 interviews, due to time constraints, and of those 18 interviews all but one staffer had worked in the state legislature since before 1996. The validation of my hypothesis that the senior staff would also be the highest paid staff was interesting in itself. From the beginning of my interview process it appeared as though the institution was making some effort to keep senior staff by ensuring that the most senior staffers were also the best compensated staffers.

In my interviews, I asked questions about the staffer's own personal experience with the term-limited legislature. I tried to keep staffers from generalizing about the effects of term limits by asking them for specific examples of any effects they suggested. I also asked them how they thought the type of staffer had changed and how their duties as staffers had changed since term limits (Appendix Figure 2). I interviewed three staffers in the political leadership (two Democrats and one Republican), five personal staffers, five chief committee consultants, four nonpartisan administrative staffers, and one recently retired staffer from the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office. The term "administrative staffers" here refers to staffers from offices such as the Chief Clerk's office and the Secretary of the Senate's office, which function mainly as support offices for the State Legislature. Of the staffers I interviewed, two worked for the Senate and 16 worked for the Assembly.

Because I chose staff specifically for their long careers in the legislature, I was unable to randomly select staffers to control for confounding variables. However, by interviewing staffers from different political parties with different positions from both the Assembly and the Senate, I hoped to control for as much bias as possible. This cannot mitigate the general staff bias that may have tainted the responses given by interviewees. Nevertheless, these interviews proved exceedingly useful in

determining some of the big changes to staff responsibilities and influence brought on by term limits.

Lastly, I sent an online survey to all of my interviewees for them to complete before or after the interview. I asked them to forward the survey to their staff, if they felt comfortable doing so, as a way of increasing my sample size. In the survey, I asked some basic questions about the perceived level of expertise of the staff and legislators as well as some basic demographic questions to get a feel for the professionalism and career trajectory of legislative staff. I had 23 staffers respond to the survey. Some of the important findings are detailed in this chapter and graphs of the responses can be found in the Appendix.

4. Findings

In my interviews, I set out to explore the more incidental, less direct effects of term limits on legislative staff. My interviews with 18 senior staffers in the California State Legislature yielded some interesting findings. The effects of term limits that I discuss in this section of the paper are the effects that were mentioned most often and by the most staffers (Appendix Figure 1). I find that though term limits have indeed increased staff's policy influence, they have affected staff in many other ways as well. Term limits have changed the role of legislative staff, institutionalizing the position of chief of staff and requiring staff to do more teaching and policy advising for legislators. Term limits also have increased job instability, changed staff demographics, and lead to interchamber and interoffice "job hopping." In sum, term limits have fundamentally altered the relationship between legislators and their staff.

The Duties of Legislative Staff

Term limits have indeed changed the role of legislative staff in the state legislature. Staff no longer act simply as the "information gatherers" of the members, as Sabatier and Whiteman argued in 1985. I find that after term limits, both non-partisan and partisan staff began to take an active role in "teaching" legislators, consistent with Weberg and Kurtz's work. Staff is responsible for teaching legislators about the day-to-day rules of the legislature, about legislative history, and even about proper parliamentary procedure. "I'm doing a whole lot more tutorial than I used to," commented one chief consultant for the Assembly. Ten out of the 18 staffers I interviewed expressed similar sentiments (Appendix Figure 1). To some extent, staffers have always been engaged in teaching members. Staffers' historical role as information gatherers and resident specialists requires them to constantly update their legislators on policy issues. However, before term limits legislators

knew much more about the history of legislation than they do today. A high ranking member of the Democratic leadership in the Assembly put it this way: “Nowadays we have to do background briefings for the Speaker to catch them up on the full history of the legislation. Fifteen to 20 years ago, we didn’t have to do that. Everyone knew how these things worked already, whether it was health care or the budget or labor issues.” As term limits increase turnover of both legislators and staff, senior staffers struggle to bring the new personnel up to speed on pressing political issues and legislative protocol. “I do more training as chief of staff than I need to, both of staff and of legislators,” complained one chief of staff. Most staff resent this additional burden, though it does come with benefits.

Unlike Weberg and Kurz, I find that with the increased burden of “teaching” legislators, nonpartisan staff has taken a more active role in policy advising post-term limits. Legislators with only a basic understanding of some of the most difficult issues facing California have been forced to turn to more experienced staffers for policy advice. Staffers certainly feel that they are better versed in policy than legislators: In my online survey, 71.4% of staffers felt they had a high or very high level of expertise, while 60% of staffers felt the legislators or chairs for whom they advise have only a moderate or moderate low level of expertise (Appendix Figure 3).

One chief committee consultant for a Senate committee told the story of a joint conference committee in 1993, when term limits were already beginning to have an impact. Veteran legislators, doomed to be termed out by 1996, had already begun to resign from office for other jobs. During the joint conference committee, the committee consultant was approached for guidance on policy issues. When the consultant tried to defer instead to the judgment of the legislators, one assemblymember took him outside of the committee room and demanded that he tell him how to vote on the issues, saying, “We don’t know enough anymore! You need to be more involved in this than you used to be!” According to the consultant, this was the beginning of a drastic shift in staff-member relations. No longer was staff asked to compile unbiased information for the member to interpret. Increasingly, staff was asked to gather information and then suggest policy directions to legislators. The change in staff influence was summed up perfectly by a long-time member of the Democratic leadership in the Assembly: “In the Willie Brown days, I gave only policy analyses. He would know where he wanted to go with the legislation. Nowadays I almost always include a recommendation with my policy analysis. Sometimes, legislators don’t take my recommendations. But most times they do.”

The policy power that staff has gained in the California State Legislature is perhaps no better exemplified than by the 2009 meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures. A consultant from the Assembly budget committee remembers the event clearly. “All of the other states sent their members. California sent

the staff. It was a little awkward.” This shows how much members have come to depend on policy experts and staff after term limits, especially in difficult to understand areas like the budget.

Job Instability

However, term limits have also had a negative impact on staff. To begin, legislative staffers are not exactly “free” from term limits. With their bosses termed out of office every six to eight years and running for re-election every two to four years, staff employment is a lot less stable than it once was. This has had consequences on who stays and who leaves staff positions in Sacramento. Individuals who find job instability harder to cope with, such as parents with small children, turn to the private sector in higher numbers causing high turnover rates among Capitol staff.

