

No Uncertain Terms

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Signers of USTL Term Limits Pledge Head to General Election

Among the 187 primary candidates who signed the Term Limits Pledge is Arizona U.S. Senate candidate Ann Kirkpatrick, a congresswoman who won her Democratic primary and is now taking on John McCain, the former presidential candidate and 30-year incumbent, in the general election.

Another prominent U.S. Senate candidate, Florida's Marco Rubio, was among the presidential candidates who pledged to fight for congressional term limits should he be elected president. (Albeit late in the campaign, the eventual GOP presidential nominee, Donald Trump, has also now voiced support for congressional term limits — see page 2.)

As U.S. Senator, Rubio co-sponsored a term limits amendment bill. “No elected official is so good that they’re irreplaceable,”

Trump endorses congressional term limits

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IL Governor Bruce Rauner Still Wants Term Limits

Many defenders of Illinois's corrupt political establishment probably expected Bruce Rauner, a businessman new to politics when elected in 2014, to have thrown in the towel by now on his Reform Agenda so that they could all get back to Corruption As Usual.

But the governor never dropped the issues of term limits and the other reforms he's been advocating. And this fall, he has been campaigning against incumbents on the same themes that dominated his election campaign two years ago and his time so far in office.

“We've been going down a bad road for a long time,” the governor said on the campaign trail this fall. “The people of Illinois demanded reforms two years ago for term limits and fairer maps when 600,000 petitions were signed for

he has said, “and having term limits will ensure that our legislative branch is continuously infused with new people and ideas. We have term limits in Florida, and I saw the benefit of having our legislators serve for a limited time and then return home to live under the laws they crafted. Term limits are long overdue in Washington.”

Rubio has also endorsed the Article V convention route to proposing a constitu-

(Continued on Page 3)



**Former Staff Sergeant
Brian Mast**



**Congresswoman
Ann Kirkpatrick**

term limits and 600,000 were signed for fair maps. But the entrenched politicians who control the legislature said no and they used the courts to overturn and reject the petitions, and keep it off the ballot. We can't let this stand. We've got to get power away from the politicians and get it back to the public...

“We need two critical reforms. One is redistricting reform so we can have competitive general elections. The other is term limits on elected officials. Term limits will be the single fastest way to change the culture in state government. Rather than patronage and cronyism and people working for a pension and for personal benefit, we'll have people who are there for the right reasons, short-term, make

(Continued on Page 3)



President's Corner

BY PHILIP BLUMEL

The Republican nominee for president, Donald Trump, has just endorsed congressional term limits as we go to press.

At a rally in Colorado Springs on October 18, Trump announced: "If elected President, I will push for a constitutional amendment to impose term limits on all members of Congress," as a means of "draining the swamp" in DC. At a later rally, Trump made clear that he supports three two-year terms in the U.S. House and two six-year terms in the U.S. Senate, which is the term limit specified by the U.S. Term Limits Amendment.

If Donald Trump does become president, his voice on behalf of congressional term limits will be most welcome. But we're not waiting for the politicians in Washington to act. Instead, we are going straight for D.C.'s jugular by organizing states in a Term Limits Convention.

No matter who our next President is, he or she will still have to work with a dysfunctional Congress made up of career politicians. We can stop the ruling class only by returning to a citizen legislature.

U.S. Term Limits has just launched a massive campaign to pass the national Term Limits Amendment in Michigan in November. At the moment, Michigan is the only one of our target states where the legislature is in session. So it is our immediate top priority. The odds of passing our legislation are excellent.

Convincing the states to call for the Term Limits Convention is our best hope of slapping term limits on the members of the U.S. House and U.S. Senate. Our amendment has already been approved by Florida. Now we must focus on Michigan.

However, we have so much work to do. And we need your help.

We need to run more ads in Michigan. We need to flood the Michigan legislature with petitions urging them to pass the Term Limits Amendment. Remember, if we convince 34 states to call for the Term Limits Convention, the professional politicians in Congress can't stop us. We *will* impose Term Limits on Congress.

That's why this Michigan campaign is so important. Visit <http://bit.ly/2dHsQRr> to donate. Even a modest contribution will help us run specially targeted ads on the Internet aimed at Michigan state legislators.

