

# No Uncertain Terms

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TERM LIMITS MOVEMENT • NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2016 • VOLUME 24 • No. 6

## With President-elect Trump Promising to “Drain the Swamp,” Congressional Term Limits Are Back In Spotlight

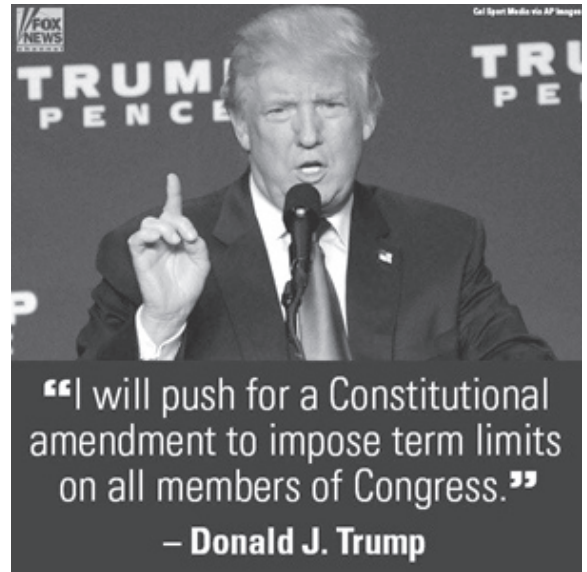
By May of 2016, every candidate for president who supported congressional term limits — including cosponsors of the U.S. Term Limits Amendment — had been knocked out of the race. For a while, it didn't seem as if the next president of the United States would be an on-record advocate of term limits for the U.S. Congress.

### October Surprise

Then, in October, just a few weeks before the election, Republican candidate Donald Trump announced that if elected he would “push for a constitutional amendment to impose term limits on all members of Congress” as one means of “draining the swamp” in our nation's capital.

Trump expressed support for a maximum tenure of three two-year terms in the U.S. House and two six-year terms in the U.S. Senate. This is the same term limit backed by signers of the U.S. Term Limits Congressional Pledge, who by signing promise to

**Term limits  
on the ballot  
p. 2**



“cosponsor and vote for the U.S. Term Limits Amendment of three (3) House terms and two (2) Senate terms and no longer limit.”

Proposing congressional term limits and getting them are two different things, of course. But the president-elect has vocal and prominent allies in Congress to fight for term limits.

In a December op-ed for *The Washington Post*, U.S.

(Continued on Page 3)

## New USTL Pledge Signers Win Congressional Elections

In November, thirteen new signers of the U.S. Term Limits Amendment Pledge won their general election contests, making for a total of 48 signatories expected to serve in Congress in 2017 — 12 U.S. Senators and 36 U.S. Representatives.

**Representative-elect Andy Biggs (Arizona).** After narrowly winning the GOP primary (a recount showed him with a 27-vote lead), State Senator Biggs handily defeated his opponent in the general election.

**Representative Matt Gaetz (Florida).** Not long after Matt Gaetz was elected to the Florida legislature, his positive view of term limits presented a sharp contrast with the laments of his colleagues. He was “grateful for term limits,” according to a 2011 McClatchy News Service report. “Without term limits, there's no sense of urgency,” he was quoted as saying. “If you told me I had to sit around for 20 years before anybody knew my name, I'd prefer to be home

working in my business.”

**Representative-elect Brian Mast (Florida).** Brian Mast served in the U.S. Army for 12 years and has served in the Joint Special Operations Command as a bomb disposal expert. In her endorsement of Mast for U.S. Congress, Tea Party Patriots Citizens Fund Chairman Jenny Beth Martin described Mast as a “solid constitutional conservative” and cited, among other issues, his support of congressional term limits.

**Representative-elect Drew Ferguson (Georgia).** On the “Term Limits Now” page of his campaign site, dentist and West Point Mayor Drew Ferguson proudly reported that he “signed the U.S. Term Limits pledge to vote for a term limits constitutional amendment.... Restoring the nation to a true citizen-legislature where members of all facets of our communities represent their neighbors for a short time then

(Continued on Page 6)



# President's Corner

BY PHILIP BLUMEL

U.S. Term Limits has been making incredible progress with our two-track strategy for slapping term limits on Congress.