In fact, private sector jobs in political consulting are booming in the post-term limits climate. With the state legislature struggling to maintain some semblance of institutional memory and with more and more legislators termed out of office and looking for work, ex-legislators and staffers are teaming up with private industry to form political “super-firms” that provide consulting on state issues (*Capitol Weekly* 2010). The Senators Firm, launched in January 2010 by former Democratic senators Martha Escutia and Joe Dunn with the help of longtime Democratic strategist Richie Ross, is an example of this new “super-firm” dominated by political professionals seeking to capitalize on their institutional knowledge and expertise. The Sacramento newspaper *Capitol Weekly* laments these “super-firms,” calling them symbols of “the continual hemorrhaging of the Capitol’s institutional memory into the private sector (2010).” These private sector jobs can lure away many experienced political staffers with better pay and more stability.

Turnover rates of staff in both the Assembly and the Senate have risen, but the Assembly, with its two-year terms, is especially plagued by high staff turnover. High staff turnover was mentioned as a problem ten times during the course of my interviews by eight different staffers (Appendix Figure 1). “Prior to term limits, turnover was less than 10%,” commented a high ranking member of the Assembly’s support staff. “It’s still like that in some support and leadership offices, but now members’ offices see turnover more like 30-35%.” The Senate manages to maintain a level of seniority in its staff, in part because of the Senate’s initial commitment to keeping senior staff after term limits and in part because members of the Senate tend to be elected from the Assembly and carry their experienced staff with them. Nonetheless, job instability makes it difficult to keep senior staff with institutional knowledge. There are few incentives for senior staff in the unstable world of Sacramento politics.

Staff Mobility and Job Hopping

Job instability brought on by term limits has had some other impacts on legislative staff as well. Instability has led to both greater job mobility for legislative staffers and a new phenomenon which I will refer to as “job hopping.”

With members constantly being termed out and staff leaving at an escalating rate, there have been more opportunities for staff that *do* stay to rise in the ranks relatively quickly and to take on powerful leadership positions. Powerful staff positions on committees and in leadership offices that were historically dominated by senior staff have increasingly become available to younger staff. “In some ways, [term limits] are great,” commented one committee staffer. More mobility, in addition to the recent retirement of many staffers of the baby-boom generation, has led to an increasingly younger staff overall. “I’ve been given a lot more opportunities than I would have otherwise because, comparatively, I had the experience and longevity that others didn’t have, even though I had only been with the Assembly for a few years.” Though this mobility may be beneficial to the careers of young staffers, it can also have negative effects on the state legislature. More mobility means that staff is less experienced in the jobs they are doing. More mobility also means that more time is wasted training staff to do new jobs. Almost all of the staffers I interviewed who had been working for the state legislature since the 1980s complained that they spend more time after term limits training both new members *and* new staff.

Job instability has also led to job hopping. The continuous supply of job openings fueled by term limits, as well as the instability of staff jobs, encourages staff to continuously look for new positions where they might enjoy a few more years of employment without being bothered by the upset of their boss being termed out. Staff can also look for more powerful positions in other offices. As new members with limited staff budgets enter the legislature, staffers who have worked in Sacramento for a few years in a legislative assistant position are often prime candidates for managerial positions in new offices. “Often legislative assistants or legislative directors from other offices with some in-house experience will be recruited for chief of staff positions in freshman offices because they are relatively cheap but still knowledgeable,” said one legislative staffer. “Also, you can get a raise that way.” Getting a pay raise has become difficult in Sacramento, post-Proposition 140’s 40% cuts to the legislative operating budget. Seven staffers mentioned job hopping as a big side effect of term limits during interviews (Appendix Figure 1). Job hopping may have greatly contributed to the 30-35% turnover numbers in the legislature; as staffers leave one office for another job, both the moving staff member and the staffer brought in to replace that staff member must be trained, increasing the al-

ready exorbitant amount of time spent by the modern-day legislature training new staff.

Chief of Staff

The position of chief of staff is another byproduct of term limits in Sacramento. Prior to the 1990s chiefs of staff were rare in offices other than leadership offices or offices of committee chairs. “Chiefs of staff in legislators’ personal offices are a relatively new phenomenon in Sacramento,” notes a high-ranking member of the Senate support staff. “I would say they now act as a formalized confidante to legislators. I don’t think it’s a great change. It just puts another person in between the member and everyone else.” Although this phenomenon was only identified by two staffers during interviews, their observations are certainly valid; In 2009, 74 out of 80 Assembly offices and 38 out of 40 Senate offices had chiefs of staff on payroll. The formalization of the chief of staff position reaffirms the increasing need for members to receive advice from their staff. Not only do members constantly need help with legislative matters, they need *political* advice as well. Chiefs of staff often act as both legislative and political advisors, keeping the members aware of the political ramifications their votes might have on their next elections and on the member’s relationship with key players in the Capitol.

This new dynamic can be frustrating to many staffers who have been in Sacramento since before term limits. There has always been a power struggle between personal and committee staff for legislators’ attention, but many say it has been amplified by term limits. One committee staffer for the Assembly put it like this: “In the first two years, members are still learning the ropes. In the second two years, they are willing to listen to committee staffers, who are the specialists, and take some unpopular but necessary votes. But in the last two years, they are already looking toward their next job. Politics begins to play a much bigger role.” It was always the case that politicians needed to start thinking about their next career move, but prior to term limits, legislators had several more years in the interim period between learning the ropes and running for a new position where they could truly engage in making good policy. Speaking about the ability of members to take committee staff advice and make tough decisions, one chief consultant let out a tired sigh and tried to see things through the legislators’ eyes: “In a world without incumbency to protect you and an organized primary working against you, it’s hard to be courageous. I get that.”

Changing Relationships between Staff and Members

Job instability, job mobility, job hopping, and the institutionalization of the position of chief of staff have all impacted staff-member relationships. The power dynamic between staff and members has shifted, and with it, the social dynamic. These social structures are key to the everyday functioning of the state legislature and effect how policy is made.

First of all, although legislators are forced to rely more heavily on staff after term limits, they often resent the fact that they have to rely on staff. This resentment strains the bonds between staff and legislators and reduces the potency of staff power. This resentment is not by any means found in every office. Many legislators are aware that they need assistance and are more than happy to delegate to and learn from senior staff. Moreover, most staffers made it very clear in their interviews that, though staff might have more *knowledge*, this knowledge does not translate directly to power. “You still need the votes of the legislators, and they don’t want to feel left out of the loop in policy making,” said one Assembly committee staffer. Yet another staffer from the Democratic leadership office in the Assembly commented, “We try to make sure that members are well informed on the issues. Still, no one can predict how the member will vote.”