Visit Phil Blumel's blog at pblumel.blogspot.com.

Visit USTL's Facebook page at on.fb.me/U0blkG.

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"It is not the function of our Government to keep the citizen from falling into error; it is the function of the citizen to keep the Government from falling into error."

-- U.S. Supreme Court in *American Communications Association v. Douds*

Pledge Signers (Cont'd from page 1)

tional term limits amendment, a method that would enable the states to ratify the amendment without its first getting an okay from Congress.

Pledge signers Brian Mast, Matt Gaetz, Ron DeSantis and Tom Rooney won U.S. House primaries in Florida.

“Career politicians put themselves ahead of what’s best for the country,” Ann Kirkpatrick says in one of her campaign ads (bit.ly/2dE1vzH). “Things have gotten so bad that I’m convinced we need term limits.”

In an op-ed for the *Arizona Republic*, she stated that she supports “limiting service in the U.S. House of Representatives to three terms and limiting service in the Senate to two terms, limits endorsed by members of both parties.”

That is an echo of the wording of the U.S. Term Limit Pledge, which commits signers to “cosponsor and vote for the U.S. Term Limits Amendment of three (3) House terms and two (2) Senate terms and no longer limit.”

Other primary winners in Arizona who have signed the pledge include Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu, Republican nominee in the state’s first congressional district; and David Schweikert, an incumbent pledge signer who has introduced a constitutional term limit bill in the U.S. House.

Primary winners in Florida who have signed the pledge



U.S. Senator Marco Rubio signing Presidential Term Limits Pledge.

include incumbent Representatives Ron DeSantis and Representative Tom Rooney. Fellow pledge signers Brian Mast, a veteran, and Matt Gaetz would be serving their first terms in Congress if elected.

Illinois Reform Fight (Cont'd from page 1)

decisions that are common sense for the people of Illinois, then get out of office. Career politicians have failed us at every level for years. More of the same isn’t going to fix our problems.

“So talk to your legislators. Put [term limits] on the ballot. We need to put pressure on the General Assembly and give people the voice.”

Rauner is also asking Illinois voters to sign a petition at FixIllinois.com in support of the reform. According to the site, visitors who supply their John Hancock are “signing this petition to tell legislators that the people of Illinois demand term limits.”

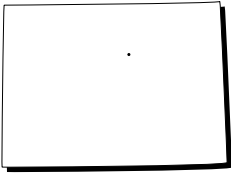
Two years ago, state lawmakers were shocked when the new governor’s team raised — and didn’t quickly drop — term limits in the first budget negotiations of his adminis-



tration. The popular issue of term limits was just supposed to be something to help him get elected, then he shed immediately once he had gone through a few empty motions on their behalf.

He wasn’t supposed to *mean* it.

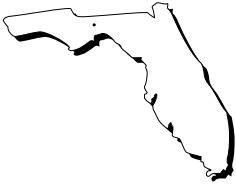
Term Limits



COLORADO

Fort Lupton, CO. City council members voted 5-2 to ask voters to repeal the three-term term limits of the mayor and council members. Fort Lupton voters rejected another repeal measure just two years ago.

Boulder County, CO. Commissioners referred a measure on the November ballot to allow district attorneys to serve up to four consecutive terms (they currently serve up to three consecutive four-year terms).



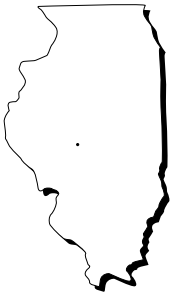
FLORIDA

Orange County, FL. Charter Amendment 2 and Charter Amendment 3 on Orange County's November ballot provide for changing constitutional officers to nonpartisan charter officers who are term-limited to four consecutive four-year terms. Similar measures were passed in 2014; but county officers, unable to abide even so loose a limit, sued to overturn the measure. A court's decision in favor of the lawsuit is being appealed. But if the appeal fails, the hope is that if the new ballot measures are passed, they are rigorous enough to withstand challenge.



HAWAII

Honolulu, HI. Honolulu voters will decide in November whether to lengthen the maximum tenure of the mayor and of city council members from two four-year terms to three four years. "I think it's bad for democracy," State Senator Sam Slom says of the ballot question. "Elective office is supposed to be a privilege and responsibility, not a career with a lot of salary, lots of perks, things like that."



