

No Uncertain Terms

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TERM LIMITS MOVEMENT

February 2000
Volume 8, Number 2

Fowler Keeps Her Word!

Self-Limiter Tillie Fowler Keeps Her "Eight Is Enough" Promise to Voters

For the past several months, in print, television and radio, U.S. Term Limits has been urging Rep. Tillie Fowler (R-FL) to keep her promise to limit her time in office to four terms. On January 4, the effort paid off as Fowler announced she would retire from the House of Representatives after she completes her current term. Fowler said in her press conference, "I've always believed that with hard work, determination and the help of people here at home, you can accomplish a lot in a short period of time, and together we have."

When Fowler was first elected to Congress in 1992, she helped lead the statewide term limits initiative campaign in Florida, known as the "Eight is Enough" campaign, which Florida voters overwhelmingly approved. Fowler pledged at the time to serve only eight years herself.

In a press release praising Fowler's decision, USTL National Director Paul Jacob said, "Florida is a tremendous term limits state, with limits on the state legislature kicking in this year, and with Senator Connie Mack and Congressman Charles Canady clearly demonstrating that self-limiters are the real leaders in Congress. Tillie Fowler deserves to be congratulated for her commitment to this Florida tradition."

Fowler's congressional service demonstrates that it doesn't take a career politician to make a difference.

"Fowler's work in Congress clearly disproves the claim by term-limit opponents that newcomers won't stand a chance in Washington and that entrenched bureaucrats will run Congress instead of elected officials if terms are limited," the Florida Times-Union reported, also noting that Fowler is the vice-chair of the Republican Conference. "It's not how long a person is in office that equates with effectiveness, but the quality of the person elected to office."

To congratulate Fowler on her decision, U.S. Term Limits unveiled TV and radio ads acknowledging that she provides a positive example for other politicians.

The radio ad stated in part, "When so many politicians today say anything to stay in office, it's refreshing to find a person of real character."

Shaping the News

USTL Ads About Nethercutt Recognized by *National Journal*

On December 23, 1999, *National Journal* listed U.S. Term Limits first in its ranking of the Top 10 political ads of the year.

National Journal noted, "These determined rabble-rousers waged an all-out war with GOP Rep. George Nethercutt after he broke his 1994 promise to serve only three terms."

Selections were made by determining which ads "shaped the news, set trends for 2000, or were simply too interesting to miss."

Term Limits in Michigan

Public Overwhelmingly Rejects Michigan Governor's Term Limits Waffle

Michigan Gov. John Engler was once a supporter of term limits, but now that the effects of the state's term limits law are beginning to show and it's a little more difficult for him to push his own agenda through Michigan's political system, he's having second thoughts. The public, however, still favors term limits by an overwhelming margin.

Although Michigan's current law limits House members to six years and other state elected officials to eight years, Engler has proposed extending those limits to 12 years for everyone. But with term limits taking effect, a remarkable amount of work got done.

"[W]hile the governor complained that it was tougher to get things done this year, the Legislature did manage to get substantial amounts of other business transacted, including another tax cut and Detroit school legislation," *The Detroit News* reported.

In order to determine whether the public shared Engler's desire for term limits reform, *The Detroit News* conducted an online survey of visitors to its web site. A full 69% of respondents disagreed with the governor, and wrote comments indicating their continuing support for Michigan term limits.

The Ego Has Landed

Naming the Buildings for Egos

You say you haven't gotten used to baseball and football stadiums named after toothpaste or banks?

Well, according to the director of U.S. Term Limits, more of this commercial-style nonsense is heading our way, thanks to the egos in Congress.

Paul Jacob, who heads up the efforts to limit the terms of those in Congress, reports that the Labor, Health and Human Services Subcommittee of the Senate has approved a bill that would allow government buildings to be named for sitting members of Congress.

The idea comes from Sen. Daniel Inouye of Hawaii, who is proposing renaming The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as the "Thomas R. Harkin Centers for Disease Control and Prevention."

That's naming the center after the Democrat senator from Iowa.

Inouye also is proposing changing the National Library of Medicine to the "Arlen Specter National Library of Medicine."

The subcommittee that approved the ego-centered measure is chaired by Specter, a Pennsylvania Republican, and Harkin is the ranking Democrat on the panel.

Naming federal buildings after congressmen who presently sit on committees deciding agency budgets is nothing short of outrageous.