However, to the extent that bitterness between members and staff does exist, it is certainly fueled by the fact that members are made to feel powerful much earlier on in their careers than before term limits. With legislators being given committee chairmanships and other leadership positions sometimes within their first term, legislators develop a feeling of importance and power that was kept in check in the old mentor/mentee system by informal means. “Members tend to develop what I like to call ‘memberitis,’” commented one chief of staff who has worked for both the Senate and the Assembly during his extensive career in the state legislature. “They think they know everything right away and there is no one to informally put them in their place.” This resentment of senior staff in turn leads to frustration of the senior staff at the inexperience and overconfidence of new members.

Memberitis combined with the effects of job hopping have had devastating effects on loyalty between staff and members. Staff used to be loyal to the members and vice versa, often times working for one legislator to whom they were loyal for 30 years. Nowadays, staffers jumping from office to office and even from the Assembly to the Senate feel less attached to any one member. The impacts on loyalty and respect have been telling. Seven out of 18 staffers expressed that they felt a change in the relationship and respect level between members and staff (Appendix Figure 1); staffers more often feel that they are on equal footing with legislators, calling them by their first names and speaking informally about them around the Capitol. Increasingly, staff feel that they can “wait out” difficult legislators, who

will be termed out in a few years anyway. The degree of respect and loyalty which existed in the '80s is gone. This may be partially due to a shift to an overall less formal work culture in California, but some of the credit should certainly go to term limits.

Staff Demographics

A few staffers have also noticed that staff has undergone a demographic transformation similar to that of the state legislatures in response to term limits (Appendix Figure 1); that is, staff has become noticeably more diverse. More women and minorities find themselves in powerful staff positions than pre-term limits. Again, this change may be due to an overall change in workplace culture in California; Kousser argues that female and minority representation in the California State Legislature had been on the rise prior to the passage of term limits, and that term limits simply accelerated the process (2005). In any case, staff demographics have changed and, many argue, have brought in staffers which both more directly reflect the demographics and the values of the constituents in their district. "Term limits have broadened the cultural complexion of staff. I mean this in the nicest possible way, but it's no longer a bunch of white guys in their 50s," quipped one female staffer.

5. Systematic Efforts to Retain Senior Staff

Though senior staff has proven an important part of the post-term limits legislature, only minimal effort has gone into retaining senior staff. This is partially due to budgetary constraints in the state legislature; the state can only pay senior staffers so much money, and never enough to compete with outside lobbying firms and private corporations. Nonetheless, there have been some concerted efforts to retain senior staff over the years.

Speaker Robert Hertzberg, who led the State Assembly from 2000 to 2002, recognized the importance of senior staff and with the help of the Democratic leadership did his best to add some incentives for legislative staff, including in-house day care for children of employees and a new Legislative Office Building across from the Capitol to allow for more office space for legislative staff. Speaker Hertzberg also established the Capitol Institute, which runs mandatory training for new legislators, including a crash course in parliamentary procedure and other Sacramento basics. The Capitol Institute, renamed the Hertzberg Institute by Speaker Herb Wesson, actively encourages members to hire experienced staff into their Capitol offices.

However, these efforts have only mitigated staff turnover to a certain extent. Turnover of legislative staff is still high. In many ways, this formal support of senior staff has led to a handful of very powerful, well entrenched staff, but not to an overall more competent staff.

III.

“Government used to pride itself in stability. There’s no stability in government anymore.”
—High Ranking Staff Member of the California State Senate

This section works to compare data from the California State Legislature to data from the Illinois State Legislature. The data was not easily accessible, and in some cases records dating back to before term-limits reform in California did not exist. Nevertheless, my findings are, if not climactic, helpful and enlightening. They both highlight some of the trends mentioned in the interview data from the previous chapter and uncover some interesting puzzles, which I will do my best to address in terms of the previous discussion on term limits and their effects on legislative staff. I will begin by briefly outlining the indicators that I thought might be useful for this study and the differences between Illinois and California that I expected to see. This informs the data I chose to gather from each institution. There were, however, limits to the data that I was able to obtain, which I will also discuss. Finally, I will detail the findings of my comparative study between Illinois and California.

1. Hypotheses

I began my research hypothesizing that I would see a positive correlation between term limits and staff power. It seemed logical to me that as legislators became less specialized and less knowledgeable, the power of legislative staff would measurably increase. But political power is a slippery term.

Power, of course, is a very difficult thing to quantify, let alone to measure objectively. I chose to attempt to quantify power by using two indicators: years of service and salary. First, I expected that after term limits, staffers with more experience would become a commodity in the California State Legislature. I hoped that this would result in an increase in years of service of legislative staff in California. I also expected that Illinois, which is highly professionalized but lacks term limits, would maintain an even level of staff experience over time. Second, I expected staff salaries to increase at a faster rate in post-term limits California. If staff were becoming a commodity, I expected salaries to increase in an attempt to retain senior staff and minimize the loss of institutional knowledge now carried by staff. Staff salary would be indicative of staff’s relative worth in the political system. Again,

I expected staff salaries in Illinois to rise at a constant rate with the rise in cost of living.

Illinois served as a comparison state to control for confounding variables. Illinois shares many characteristics with California. It has some of the largest cities in the nation but also many agrarian districts, creating a need to balance both industrial and agricultural needs. Chicago alone is ranked the third most populous city in the United States, behind New York and Los Angeles (Census Bureau 2007). Illinois is a solid Democratic state, voting for a Democratic president in the last five presidential elections. Barack Obama carried the state by 62% in the 2008 presidential election (washingtonpost.com 2008). Illinois' state legislature is also highly professionalized, meaning it retains permanent staffers, pays high salaries for members and staff, and treats its legislature as a professional, not a part-time, body. And key to its importance in this study, Illinois has never had term limits (Kousser 2005). All of these components make Illinois a good control state for California.

2. Gathering Data: Successes and Limitations

I proceeded to seek data from both Illinois and California on years of service and salaries for legislative staff. Though all expenditures of the state governments are technically open to the public (Freedom of Information Act 1966), procuring data was still problematic. To begin, state legislatures do not retain staff data for more than a few years. Staff salary records going back to the 1990s was irretrievable in both California and Illinois. Additionally, California makes it very difficult to obtain any data through FOIA requests, namely because there is no strict deadline by which they must produce the data and because in the Assembly, you are not given direct access to the staff member collecting your data for you. In contrast, Illinois adheres strictly to the "prompt" response required by FOIA. They are required to respond to you within seven business days, and may ask for an extension of up to seven more business days to compile your data (Madigen 2004).