A proponent of congressional term limits, Donald Trump, has won the presidency, promising to fight to “drain the swamp” in Washington through term limits and other reforms.

The president has no direct role in enabling a constitutional amendment to emerge from Congress, he can certainly push the issue from his bully pulpit.

Candidates from both sides of the aisle discussed term limits during the 2016 campaign. In addition to President-elect Donald Trump’s “Drain the Swamp” plan, candidates for the U.S. Senate have come out for this. Senators Pat Toomey, Rand Paul, Kelly Ayotte, and Marco Rubio have all stressed their strong support of congressional term limits. Moreover, 13 new signers of the U.S. Term Limits Amendment Pledge have won their 2016 campaigns for Congress (see page 1).

House Speaker Paul Ryan supports term limits and has asked for help passing legislation through the House. Even Jeb Bush now says that he supports convening the Term Limits Convention using Article V of the Constitution.

The Term Limits Convention bill has been filed in Michigan by State Rep. Tom Barrett. If Michigan passes the resolution, it will join Florida in calling for a convention to rein in career politicians and impose term limits on Congress. You can learn more about how the convention works by visiting the U.S. Term Limits web site ([bit.ly/2hf4xza](http://bit.ly/2hf4xza)).

We have teams of staffers and volunteers in the states working overtime to pass the Term Limits Convention legislation in 34 states. U.S. Term Limits has expanded its footprint to account for the surge in support we’re seeing. We’ve just added grassroots leaders in Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Tennessee, Texas, and Utah.

Meanwhile, citizens in towns and counties around the country continue to impose new term limits on local officials or to fend off attacks on existing term limits (see page 4).

The movement is growing, in villages, in state capitals, in the nation’s capital. Thank you for being a part of it.

*Visit USTL’s Facebook page at [on.fb.me/U0blkG](http://on.fb.me/U0blkG). And please consider contributing to U.S. Term Limits at [bit.ly/2gkhhQA](http://bit.ly/2gkhhQA) to help us to take advantage of major the new opportunities to advance congressional term limits. We must work together if we hope to foil all the incumbent politicians who will fight tooth and nail to preserve their holds on power.*

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### US TERM LIMITS FOUNDATION

U.S. Term Limits – DC Office  
1250 Connecticut Avenue NW  
Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 261-3532 – Phone

[info@ustl.org](mailto:info@ustl.org) – Email  
[www.termimits.org](http://www.termimits.org) – Web

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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*

# Trump, Term Limits (Cont'd from page 1)

Senator Ted Cruz and U.S. Representative Ron DeSantis observed that on Election Day, Americans “made a resounding call to ‘drain the swamp’ that is modern Washington. Yet on Capitol Hill, we seem mired in the same cycle of complacency. During the presidential campaign, Donald Trump called for enacting term limits, and House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) has endorsed the idea. As soon as the 115th Congress convenes, both of us will move to restore accountability among the entrenched Washington establishment by introducing a constitutional amendment to limit the number of terms that a member of Congress can serve to three in the House and two in the Senate.”

## Number One Reform

Proposing “a constitutional amendment to impose term limits on all members of Congress” is the first of “six measures to clean up the corruption and special interest collusion in Washington, DC” listed in the president-elect’s “Contract with the American Voter” (see [donaldjtrump.com/contract](http://donaldjtrump.com/contract)).

We hope that as president, Trump will move as soon as possible to take action on behalf of congressional term limits — and then keep pushing the issue.

Making a dent in the corrupt ways of our nation’s capital won’t be easy. Many reforms may be necessary to begin to fundamentally improve how politics is done in Washington. But whatever reforms are called for, term limits must be high on the list. Constitutionally enforced term limits would eject the present class of entrenched incumbents from power — all whose complacency and susceptibility to corruption have been abetted by open-ended tenures. Term limits would also prevent future decades-long monopolizing of any congressional seat.