But it's also the stuff of embarrassment. Remember Illinois Rep. Dan Rostenkowski, who admitted embezzling postage stamps among other things? Maybe there should be a postal service building named in his honor...

One representative, Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, has at least said out loud he opposes the idea: "We have reached a new low in Washington's culture of arrogance when federal agencies can be renamed in honor of the incumbent senators who control their budgets. How can they expect to be taken seriously as serving the public interest when they indulge in such an embarrassing display of self-flattery?"

Good for Mr. Coburn.

Let's hope others join in opposition to this latest-ego-centered scheme from our too-often-elected leaders.

Reprinted from *Today's News-Herald*.

Doctor In the House

Tom Coburn: Self Limiter, Maverick Legislator

As Coburn's career in Congress winds down, he is making the most of his remaining time, relentlessly pressing for cuts in federal spending and changes in health insurance regulations — and worrying not at all that his efforts are most definitely not appreciated by many colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Coburn, who is voluntarily limiting his service in Washington to six years and will not seek re-election in 2000, is a rebel with a cause — two major causes, in fact.

The Oklahoman believes the federal government is too large and complains that Congress is cynically renegeing on a promise made two years ago to restrain spending. And, as a physician, he argues that something must be done to restrain health maintenance organizations' power over medical decisions.

In his zeal, he has earned the enmity of Democrats and Republicans alike. He has caused particular heartburn for his party's leadership and the appropriators with whom he has been skirmishing for much of his tenure on Capitol Hill.

After Coburn earlier this year made a shambles of the timetable for dealing with the Agriculture appropriations bill — delaying work on the bill for two weeks with a passel of amendments to cut spending — the leaders were forced to adjust their strategy and to agree to some cuts, even though most of Coburn's amendments were defeated.

According to *USA Today*, Texas Republican Henry Bonilla observed that "we have a case of the tail wagging the dog," and, Bonilla continued, "a lot of us are tired of it."

Coburn's response? "Somebody has to be the villain. I don't think I'm as much disliked as I'm kind of a pain in the rear. Is it frustrating? Sure. Is it fun? You bet," he told the newspaper.

Coburn is a hero to the term limits movement. Not only did he run in 1994 on a promise to serve no more than six years, he is abiding by that pledge — unlike a few of his colleagues who say they have discovered that seniority is vital to effectiveness in Congress.

But term limits backers insist that Coburn's performance — bucking his leaders and fighting for what he sees are matters of principle — proves that term limits affords members the freedom to do the right thing. After all, they argue, how can the leadership punish somebody who's already decided to leave?

Coburn is ending his Hill career where he began it — offering himself as an emissary from the "real world" that lies beyond the capital Beltway. "Washington tends to change people," Coburn once said, "What makes me valuable to my district is [that] there's nothing in Washington that I want."

He styles himself a "citizen legislator" and in his floor speeches often reminds listeners, "I am a practicing physician."

As a physician, Coburn in 1999 was asked by Speaker J. Dennis Hastert of Illinois to lead in drafting legislation to counter a largely Democrat-backed bill to give patients more clout in dealing with managed health care plans. Coburn and John Shadegg, R-Ariz., came up with a bill, but when it failed to win the GOP leadership's endorsement, they vowed to press forward. "It's going to happen whether the leadership decides they all like this bill or not," Coburn said in September.

Even in the GOP Class of 1994, widely noted for its ideological zeal, Coburn stands out as a vehement defender of spending restraint.

His assault on appropriations bills this year is not new. During the 105th Congress, Coburn helped lead the charge when a cadre of members on the House GOP's right wing sought to inject their conservative views into a variety of spending bills. As they sought to force action on these controversial policy matters, by tacking them on to must-pass spending bills, debate slowed the appropriations process, frustrating Speaker Newt Gingrich, Appropriations Committee Chairman Robert L. Livingston and the Appropriations subcommittee chairmen whose bills got bogged down.

Coburn's unhappiness with House rules regarding members' outside income almost made his House career even briefer. In 1998, Coburn indicated he would not seek re-election, or even resign immediately, if the House ethics committee required him to curtail his practice of delivering babies one weekend a month back home in Muskogee. "I'm certainly not going to give up the practice of medicine," he told *The Washington Post*. "You can't take somebody in midlife and say, 'Totally trash your career, come up here for six years and then go back.'"

The ethics panel eventually clarified its ruling to Coburn's liking.

Excerpted from *Congressional Quarterly*.