The limitations in my data stem primarily from my inability to obtain salary data stretching back to the 1990s from either state. Illinois was able to provide me with salary data from 2004 on and the California State Senate was able to give me salary data from 1999 to the present. I was able to retrieve staff-salary data for the California State Assembly from databases kept by *The Sacramento Bee*, but I never received any data from the Assembly directly. Interestingly, even the *Sacramento Bee* does not archive their legislative staff-salary data. This general dismissal of legislative staff is, I believe, indicative of the overall understatement of the importance of legislative staff in the political system. The lack of historical data from the 1990s significantly hampered my ability to directly correlate any changes I saw in

salary data to the institution of term limits in California. Nevertheless, I still find the data useful and informative for this narrative.

I was able to obtain better data on years of experience. California keeps some record of years of service over time, or at least hire dates for employees. I obtained data on years of service for 1990, 1997, 2008, and 2009 from both the Assembly and the Senate. This allowed me to look at levels of staff experience before and after term limits in California and to more accurately attribute changes as flowing directly from the institution of term limits. I was also able to obtain years of service for the Illinois House of Representatives for 2007 and 2009. This allowed me to do some comparison of data between states as well, although not over time between states.

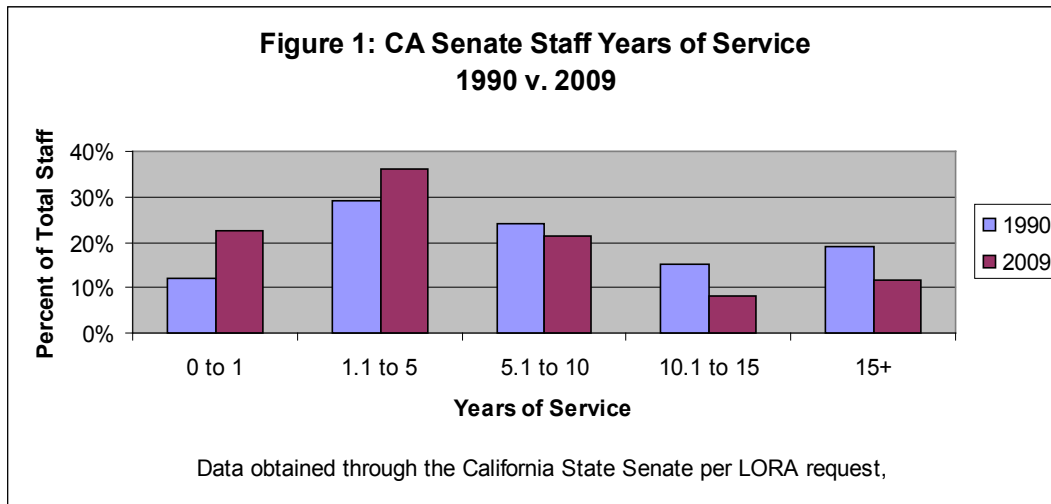
3. Findings

There have been measurable changes over the last 20 years in both the level of experience of staff and the salaries paid to staff in California. The California Senate has experienced a significant drop in the percentage of experienced staff overall while the Assembly has remained relatively unscathed and has actually managed a slightly higher percentage of experienced staff overall after term limits. These changes have put California staff pretty much on par with Illinois staff in terms of years of experience by 2009. We can assume from the numbers that California enjoyed a more experienced body of legislative staff than Illinois prior to term limits. However, along with this recent drop in experience California has simultaneously increased staff salaries, at least since 2006, at a faster rate than Illinois.

Level of Staff Experience

Levels of staff experience in the California Assembly and Senate have always been divergent, as mentioned earlier. The Senate has traditionally been able to maintain a higher level of experience over all than the Assembly. This is partially because senators tend to be elected from the Assembly, taking already seasoned staff with them from the Assembly to the Senate. However, term limits have altered this traditional phenomenon and somewhat leveled the playing field in staff experience.

As Figure 1 shows, the California Senate has seen a steep decline in experienced staff since term limits passed in 1990. The first column shows levels of staff experience before term limits went into effect in 1996. Staff with 1.1 to 5 years of experience held the largest percent of staff (29%), but the percent of staff with 5.1 to 10 and 15 plus years of experience remained high (24% and 19% respectively). That means that 58% of the Senate staffers in 1990 had over 5 years of experience,

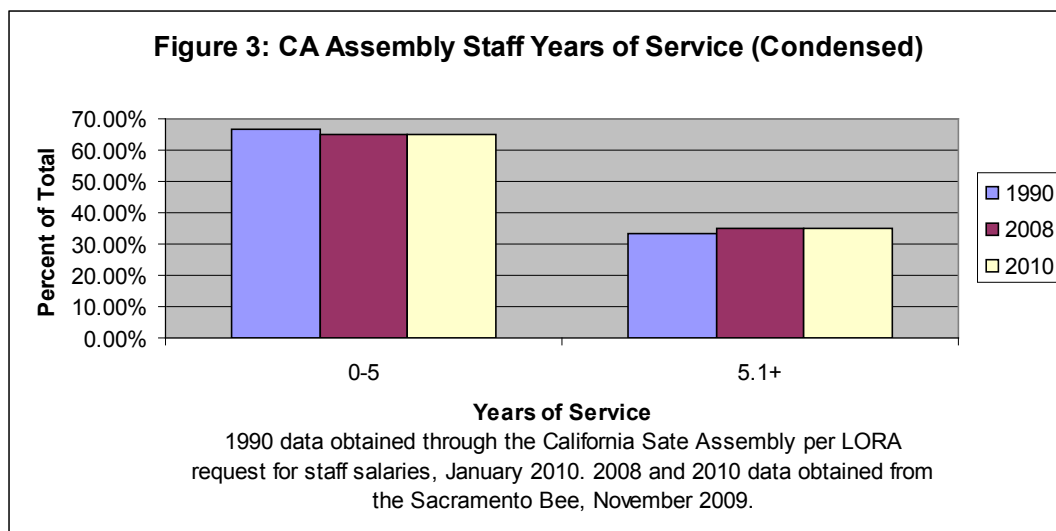
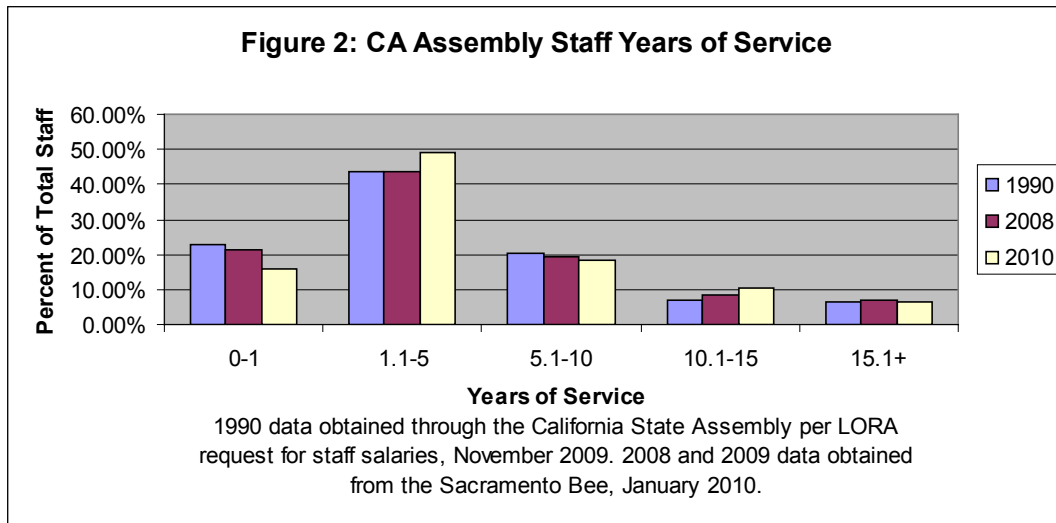