Support for term limits among the general public is broad and bipartisan, and always has been. But opposition to term limits among members of the political class has also been



broad and bipartisan — and vehement.

One recent example is the conduct of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Republican, who in the wake of Trump’s announcement hastened to foreclose any consideration of the reform in his chamber; term limits “will not be on the agenda in the Senate,” he flatly asserted. Echoing him was House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, who blandly informed Americans on “Face the Nation” that “I don’t think people want a new direction.”

Could have fooled us. As USTL President Phil Blumel observed, “This kind of tone deafness is exactly why the term limits movement was created! In her bubble, everything in Washington, D.C. is going just fine.”

## Bitter Clingers

We all understand that most members of the political class in Congress are not going to go quietly. There isn’t going to be any dignified assent to popular demands for meaningful term limits.

So we must keep fighting for congressional term limits on every possible front: through the presidency, through those members of Congress who do support term limits, through state-legislative calls for a Constitutional Term Limits Convention.

To make congressional term limits happen, we — all of us — must keep pushing to make it happen.

## Cruz, DeSantis: Use Term Limits to “Drain the Swamp”

“In an age in which partisan divisions seem intractable, it is remarkable that public support for congressional term limits is strong regardless of political affiliation — huge majorities of rank-and-file Republicans, Democrats and independents favor enacting this reform. Indeed, according to a Rasmussen survey conducted in October, 74 percent of likely voters support establishing term limits for all members of Congress. This is because the concept of a citizen legislature is integral to the model of our democratic republic.

“Though our Founding Fathers declined to include term limits in the Constitution, they feared the creation of a permanent political class that existed parallel to, rather than enmeshed within, American society. As Benjamin Franklin said, ‘In free governments, the rulers are the servants, and the people their superiors.... For the former therefore to return among the latter was not to degrade but to promote them.’

“We believe that the rise of political careerism in modern Washington is a drastic departure from what the founders intended of our federal governing bodies. To effectively ‘drain the swamp,’ we believe it is past time to enact term limits for Congress.”

— “If Republicans really want to drain the swamp, here’s how to do it,” Ted Cruz and Ron DeSantis, *The Washington Post*, December 9, 2016, [wapo.st/2hg0gvH](http://wapo.st/2hg0gvH)



# Term Limits El



## CALIFORNIA

*Albany, CA.* With 66% opposed, Albany, CA voters rejected a measure to repeal consecutive two-term limits on local school board members.

*Carson, CA.* With 77% in favor, Carson voters approved a lifetime term limit of three four-year terms on city officials, including city council members and the mayor “or any combination of elected offices.”

*Coalinga, CA.* With 77% in favor, Coalinga voters approved term limits of two four-year terms on city council members.

*Orange Unified School District, CA.* With 87% in favor, Orange County voters approved a lifetime term limit of three four-year terms on school board members.

*San Buenaventura, CA.* With 82% in favor, San Buenaventura voters approved term limits of three consecutive four-year terms on city council members.

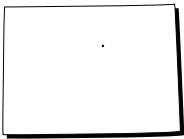
*Santa Clara, CA.* With 81% in favor, Santa Clara voters approved term limits of two four-year terms on city council members and the mayor. It is a lifetime cap on tenure that tightens what had been a consecutive two-term limit.

*Simi Valley Unified School District, CA.* With 79% in favor, Simi Valley voters approved term limits of two consecutive terms on school board members.

*Stanton, CA.* With 76% in favor, Stanton voters approved lifetime term limits of two terms on city council members.

*Stockton, CA.* With 59% in favor, Stockton voters approved a measure to term-limit the mayor and city council members to two terms.

*Sweetwater Union High School District, CA.* With 86% in favor, Sweetwater voters approved a two-term limit on the high school district’s board of trustees.