ILLINOIS

Crestwood, IL. The Crestwood village board has referred a measure to the November ballot that would limit the town's elected officials to no more "than three consecutive four-year terms." This limit is also consecutive and non-retroactive. If passed, it would begin to limit tenure in April of 2017. We've seen this before. When city officials refer a slack term limit to the ballot, it usually means that although they hate term limits, they recognize their popularity and hope to deflect calls for stricter limits by offering voters a halfway reform.



LOUISIANA

Lafourche Parish, LA. The parish council voted 8-1 to let voters decide on December 10 whether council members should be limited to two consecutive four-year terms and whether parish presidents should be limited to three consecutive four-year terms. Only terms served after 2020 would count toward the limit. The lone dissenter is a councilman currently in his ninth term and 33rd year on the council.



MARYLAND

Montgomery County, MD. Activist Robin Ficker's ballot measure to limit the tenure of Montgomery County council members to a maximum of three terms ("Question B") has made it to the ballot. Although the tenure specified is one term more than that advocated by U.S. Term Limits, Question B is strong in other respects: in addition to counting a partial term as a full term, the measure is also retroactive, counting terms served prior to passage toward the term limit. (Should Question B pass, incumbents whose tenure already exceeds the new term limit would be able to finish serving their current term before being termed out.)

Unable to prevent Ficker's question from reaching the ballot, council members have crafted a competing measure that would prevent a partial term from being considered a full term for purposes of the term limit. Another opponent of term limits, former Councilman Tom Moore, has tried to get the ballot measure thrown out in court, on the basis of an alleged deficiency of petition signatures. But his suit failed.

A "No on B" committee has been formed to defeat the ballot measure. As we go to press, though, it has reportedly raised less than \$10,000 to devote to that end. Some two thirds of that money comes from current Montgomery County council members. Four of the contributors will be ousted after

in the News

their current term if voters pass Question B. On the positive side of the ledger, the Montgomery County Civic Federation recently voted 11-3 to endorse the measure.



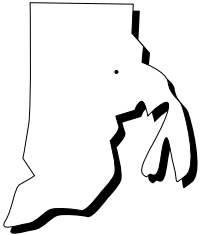
MICHIGAN

Walker, MI. The Walker city commission agreed to place a citizen-initiated question on the November ballot to limit the tenure of all city officials except the city clerk to two terms in office. A foe of the measure, Kyle Brethauer, says: “Term limits are a destructive policy on every level that tends to breed career politicians....” We expect he’ll next argue that term limits tend to prevent incumbents from being termed out of office.



OHIO

Kettering, OH. In 2012, Kettering voters passed a citizen initiative to term-limit the mayor and city council members. A council-referred question, Issue 36, would eliminate mayoral term limits and add another term to the the two-term council member limit. Ron Alban, who founded Citizens for a Better Kettering, which led the petition drive four years ago, suggests that the council “shows disrespect by rushing to place Issue 36 on the November 2016 ballot — knowing full well” that Issue 31 would also be on the ballot. Issue 31 would ban the city council from from proposing any amendments to the charter regarding term limits. U.S. Term Limits has been lending support to the efforts of Kettering term limit activists to defeat Issue 36 and pass Issue 31. We expect that Ohio state lawmakers observing the backlash in Kettering will be less likely to try to weaken or undo their own term limits, lest they suffer the same political fallout.



RHODE ISLAND

Westerly, RI. Westerly voters will be deciding a slate of council-referred measures on the November 8 ballot, including Question 2: “Shall Section 2-1-1 of the charter be amended to impose term limits for town councilors to no more than two (2) consecutive terms with the council electing a president every two years?” Questions 3 and 4 would impose term limits on planning and zoning board members and on school committee members.



TENNESSEE

Shelby County, TN. Enemies of term limits are suing to “return the offices [of five countywide officials] to their status as positions governed by the Tennessee Constitution.” Plaintiffs hope that doing so would lead to the annulling of the term limits on those positions. If the officers are regarded as falling under the purview of the state constitution rather than the county charter, county voters would no longer have the right to restrict their tenure. Voters approved a two-term limit for the five offices in 2008 after defeating a three-term limit for those offices in the same year.