leaving 42% with less than 5 years of experience. By 2009, the percent of staff with less than 5 years of experience had risen to nearly 59%, leaving 41% of staff with over 5 years of experience. The number of staff with more than 15 years of experience was down from 19% to 12%. Staff with 10.1 to 15 years of experience had dropped from 15% to 8%. Meanwhile, the number of staff with 0 to 1 years of experience leapt 10%, from 11% to 22.5%. These are significant changes.

The Assembly, however, has managed a slight rise in staff experience levels since 1990. Figure 2 shows that the number of staff with between 10.1 and 15 years of experience working for the state legislature has been steadily increasing since 1990. The Assembly continues to possess a much less experienced staff base overall than the Senate; only 35% of the Assembly's staff boasts over 5 years of experience to the Senate's 41%. Nevertheless, the Assembly has managed to increase the number of staff with between 10.1 and 15 years of experience from 8.6% to 10.5%. On the whole, though, the Assembly had seen relatively little change since term limits.

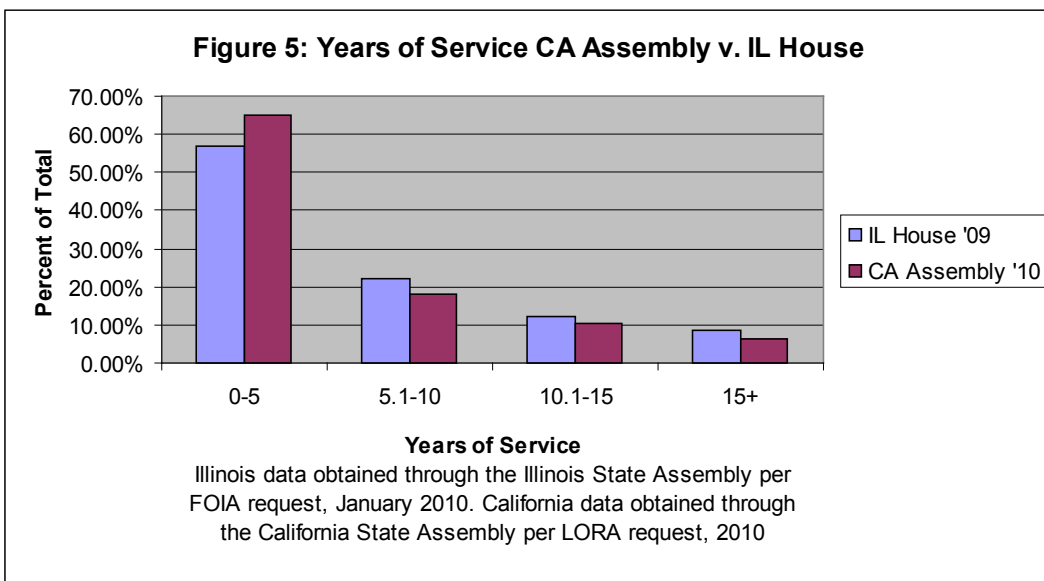
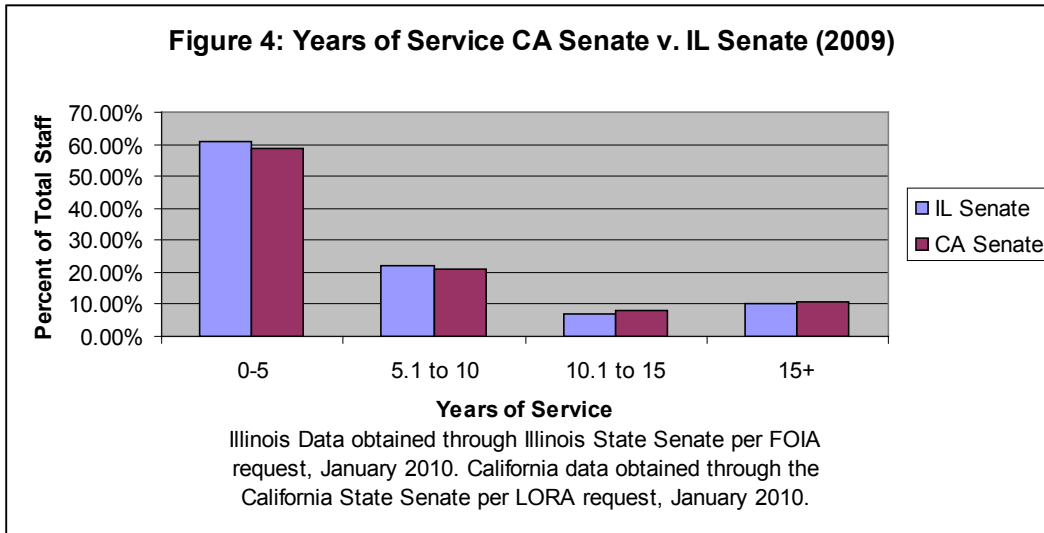
These changes make sense when we put them in context with what we know about the Assembly and the Senate in California. Because the Senate has traditionally been the repository for more experienced staff, it would make sense that any event that may have significantly altered the number of experienced staff would manifest itself in the Senate. It appears that, despite the relative power gain that experienced staff may enjoy post-term limits, the growth in job instability has proved too much for many older staffers. For younger staffers with few obligations, job instability may not be so difficult.