## COLORADO

Amendment 71, which makes it harder to place a question on the state ballot, passed with about 56% of the vote. The measure imposes a distribution requirement on signature gatherers, forcing them to gather signatures from 2% of registered voters in each of the Colorado’s 35 senate districts. When a question does reach ballot, a supermajority of 55% is now required to pass it.

*Boulder County, CO.* Ballot Question 302 to impose term limits on city council members passed with 59% of the vote. The measure asked whether the charter should be amended “to restrict council members to three terms in the person’s lifetime, which requirement shall apply to any candidate for council after November 8, 2016.”

*Fort Lupton, CO.* Lupton voters quashed a measure to “eliminate term limits for mayor and council,” with 64% voting No. A few years earlier, the town’s voters had accepted a weakening of local term limits to three consecutive terms. Such lengthening of maximum tenure often serves as a warmup for more aggressive anti-term-limits measures.



## FLORIDA

*Orange County, FL.* With 69% of the vote and 70% of the vote, respectively, voters passed Charter Amendments 2 and 3 to confirm a 2014 vote in favor of charter changes that included slack term limits on several offices (a maximum tenure of four consecutive terms). Two years ago, offices like sheriff, supervisor of elections and clerk of the court were converted into nonpartisan elected positions and subjected to the four-term maximum.



## HAWAII

*Honolulu, HI.* With 57% opposed, Honolulu voters rejected a measure on the November ballot to lengthen the maximum tenure of the prosecuting attorney, council members, and the mayor from two four-year terms to three four-year terms.



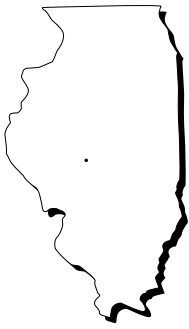
## GEORGIA

*Marietta, GA.* With 81% in favor, voters approved an advisory referendum to limit city council members to three terms in office. The proposed charter revision must be approved by the state legislature to take effect.

## ILLINOIS

During the election campaign, Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner and other proponents of major reform like state legislative term limits urged voters to toss out obstructionist incumbents. The election did

# ection Results



make a dent; the Democrats lost the supermajority in the house that had allowed them to override any gubernatorial veto. We'll have to see what kind of substantive reform is possible now that the Madigan-led legislative establishment infamous for corruption and fiscal hemorrhaging has been weakened. In early December, Rauner said he would consider signing a partial budget only if two provisions were included: term limits and a freeze on property taxes.

Meanwhile, voters in several towns of the state have passed term limits locally.

*Broadview, IL.* With 52% in favor, Broadview voters passed a measure to limit the village president to two consecutive four-year terms in office; but the Illinois Supreme Court is in the process of deciding whether the vote will be allowed to stand.

*Calumet City, IL.* With 65% in favor, Calumet City voters limited the mayor to four consecutive four-year terms; the terms that are subject to the limit include any served as an alderman.

*Crestwood, IL.* With 88% in favor, Crestwood voters limited the mayor and other town officials of three consecutive four-year terms.

*Harvey, IL.* With 85% in favor, Harvey voters limited aldermen, the mayor, and other officers to a maximum of four consecutive four-year terms.



## MARYLAND

*Montgomery County, MD.* With 69% in favor, Montgomery County voters passed Question B — posted as a result of citizen initiative — to limit council members to three consecutive four-year terms. Since the measure is retroactive in effect, four council members are now barred from seeking reelection. County voters also approved Question C, by 79%. Question C is a council-referred measure to prevent partial terms from being counted as full terms for purposes of the term limit unless the incumbent has served at least half of that partial term.

The lopsided vote was a “thundering rebuke to Montgomery County’s government establishment,” according to Adam Pagnucco at the Seventh State web site.

Previous ballot measures to impose council term limits failed, in 2004 and 2000. Credit for persistence goes to local activist Robin Ficker, who led the petition drive for each term limits initiative that made it to ballot, as well as a 2010 petition effort scrapped because of more stringent signature verification requirements.