Candidate Spotlight: Gene Watts — Ohio Congressional District 12

A Clear Commitment

With a re-election rate of close to 100%, it's almost impossible to defeat congressional incumbents. So when a career politician decides to retire, challengers line up to take his place.

In Ohio's 12th congressional district, state senator Gene Watts is seeking the Republican nomination to replace John Kasich — and he's also pledged to limit his time in office to four terms.

Watts became a self-limiter when he signed the U.S. Term Limits Declaration on November 8, 1999. In a press release, U.S. Term Limits National Director Paul Jacob said, "Gene's early signing of the U.S. Term Limits' Declaration is a clear indication of his commitment to term limits and the principles of the citizen legislator."

Given the reputation Watts has for speaking his mind, he should fit in well with other self-limited congressmen like Tom Coburn (R-OK), Mark Sanford (R-SC) and Matt Salmon (R-AZ), who credit their term limits pledges with giving them the courage to buck the spendhappy system — a luxury career politicians seldom have.

Critics sometimes complain that term limits leads to a shortage of experience in Congress, but Watts has plenty of the kind of experience that counts the most — real-life experience. Both before and during his time as an Ohio state senator, Watts has maintained an outside career as a professor of history at Ohio State University. He has also been the recipient of numerous awards, including twice earning a "Watchdog of the Treasury Award" for fiscal responsibility.

Soon after Watts signed the pledge, the *Columbus Dispatch* quoted him as saying, "[Voters] are not looking for a candidate seeking to promote his own career or to become a part of the establishment, but someone experienced enough and independent enough to go to Washington and advance their interests and fight for them."

The Last Word

Rep. Matt Salmon Believes in Term Limits More Than Ever

After joining the Republican revolution in 1994, Rep. Matt Salmon, R-Ariz., says he, like others, has no regrets about stepping down after three terms in Congress.

After all, that's what he campaigned on.

"I felt it was the right thing to do when I was elected and now I know it's the right thing," says the former public affairs manager. "Term limits make more sense than ever."

"It's the trump card over everything else," he confides. "You become emboldened and stand up to your own leaders when you know you have only a short time to make your mark."

And Salmon has made his mark as a high-profile conservative who frequently battles with the GOP leadership no matter the political costs.

In his most recent dispute, Salmon targeted the record number of pork-filled special interest earmarks in Year 2000 spending bills. Salmon differs with Republican leaders who claim the budget won't force Washington to take loans out of the Social Security Trust Fund. "We'll be taking \$17 billion," he says.

In fact, conservatives frequently tie the amount of government spending to the length of time a member of Congress plans to be in office. After studying the 64 members of the freshman class of 1994 who never pledged to personally limit their terms, the National Taxpayers Union found that they voted for an average of \$29.1 billion in spending increases last year. Those with self-imposed term limits voted to cut spending by \$17.3 billion.

"Clearly, the longer people are here the more they spend," notes Rep. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., who chairs a new 14-member Citizens Legislator Caucus made up of lawmakers who are now voluntarily limiting their terms. "Careerism in politics creates a ruling class."

Salmon isn't waiting around to find out. "I made my promise and I don't give my commitment lightly."

Excerpted from the *ABCNews.com*.

They Said It

Historical Figures Talk About Term Limits

"If our American society and United States government are overthrown, it will come from the voracious desire for office, this [desire] to live without toil, work and labor . . . from which I am not free myself."

—*Abraham Lincoln*

"My reason for fixing them in office for a term of years, rather than for life, was that they might have [an] idea that they were at a certain period to return into the mass of people and become the governed instead of the governors which might still keep

alive that regard to the public good that otherwise they might perhaps be induced by their independence to forget."

—*Thomas Jefferson*

"Elections, especially of representatives and counselors, should be annual, there not being in the whole circle of the sciences a maxim more infallible than this, 'where annual elections end, there slavery begins.' These great men . . . should be [chosen] once a year — Like bubbles on the sea of matter bourne, they rise, they break, and to the sea return. This will teach them the great political virtues of humility, patience, and moderation, without which every man in power becomes a ravenous beast of prey."

—*John Adams*

"The more secure an officeholder, the more his interests would diverge from those of his constituents."

—*Andrew Jackson*

"[Congressional limits would] help cure senility and seniority — both terrible legislative diseases."

—*Harry Truman*

"To prevent every danger which might arise to American freedom from continuing too long in office, it is earnestly recommended that we set an obligation on the holder of that office to go out after a certain period."

—*Thomas Jefferson*

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By Paul Jacob

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