But staffers who have worked for the legislature for more than five years may be looking to start a family, or to pay their children's college tuition, and cannot be



worried about finding a new job every time their legislator is termed out or loses in a competitive primary.

However, the drain on experience and expertise in the California State Legislature is troubling. If staff is truly the new seat of institutional memory within the State Legislature, and if legislators are increasingly becoming dependant on knowledgeable staff, a decrease in the percentage of experienced staff in the legislature is worrisome. With the loss of experienced staff, the Senate will be unable to function at the same capacity it was once able to function. Kousser argues that we have already begun to see the repercussions: the decline in the quality of legislation, the inability of the legislature to tackle big issues, like budget reform and water



parceling, and the lack of quality leadership (Kousser 2005). Additionally, loss of experienced staff leaves power concentrated in the hands of the few experienced staff which choose to remain, reducing the checks and balances built into a system where power is meant to be shared by many.

There may be other factors contributing to the decline of experienced staffers. The last 10 years or so have seen the retirement of many of the post-WWII Baby Boomers. These retirements may well have contributed to the fall in experienced staff in the California Senate. Additionally, even after the fall, California seems to

be on par with professionalized Illinois as far as staff experience goes (Figure 4 and 5). In 2009, 58.79% of staff working for the California Senate had less than 5 years of experience to Illinois' 60.92%. The two shared an almost identical percentage of staff with over 15 years of experience (CA-10.34%, IL-10.76%). It is the Assembly which does not live up to its Illinois counterpart.

Even with its marginal gains in levels of staff experience, the California Assembly falls behind the Illinois House in staff experience. In 2009, the percentage of staff in California Assembly with less than 5 years of experience was almost 10% higher than in the Illinois House (CA-65.1%, IL-56.92%). The Assembly also showed lower percentages than the Illinois House in all of the more experienced staff categories. Despite the relative gains the California Assembly has made in increasing its percent of experienced staff, it still does not enjoy the experience levels of Illinois.

Staff Salaries

Salary is generally a good indication of worth. That being said, public servants have always struggled with not being paid what they are worth. States can allocate only so much money to pay their employees. In fact, it was not until relatively recently that states began to pay their employees and legislators professional salaries. Prior to the 1960s professionalization movement, most legislatures met part time and legislators and staff were paid part-time salaries. By 1996, the top five professionalized legislatures all paid their members over \$50,000 a year (Kousser 2005). Although staff salaries may be artificially low due to state budget restraints, salary remains an interesting factor in attempting to externally quantify power. A comparison of average and median salaries in the California Senate versus the Illinois House shows that California consistently pays its staff more than Illinois. Additionally, the data shows that staff salaries in California increased at a faster rate than in Illinois between 2006 and 2009.

The average salary for a staffer in California was higher than in Illinois in both 2006 and 2009. Figure 6 shows that in 2006, California's average salary was \$59,334.72 while Illinois' average salary was \$48,460.43. Likewise, in 2009 the average staff salary in California was \$67,366.56 to Illinois' \$48,011.52. Additionally, the data shows that this divergence in salaries is not simply due to a few exorbitantly high salaries in California skewing the data toward higher salaries. The median salary in 2006 was still \$14,493.70 more than in Illinois. In 2009, the median salary was \$20,777.40 more in California than in Illinois.

Moreover, it's not that California's staff salaries were simply higher than Illinois' staff salaries. California's staff salaries also grew at a faster rate than Illinois' staff salaries from 2006 to 2009. In 2006, the difference between average

Figure 6: Comparative Salaries, Illinois House v. California Senate

		Illinois House	California Senate	Difference
2006	Average	\$48,460.43	\$59,334.72	10,874.29
	Median	\$39,650.30	\$54,144	\$14,493.70
2009	Average	\$48,011.52	\$67,366.56	\$19,355.04
	Median	\$39,942.60	\$60,720	\$20,777.40

Illinois data obtained from the Illinois State House per FOIA request, February 2010. California data obtained from the California State Senate per LORA request, January 2010.

staff salaries in California and Illinois was \$10,874.29. By 2009 the gap had nearly doubled, increasing by nearly \$10,000 to \$19,355.04. This is a huge increase in inequality between California and Illinois in a three-year period. Likewise, the difference in median salary increased from \$14,493.70 in 2006 to \$20,777.40 in 2009. This means that even if staff salaries in the California Senate were, for some reason, higher than in the Illinois Senate, say because the Senate is the “upper house” and the House is the “lower house,” there is still a marked difference in the *rate* at which staff salaries are increasing in California versus in Illinois. This is another reason to suspect that staff worth in California is increasing.

4. Evaluating Hypotheses

To circle back to my hypotheses, I had expected that staff would have more years of experience after term limits than prior to term limits. I found, however, that years of staff service had actually declined considerably in the California Senate after term limits and had grown only incrementally in the Assembly. This furthers one of the conclusions from section 2, that although staff have benefited in some ways from term limits, they have been negatively impacted in other ways. Job instability has taken a toll on levels of staff experience in the California Senate, historically the repository for experienced staff. This might suggest that not only has California lost experienced legislators due to term limits, but it has lost institutional memory which rested within experienced staff as well. However, my findings also suggest that the changes in staff experience are not necessarily detrimental to California. Even with declines in staff experience, California’s staff experience levels are almost equal to those of Illinois, another professionalized legislature.

My predictions about staff salaries were more accurate. I expected to find staff salaries increasing in California over time, and I hypothesized that salaries in California would be significantly greater than salaries in Illinois. My data supported this hypothesis, though I was only able to compare the California Senate to the Illinois House and was only able to obtain data from 2006 and 2009. California's staff salaries were higher than Illinois' in both 2006 and 2009. California's staff salaries also increased at a faster rate than Illinois'. This data supports the hypothesis that staff in California have become more valuable after term limits and that the California State Legislature has made at least some effort to retain experienced staff.

IV.

“You know, the danger is that a handful of staffers can have a lot of power, and the leadership isn't around long enough to remove those powerful staff members.”—Assembly Chief of Staff

This final section discusses the implications of my findings about the effects of term limits on legislative staff in Sacramento. First, I discuss what these changes in staff power mean for democracy in California and both the positive and negative impacts of term limits. Second, I offer some possible solutions to the problems I argue term limits have caused for the legislators, staff, and citizens of California. Finally, I suggest avenues for further research and ways in which my data on term limits could be improved.