## MICHIGAN

State Representative Tom Barrett has introduced House Joint Resolution TT ([bit.ly/2gl6ENu](http://bit.ly/2gl6ENu)) “applying to the Congress of the United States to call a convention to propose an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to impose term limits on members of Congress.” (See Scott Tillman’s article on the USTL site, “Michigan Rep Files Congressional Term Limits Bill” [bit.ly/2hfiVaY](http://bit.ly/2hfiVaY))

*Walker, MI.* With 68% in favor, Walker voters passed a citizen-initiated measure to limit commissioners and the mayor to two four-year terms in office. The petition drive had been led by Walker Citizens for Municipal Term Limits, which stated that it had been inspired by the passage of term limits in Grand Rapids in 2014.

“Politicians and diapers must be changed often, and for the same reason.”

- Mark Twain

**VOTE  YES**

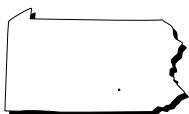
Walker Term Limits for City Commissioners and Mayor

*Eight (years) is Enough*



## OHIO

*Kettering, OH.* With 60% opposed, voters rejected Issue 36, a council-referred measure to lengthen city council term limits from two four-year terms to three four-year terms. But voters approved a slew of measures proposed by the group Citizens for a Better Kettering in response to Issue 36, including a term limits measure delivering the salutary message “And we mean it!” Passed with 64% in favor, Issue 31 requires council members to maintain the term limits passed in 2012 and prohibits them from proposing charter revisions that affect those term limits.

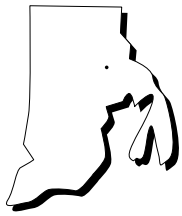


## PENNSYLVANIA

*Malvern Borough, PA.* With 85% in favor, Malvern residents affirmed a clarified two-term consecutive limit on the tenure of Malvern Borough Council members. The limit had already been part of the home rule charter adopted in 2008.

**MORE ON PAGE 6...**

# Term Limit Election Results (Cont'd from page 5)



## RHODE ISLAND

*Westerly, RI.* Town voters approved separate ballot questions on town charter amendments. They impose two-term limits on town councilors (Question 10; 71% Yes), planning and zoning board members (Question 11; 77% Yes), and school committee members (Question 12; 73% Yes). Question 13, about adding a recall provision to the charter, was also approved (74% Yes).

## WASHINGTON



*Monroe City, WA.* In 2011, after an advisory vote strongly favored council term limits — with 76% of Monroe City voters approving the question — council members unanimously imposed eight-year limits on themselves. Because the limits are an ordinance, though, the council has the power to unilaterally repeal the limits if they wish, without taking the question to ballot. This is what they are now thinking of doing. Councilman Jim Kamp says that although he doesn't like term limits either, "If we want to get rid of term limits, I think it should go to ballot as an advisory vote." In early December the Monroe City Council began holding public hearings on the question.

# Pledge Signers (Cont'd from page 1)

return home to live under the laws they wrote is absolutely necessary to moving our country forward. Our founders never envisioned a permanent political class, but we have one and it insulates lawmakers from the consequences of their decisions in Washington."

**Representative Darin LaHood (Illinois).** A former state senator, LaHood was first elected to Congress in September of 2015 in a special election after the incumbent, Aaron Schock, resigned.

**Representative-elect Trey Hollingsworth (Indiana).** During his campaign, Hollingsworth featured his term limits pledge in a TV ad ([bit.ly/2gliiIn](http://bit.ly/2gliiIn)). According to his campaign site, "The only way to return true public service in Congress is to kick out career politicians."

**Senator-elect Todd Young (Indiana).** During the GOP primary contest, both major contenders — Marlin Stutzman and Todd Young — signed the U.S. Term Limits Amendment Pledge.

**Representative-elect Roger Marshall (Kansas).** An obstetrician and political newcomer, Marshall unseated the incumbent, Tim Huelskamp, in the GOP primary — the first time an incumbent in the district had lost a primary since 1944. On Marshall's campaign site, one of the six categories under Issues was "Not a Politician": "Too many these politicians have motivations other than representing the people and act as though Washington DC insiders, special interest groups and TV cameras are the only things that matter in their decision-making process."

