

No Uncertain Terms

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TERM LIMITS MOVEMENT

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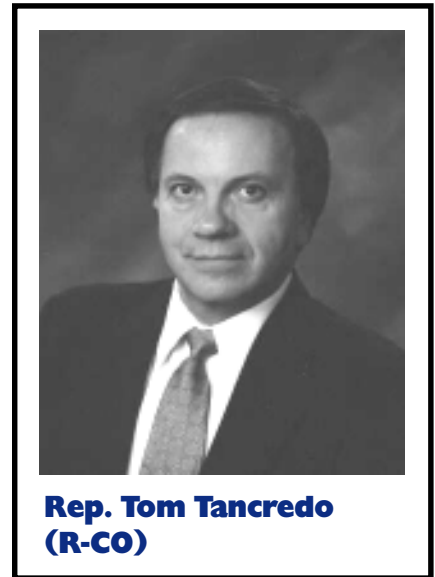
Fiscal Responsibility

Self-Limiters in Citizen Legislators Caucus Expose Unauthorized Spending

With such a spend-happy, unaccountable group of politicians in Congress, it shouldn't be a surprise to find that billions of your dollars get spent without proper authorization. But Congress contains at least a few honest politicians. They have their sights set on eliminating \$101 billion in unauthorized federal spending, reports the January 14th edition of *National Journal's CongressDaily*. It also shouldn't be a surprise to find that these honest politicians have limited their own terms in office.

"According to information prepared by Rep. Tom Tancredo, R-Colo., who is spearheading the effort on behalf of the 14-member Citizen Legislators Caucus . . . Congress provided nearly \$101 billion in FY99 for 198 government programs that either have never been authorized or whose authorization has expired," noted *CongressDaily*. "A newly released CBO [Congressional Budget Office] report shows that in FY2000 appropriations bills, Congress provided funding for 137 unauthorized programs totaling about \$120.9 billion."

In order to alert other Members of Congress to this spectacular failure of fiscal oversight, members of the Caucus plan "to employ a combination of 'Dear Colleague' and personal letters, floor speeches and face-to-face meetings, as well as raising the issue at leadership meetings," *CongressDaily* reports.



**Rep. Tom Tancredo
(R-CO)**

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The Weasel King

Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? George Nethercutt (R-WA)

George Nethercutt's (R-WA) broken term limits promise is gaining more attention these days. On January 10, U.S. Term Limits began a series of radio ads in the Spokane area parody-

ing the hit ABC quiz show "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?" The ads target listeners in Nethercutt's congressional district.

"Name the Washington State Politician who said 'Your Word

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Message from the National Director

“An Honest Man”

Campaign finance reform is a hot topic. Senator John McCain of Arizona has made it the number one issue in his presidential campaign. When politicians talk about changing a system that so greatly benefits them, well, like most Americans, I'm pretty skeptical.

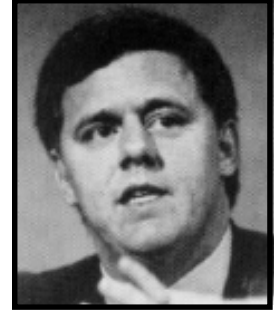
McCain has talked a lot about the corruption of our representatives and the appearance of corruption that turns off voters. We're all sick and tired of politicians trading political favors for campaign cash. But now several stories suggest McCain too has gone to bat for big campaign contributors trying to alter federal government policy to their advantage.

Has McCain sold out to big money or has he been snared by his own tangled net? One Arizona woman said, "John McCain is an honest citizen; nobody's going to buy him with contributions."

What is forgotten in all the talk of campaign finance is that our system depends on having honest men and women holding public offices. That's why an office is called a public trust.

No laundry list of rules and regulations can stop a corrupt politician from taking home a briefcase full of cash every day from a special interest. We can't stop dishonest people from being dishonest.

So what we must do is make sure the men and women we elect are honest to begin with and will stay that way. A congressman who makes a commitment to term limits has a strong defense against such corrupting influences. An honest man in Washington for a limited stay is likely to stay an honest man. ■



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul F." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Self-Limiters Expose Unauthorized Spending

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Getting these hundreds of billions of dollars back where they belong — in taxpayer hands — won't be easy. The Rules Committee routinely allows Congress to waive points of order against these types of unauthorized appropriations, allowing the unaccountable spending to continue and severely restricting the ability of whistleblowers to take action.