1. Summary

Through a series of interviews and data analyses, I show that term limits have indeed had marked consequences on the power of legislative staff. In some ways, term limits have increased the relative power of legislative staff. Term limits have increased the duties of legislative staff from simply gathering impartial information for legislators to teaching and advising legislators on policy issues and taking on more responsibility within the office. Term limits were also followed by the institutionalization of the chief of staff, a professional confidante and personal advisor to the legislator. Moreover, staffers after term limits have more opportunities to rise in the ranks through “job hopping.”

But in other ways, term limits have undermined the power of staff. Term limits have increased job instability, which has significantly reduced the years of service of most Senate staff. In some cases, term limits have also strained the relationship and loyalty between members and their staff. Thus, I argue that term limits have increased the potential power of staff, but diminished the overall competence of staff.

The shift in staff power raises an important question: are term limits threatening democracy in California? Staff certainly has more sway over policy post-term limits. Section 1.5, Article IV of the California Constitution, which lays out the term limits language imposed by Proposition 140, says this about the intended goals of a term limited legislature:

“To restore a free and democratic system of fair elections, and to encourage qualified candidates to seek public office, the people find and declare that the powers of incumbency must be limited. Retirement benefits must be restricted, state-financed incumbent staff and support services limited, and limitations placed upon the number of terms which may be served (California State Constitution).”

But have term limits truly created a more “free and democratic system?” Legislators, not staffers, are elected in a democratic process to govern. It is legislators’ names, not staffers’ names, which appear on the ballots. And despite initial cuts to the legislative operating budget, Proposition 140 was unsuccessful in limiting “state-financed incumbent staff,” instead increasing the power of incumbent staff. If term limits are forcing so much power into the hands of staff, then term limits threaten the very principles of democracy on which this nation is founded.

That is not to say that term limits have not come with their benefits. Demographic shifts in legislators and legislative staff show that term limits can advance better democratic representation. Minority and female representation has increased. “Term limits have broken down that barrier of entry for both legislators and staffer,” notes a high ranking member of the Republican leadership in the Assembly. Term limits have also, for better or for worse, increased the ability of the state legislature to shift directions on policy issues, argues one Assembly committee consultant: “Term limits have allowed the legislature to make more dramatic shifts in policy. Legislation used to be this glacial process. Now it goes faster, the quality is not as good, but historic things are being passed and the legislature can change directions relatively quickly.” Finally, term limits killed the stranglehold that incumbent legislators held over the state legislature. Politicians seeking to reform term limits should not forget these benefits.

It is also important to keep in mind that some staff power is to be encouraged. I do not argue against the fact that staff is an essential element of professional legislatures. The importance of good staff is not to be underestimated. It is only when staff is forced to take on additional burdens due to an incapable legislature that we must begin to question the effects of term limits on our democracy.

2. Solutions

The last decade has seen numerous reform efforts to term limits in California. One solution to the problems with current term limits would be to combine the

six and eight year caps on years of service for each branch and allow members to serve a combination of 14 years in one *or* both branches. This is similar to the “Fresh Start for Term Limits” ballot initiative that will appear on the November 2011 statewide ballot, which reduces the number of years a member may serve in the legislature from 14 years to 12 years but allows the member to serve all 12 years in one chamber (Bowen 2011). This solution would allow members time to develop the expertise and knowledge base that they lack under current term limits legislation. With more experienced legislators, the role of staff in policy advising can shrink again to pre-term limits levels. As legislators become more experienced and less dependant on staff, relationships between legislators and staff should improve as well. However, this solution still caps legislators’ experience levels at 12 years and would essentially level the Senate (traditionally the “upper” house, with more senior members) to the Assembly, potentially obliterating another check in the democratic system of checks and balances.

Another solution would be to keep restrictions on years of service in each chamber, but lengthen them from six years in the Assembly and eight in the Senate to 10 years in the Assembly and 12 in the Senate. This solution is more radical, because it allows a potential political career of 22 years for a California legislator, long enough to create the loathsome “career politician” which term-limits advocates fought so hard to eliminate. We must remember, however, that individuals running for office even under today’s strict term limits legislation are largely career politicians, coming up from positions in local government and taking state office for awhile often as a stepping stone to another position in city, state, or national politics (Kousser 2005). Setting this argument aside, then, this solution offers potentially more experienced legislators without letting incumbency advantage run rampant. This is especially important for the political leadership in both chambers. Staff working under more experienced Assembly and Senate leadership would see their current policy power significantly decrease. However, many of the benefits of term limits may be erased under this model. Legislation would most likely resume the glacial pace of old, and legislator and staff demographics would take time to reflect the ever-changing state demographics.

A third solution would be to keep current term limits intact, but remove the lifetime ban. This would allow ex-legislators to run for office again after a few-years break. This proposal is similar to California’s Proposition 131, which was posed as an alternative to Prop 140 on the 1990 ballot (Price 1992). Again, this policy change is more radical than the first because in theory it places no limit on the number of years in total an individual may serve in the state legislature. However, it keeps many of the benefits of term limits in place while allowing more flexibility and experience. This solution, however, would be particularly problematic for staff as job instability would be virtually unchanged. Competence of staff would thus

remain low. Additionally, this solution may not solve the problem of excessive staff power. Under this model, though staff may not house the institutional memory of the legislature they continue to represent the continuity within the legislature. This may grant staff similar power as under current term limits legislation.

3. Further Studies

This article is only the beginning of what I hope will be an exciting discourse on legislative staff in California and the effects of term limits on the power structure in state legislatures. Studies to verify the findings presented here might begin by comparing California with other non-term limited, professionalized legislatures, such as New York, Michigan, or Massachusetts. Other studies using term limited legislatures that have better staff salary data from before the 1990s term limits wave would also be useful in eliminating confounding variables, such as may be present in this study. This data would solidify the correlation between term limits and shifts in the power structure of state legislatures.

I hope that this study can also act as a launching point for other studies on legislative staff and their role in the democratic system. Political staff is a powerful tool in democracy and worthy of investigation by political scientists. Staff has come a long way since the “information gathering” days; it’s about time political science paid more attention to the role staff play in the political system.