**Representative-elect James Comer (Kentucky).** At his campaign site, Comer stated: "Our founding fathers never envisioned a Congress where elected officials stayed in office for decades.... I support term limits and pledge to take a self-imposed term limit of 6 terms. I have also signed the U.S. Term Limits Amendment Pledge to co-sponsor and vote for the U.S. Term Limits Amendment."

## Representative-elect John

**Faso (New York).** Faso is a former minority leader of the New York State Assembly who has also run for comptroller and governor in the state.

## Representative-elect Don

**Bacon (Nebraska).** A "fact check" page of Bacon's campaign site states that he "proposed a plan...that called for a ten percent salary cut for members of congress, cancellation of congressional pay during government shutdowns, a halt to automatic pay increases for congress, term limits, and a lifetime ban on former members of congress becoming lobbyists."

## Representative-elect Ted Budd (North Carolina).

Small businessman and first-time candidate Ted Budd won the general election after emerging from a crowded GOP primary in which 17 candidates had competed for the nomination. "Ted knows that the best way to turn around the American economy is through a system that encourages innovation and relieves the stranglehold of regulation," according to the biography at his campaign site. "He is committed to making a difference, not building a political career."

**Representative Warren Davidson (Ohio).** In June of 2016, Davidson won a special election to replace John Boehner after Boehner resigned. His campaign site declared: "Far too often, we elect politicians eager to play the game, preserve the status quo, and swear fidelity to Party above all. Warren is not a politician. He is a former soldier, a business owner, a conservative, a leader, and a problem solver. Warren wants to serve in Congress in order to help turn this country around — not become part of the status quo."



# WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

## Jeb Bush: Let's Have Constitutional Convention, Term Limits

"Americans, by wide majorities, agree that Washington is broken, so let's send power back to the people and back to the states. Republicans should support convening a constitutional convention to pass term limits, a balanced-budget amendment and restraints on the Commerce Clause, which has given the federal government far more regulatory power than the Founders intended.

"The federal government has become too unwieldy, too powerful and too distant — precisely the problem that the Constitution was designed to avoid."

— "Where Republicans Go From Here," Jeb Bush, *The Wall Street Journal*, November 24, 2016, on.wsj.com/2g8CBsf

## Tennessee Legislature Can Help Make Term Limits Convention Happen

"The Tennessee legislature can get the ball rolling by passing a resolution next session calling for a constitutional convention to propose a term-limits amendment. Once 34 total states have done that, the American people will be empowered to vote on whether to bring term limits to Washington.

"Congress is the problem. As America's fiscal situation weakens, lawmakers refuse to make the choices necessary to turn things around. Since defeating a federal incumbent is nearly impossible, the people who can fix Washington must wait for an open seat to make their move....

"A quarter of Congress has been in office for more than 16 years. By the end of 2016, nine members will have been in office for more than 40 years.

"Term limits would reverse this trend by making sure that open-seat races are held on a regular basis. The best and brightest minds in our states, who are currently blocked from serving in Congress by tenured politicians, would finally have the opportunity to move upward and make their case to the American people....

"Members of Congress will not enact term limits on themselves. It is up to the state legislatures to see this through. There may never be a better time for us to act. Please join with us and support this historic effort in Tennessee, the Term Limits Convention."

— "Tennessee can start the push for Congressional term limits," Phil Russell, *The Tennessean*, December 5, 2016, tnne.ws/2hgd2dv



## Visit U.S. Term Limits on Facebook and Help Us Make Congressional Term Limits Happen. [bit.ly/2hfRQ7e](http://bit.ly/2hfRQ7e)

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1250 Connecticut Avenue NW  
Suite 200  
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**“If I’m elected president, I will push for a constitutional amendment to impose term limits on all members of Congress.”**

**— President-elect Donald Trump**  
**see p. 1**