

City council term limits emerge as campaign issue

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Three council hopefuls are promising to sit no more than two terms if elected, prompting debate again over council term limits.

"Politics are more of a calling than a profession," Mark Taylor said yesterday, as he joined fellow city council candidates Stephen Blais and Allan Hubley in promising to serve a maximum of two terms if elected in Bay, Cumberland and Kanata South wards respectively.

"A fresh perspective is always good, new blood is always good," Blais said.

Hubley added councillors should be able to get their work done in eight years.

In the 2006 election, every incumbent councillor seeking re-election won or was acclaimed. Current councillors Steve Desmiches and Bob Monette have supported the idea of term limits.

Blais is calling for all election candidates to consider making the same two-term pledge.

With Bay Coun. Alex Cullen

running for mayor, the ward race is wide open for Taylor and two others who have filed election papers. Blais and Hubley are the only candidates who have registered so far in their wards.

Caroline Andrew, a professor and municipal politics expert at the University of Ottawa, said a problem with limiting terms will be for councillors who aspire to be mayor. Sometimes it takes longer than eight years to fully understand city-wide policies before someone can pursue the city's top job, Andrew

said.

At the same time, maximum term limits would encourage candidates to tackle city-wide issues instead of being too focused on ward issues.

"There has been a lot of criticism that people are too ward-centred," Andrew said.

One candidate registered yesterday to run in the fall election. Robin Lawrance filed papers to run in Gloucester-Southgate, currently held by Diane Deans.

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