Appendix

Figure 1: Content Analysis for Interviews

Content Analysis for Interview Conducted January 2010 (by mention)

	INF	DEF	EDU	A v. S	POL	EX	SHIFT	IE
Interview 1	1	1	1	1	2	2		
Interview 2	1	1	1		2	4	1	
Interview 3	1		1			2		1
Interview 4		1	1		1			2
Interview 5								
Interview 6	2			1	1	1		2
Interview 7					1	1		2
Interview 8		1	1		1			
Interview 9	1		1		1			1
Interview 10			1			1		1
Interview 11					1	1		
Interview 12	1			1	1			
Interview 13	1		1	1				1
Interview 14/15			2	1	2			1
Interview 16								1
Interview 17	2	1	2		2			
Interview 18								
	10	5	12	5	15	12	1	12

	TURN	HOP	BEN	REL	MEM	COS	DEM	LEAD
Interview 1								
Interview 2								
Interview 3								
Interview 4	1	2			1			
Interview 5			1					
Interview 6			1	2	1			
Interview 7	1	1		1		1		
Interview 8	1	1	2	1			2	
Interview 9	1				1			
Interview 10	1				1		1	
Interview 11		1			1			
Interview 12	1	1						
Interview 13				1		1		
Interview 14/15	3	2		2	1			1
Interview 16		1					1	2
Interview 17				1	2		1	
Interview 18	1			1				
	10	9	4	9	8	2	5	3

Key

INF: staff has more influence

DEF: definitional

EDU: staff educating members

A v. S: Assembly vs. Senate

POL: political staff c. committee staff tensions

EX: example

SHIFT: ability of legislature to shift quickly

IE: institutional efforts to keep senior staff

TURN: turnover

HOP: job hopping

BEN: benefits to keeping senior staff

REL: relationship changes between staff and members

MEM: how term limits have effected the members

COS: institutionalization of the chief of staff

DEM: demographic shift in staff and members

LEAD: leadership offices

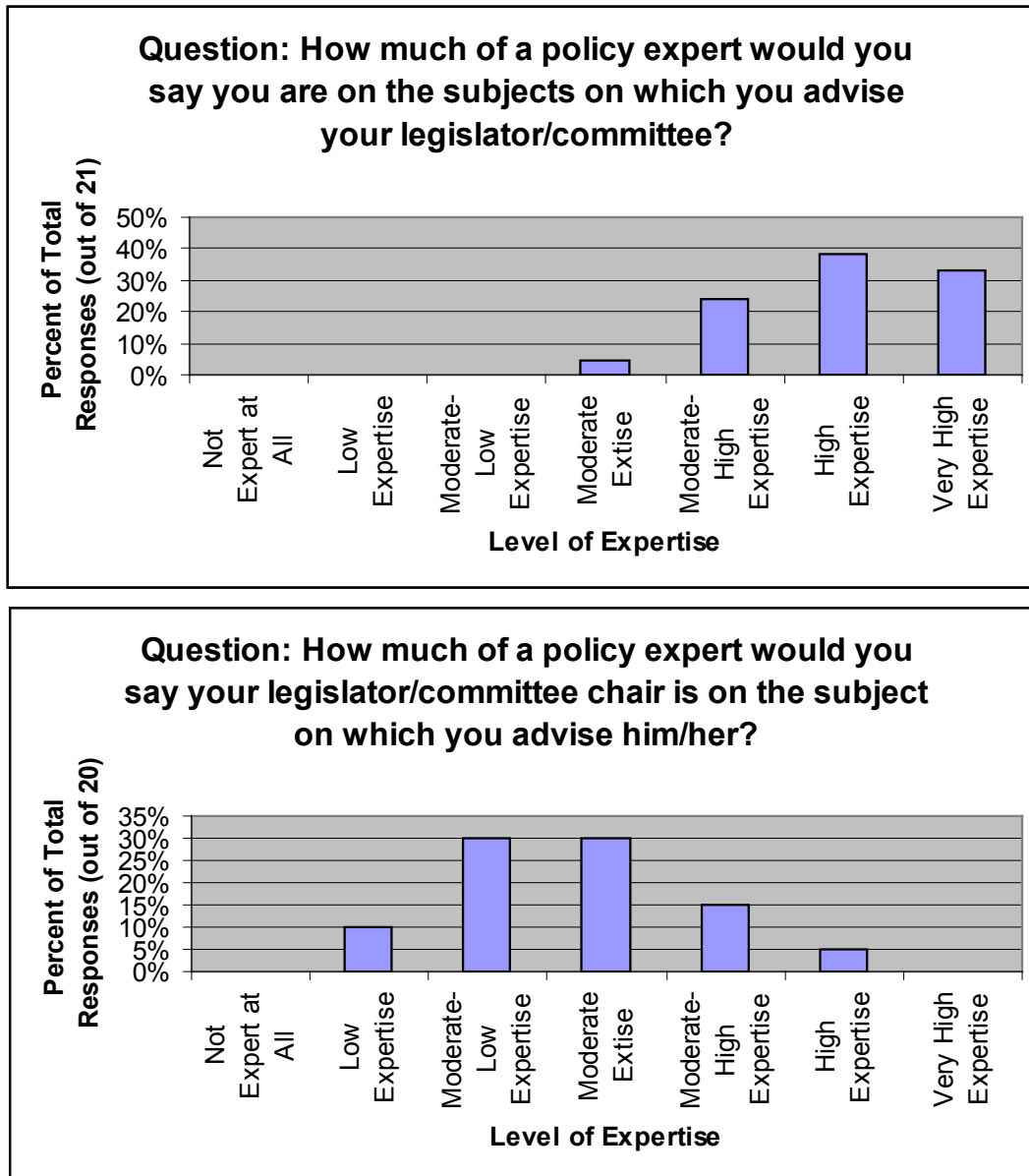
Figure 2: Interview Questions

1. What year did you start working in the Capitol?
2. Can you think of an example where term limits changed your job, either adding or subtracting responsibilities? With term limits, have you seen a shift in your responsibilities as a staffer? Do you ever find yourself picking up responsibilities which used to belong to legislators or committees?
3. Can you think of an example of how the relationship between legislative staff, legislators, and committees has changed since term limits? [For example, do you feel that staff knows the key players better than the legislators? Are *staffers* key players more often than pre-term limits?]
4. Do you feel that term limits have affected the *kind* of staffers present in Sacramento, by which I mean do new legislators bring in their own, all new staff, or is there more of a continuum of senior staffers?
5. Has the compensation and value of senior staff changed since term limits? [Does senior staff get paid more? Are they sought after?]

6. Have you ever considered running for public office?

*Questions in Brackets were used as follow-up questions should the interviewees seem lost or confused by the question, but interviewees were encouraged to provide their own responses before follow-up questions were asked.

Figure 3: Online Poll Results



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