AFRICA

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo this October, at least 50 protesters died in clashes with security officers after President Joseph Kabila made clear that he would be pursuing a third term despite the constitutional term limit on his office. And now, following Kabila’s lead, the country’s electoral commission has announced that a presidential election originally scheduled for November of 2016 will be delayed until December of 2018 — a de facto lengthening of Kabila’s tenure that gives him time more time to deal with the blowback before dealing with the further complications of even a nominal election.

In Burundi, the toll is even worse: 564 people are believed to have been executed by the government since the spring of 2015, when protests erupted in response to President Pierre Nkurunziza’s plans to run for a third term.

Although dictatorial heads of state believe term limits on themselves are eminently dispensable, the citizens of their countries tend to believe the opposite. The treatment of those who object to plans to get rid of term limits too often illustrates in the most horrifying way why those term limits are so important.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

End Decades-Long Congressional Tenure

“The longer congressmen stay, the more they adopt the Washington point of view—that Big Government is good, that government should provide special advantages for special interests, and that the greatest sins are to reduce government spending and to provide equal treatment for all.

“Term limits would put an end to the professional congressman who serves for decades. It would break up the networks of long-serving congressmen and lobbyists....

“Term limits alone will not turn a professional legislature into a citizen legislature... However, without term limits it is unlikely we will ever return to the citizen legislature that was a foundation of the government established by the Founders.”

— **“Time for Term Limits for Congress,” Peter Thomas and Charles Orndorff, *Highland Community News*, October 4, 2016, bit.ly/2dBVqUo**

Exhibit A in Disasters of Endless Incumbency: Obamacare

“We have seen the disastrous effects of what happens when politicians stay in Washington for too long. Obamacare is a prime example. Congress imposed a hugely complicated, expensive, and unwieldy law on Americans and then illegally exempted themselves from the most expensive aspects. That’s why the importance of implementing term limits, especially in Congress, cannot be overstated.”

— **U.S. Senator David Vitter, quoted in “Anti-Establishment Mood Could Spur Revival of Term Limits,” Fred Lucas, *The Daily Signal*, September 7, 2016, bit.ly/2edQ3hx**

Term Limits as if There Were No Term Limits at All

“Recently, Mark Scott resigned just three months or so shy of the end of his term....

“The notion that stepping down in the last three-to-four months of the final two-year term would nullify your overall term limit is ludicrous, and it is certainly not the intent that voters voted on. I can assure you, this is not what I envisioned when I introduced this measure, and I don’t think this is what the voters envisioned when they voted on this measure either.

“If the Mark Scott method of circumvention is correct, any council person or mayor could drop out prior to the completion of their term limit, to run and win indefinitely. This is certainly not the intent of the rule the voters put in place.”

— **“Scott is circumventing the intent of term limits,” Kevin Kieschnick, *Corpus Christi Caller Times*, September 24, 2016, bit.ly/2e91k48**



Preserve the Democratic Spirit in Boulder

“Boulder’s general public has so much to offer. We want to be a city that is open and inclusive, sharing and diverse, growing and learning, all of the time. Term limits promote such an environment, an environment where qualified members are encouraged to offer their names for public service. Let’s keep the spirit of democratic and equitable ideals relevant to our community.

“Please join me in voting for Amendment 302 this November.”

— **“Yes to City Council term limits,” Matt Kobzik, *Daily Camera*, September 16, 2016, bit.ly/2dB571N**

Illinois Political Class Versus Illinois Voters

“Rauner favors term limits for state legislators. Democrats have job security, thanks in large part to the financial support of grateful public- and private-sector unions. Illinois voters overwhelmingly want term limits, which Democratic politicians oppose because, they say, such limits restrict voters’ ability to get what they want.

“Illinois is a leading indicator of increasing national childishness — an unwillingness to will the means for the ends that it wills. Nationally, state and local governments’ pensions have somewhere between \$1 trillion and \$4 trillion in unfunded pension liabilities, depending on, among other things, assumptions about returns on pension funds’ investments....

“The federal government can continue to print money. There are bankruptcy procedures for cities but not for states. So, high-tax Illinois will continue bleeding the population and businesses, but with one contented cohort — the Democratic political class, for whom the system is working quite well.”

