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U.S. Term Limits Says Grand Rapids a Lesson for Michigan Legislators

Palm Beach, FL – U.S. Term Limits, the nation’s oldest and largest term limits advocacy group, today applauded term limits activists in Grand Rapids on their victory and said the result should be a lesson for Michigan lawmakers aiming to weaken their own term limits.

“While the people of Grand Rapids were voting to enact eight-year term limits on Tuesday, the Senate Majority leader was busy plotting to kill his own eight-year limits in the lame duck session,” said USTL President Philip Blumel. “Either he isn’t paying attention, or has deliberately chosen to ignore the people’s will.”

He is referring to State Sen. Randy Richardville, who has doggedly pushed to weaken term limits despite the objections of Michigan citizens. A recent Google poll showed that only 10 percent of state residents favor a change in term limits, which passed with 59 percent of the vote in 1992.

"In the 90's despite clear public support the legislature refused to call a vote on term limits. Michigan volunteers gathered signatures, raised money, and spent countless hours of personal time to initiate a vote on term limits," said Greg Schmid. Schmid has been an active supporter in the Michigan term limits movement since the 1980s. "Current legislators who are only in office because of term limits are plotting to undermine voter approved term limits. Why? So they can hold onto a cushy job and keep their lobbyist friends happy."

U.S. Term Limits believes that legislators create a conflict of interest by messing with their own term limits.

“In any other sector, an employee is expected to respect the wishes of his employer. In this case, that’s the voters who signed off on term limits,” Blumel said. “Voters have no reason to accept leaders who claim to know better than they do.”

The success in Grand Rapids has been part of a national trend. In the 19 municipal or county races of 2014 deciding whether to enact or retain term limits, voters selected the pro-term limits option 91 percent of the time (20 out of 22).