— **George Will, “Illinois Cracking Under Weight Of Public Pensions,” *Hartford Courant*, August 11, 2018, cour.at/2cjoioj**

WHAT WE'RE SAYING

Let the Next President Support Congressional Term Limits

“Electing a president who supports term limits would have a game-changing impact.... Gridlock in Congress on a term limits amendment — which requires a two-thirds vote — is more likely to subside if the occupant of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue is on board.

“Whether Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton is the next president, the people deserve a champion in the White House who stands up for term limits. Trump has weighed in, but that shouldn’t preclude Clinton from releasing a strong term limits platform. Libertarians Gary Johnson and Bill Weld were the first ticket to embrace the idea, with both men having advocated term limits for more than a decade.

“No matter who wins on November 8, citizens will benefit more if the congressional term limits discussion is returned to the forefront. While no president can push a button to make it happen, he or she can provide the leverage needed to get the amendment done.”

— **“The president can help term limit Congress,” Nick Tomboulides, *The Hill*, October 19, 2016, bit.ly/2exM9Av**

Let's Do This, Utah

“A new poll shows that Utah residents by historic margins favor term limits at all levels of government. The survey, conducted by Dan Jones & Associates for UtahPolicy.com, found that 85 percent of Utahns support term limits on the state legislature and Governor, while 88 percent support term limits on members of Congress.

“The pollsters also found that those who support term limits do so with a high level of intensity, with 70 percent remarking that they ‘strongly favor’ the reform.

“For Utahns, this survey is more than fodder for a discussion at the watercooler. It will be rocket fuel needed to launch the Term Limits Convention resolution through the Utah State Legislature next year.

“All Utah needs to do is pass a simple, one-page resolution through its State House and State Senate in the 2017 session. The State House already passed the resolution in 2016 before running out of time to put it on the Senate Calendar. That means state lawmakers are listening to the people’s concerns.

“We have to keep this momentum going. This year, they need to finish the job by getting it passed through both chambers.

“Send a message to the state lawmakers in your district by visiting <http://bit.ly/2dDTV7Y>. You can take advantage of this email tool whether you live in Utah or not.”

— **“Huge Majority of Utahns Back Term Limits: Poll,” Nick Tomboulides, *U.S. Term Limits*, October 11, 2016, bit.ly/2dDTiLA**

The Scandalously Un-Scandalous Opinion in the Hacked Colin Powell Emails

“In the midst of the usual foot stomping and chest beating, there was something important that has largely been overlooked in favor of sensational headlines.

“[Former Secretary of State Colin Powell] was asked by a supporter of his, former Obama Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki, if he would consider running for president. Powell said that it would be ‘absurd’ for him to run....

“What was Powell’s response to what America needed more than him as president?

“‘Toss out congressional incumbents that do nothing, fix taxes, fix the infrastructure, get super rich money out of the system, eliminate gerrymandering, etc.’

“Is there anything in this sentence that the vast majority of Americans would disagree with? In fact, this statement is reflective of what the average American has been saying about Congress and the political elites for years. This is what has been said by the majority of Americans on both sides of the aisle.”

— **“Insights and Musings on Congress from a Consummate Insider,” Alannah NicPhaidin, *U.S. Term Limits*, September 19, 2016, bit.ly/2dDQuOH**

Special Favors to Special Incumbents from Special Interests

“Members of Congress who took seats on powerful banking and finance committees received special low-interest loans, according to a new study by two London Business School professors.

“The study, which looked at congressional behavior from 2004-2011, found that members who regulated Wall Street received bigger loans, lower interest rates and more time to pay back their debts — compared to colleagues who didn’t have power over the financial sector.

“On average, members of finance committees were given 32 percent more time (or 4.5 years on average) to pay back debts than the average legislator....Congressmen and congresswomen are considered special people in need of special favors because of their seniority and clout.

“A strong amendment for term limits on Congress will address the relationship between seniority and corruption. By eliminating the idea of career politicians, term limits restore the citizen government our founders intended.”

— **“Report: Congressmen on Banking Committees Got Special Loans,” Nick Tomboulides, *U.S. Term Limits*, August 26, 2016, bit.ly/2e5I867**

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“If elected President, I’ll push for a constitutional amendment to impose term limits on all members of Congress.”

— Donald Trump
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