But the self-limiters, who include

Tancredo, Tom Coburn (R-OK), Mark Sanford (R-SC), Pat Toomey (R-PA), Nick Smith, (R-MI) and Jim DeMint (R-SC), proceed undaunted. *CongressDaily* notes that "Tancredo is calling on Caucus members to oppose rules that waive points of order against unauthorized spending, to offer amendments to spending bills striking funds for unauthorized programs and, 'if all else fails,' to encourage appropriators to limit funding for unauthorized programs to 90 percent of current spending of those programs."

Holding Congress accountable for its spending is a difficult road, but self-limiters have repeatedly shown that they're up to the task. They've chosen another important way to make a difference. As Tancredo notes, continued use of unauthorized appropriations signals "the deterioration of the power of the authorizing committees and thus the loss of congressional oversight and fiscal responsibility. This also has led to the shift of power away from the legislative branch toward the administration and federal bureaucrats." ■

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Vilsack to seek 2-term limit

Gov. Tom Vilsack said he will ask the Iowa Legislature to approve a constitutional amendment limiting a governor to two four-year terms.

Republican legislative leaders controlling the General Assembly said they are likely to approve such an idea when the Democratic governor formally presents it to them.

"If you can't get it done in eight years, then maybe it's time to move on," Vilsack said in an interview.

"You were supposed to come

out of the private sector, do your thing and then return to the private sector. The theory behind that was you didn't want people who were in this process forever.

"I think you get better policy when you have periodic change," Vilsack said.

If approved by the Legislature and by voters, the amendment would prevent a continuation of the longevity patterns set by Iowa's two governors before Vilsack: Robert Ray served 14 years, and Terry Branstad served 16

Vilsack said the proposed amendment will be part of a 77-point program he presents to lawmakers.

"I suspect it will fare well," House Speaker Brent Siegrist, R-Council Bluffs, said of the amendment. "I think we will have an interest in doing that."

Siegrist said that because Vilsack has said he would serve no more than two terms, it would not be seen as a political move aimed at him. ■

Excerpted from *The Des Moines Register*

Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? George Nethercutt (R-WA)

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is Your Bond,' and then broke his word," the first ad queries. The answer, of course, is George Nethercutt.

Continuing, the ad asks, "On his latest fundraising report, how many donors did George Nethercutt list from Eastern Washington? Did Nethercutt list ten thousand local supporters, five hundred, or just three?" On his 1999 mid-year FEC report, Nethercutt listed only three donors from his own congressional district.

The second ad asks, "What mascot recently won the award for best costume of 1999? Was it Otto the Spokane-a-saurus, Marty the Riverfront Marmot, or George the Weasel King?" The answer is George the Weasel King, awarded best costume of 1999 by the *Seattle Times*. The Doonesbury comic

strip first dubbed George Nethercutt the "Weasel King" last May. In August, the Eastern Washington Term Limits Action Committee unveiled a life-sized Weasel King mascot, who has followed Nethercutt around the district ever since.

The second ad also asks, "What politician declared, 'I meant it when I said six years is enough'? Was it Richard Nixon, Bill Clinton, or George Nethercutt?" The "contestant" answers correctly that it was George Nethercutt, adding that Nethercutt made the declaration, "before he got corrupted by power in Washington DC."

The series adds a twist in the third ad, where Nethercutt appears as a contestant. Nethercutt is asked, "How long will you serve in Congress? Will you serve six years, thirty years,

or forever?"

Actual audio clips of Nethercutt speaking during his 1994 campaign are used to provide the answer. Nethercutt's first answer is "I don't want to fall into that trap of feeling that Washington DC is more important than Washington State. For me, six years is enough."

Several other strong pro-term limits statements by Nethercutt are used in the ad, followed by more recent statements waffling on the issue. The announcer is left asking Nethercutt, "How about trying a lifeline?"

This radio ad series will run continuously for an indefinite period of time, and will periodically change to include new questions and answers from the contestants on the show. ■

Don't Extend Term Limits

South Dakota voters eight years ago approved a constitutional amendment limiting members of the state Legislature to serve no more than eight consecutive years in the House or the Senate. The measure passed by a whopping 64 percent to 36 percent margin. One-third of the Legislature cannot run for re-election this year, and not surprisingly, lawmakers are considering a constitutional amendment to extend the term limits to 12 consecutive years.

State Rep. J.P. Duniphan, R-Rapid City, is a co-sponsor of HJR 1001 that would place on the next ballot a constitutional amendment limiting state lawmakers' terms to 12 consecutive years. "People voted for term limits because they're disgusted with Washington (D.C.)," she said, noting that South Dakota has a "citizen legislature" and that turnover among lawmakers is 30 percent. Rep. Duniphan, who cannot run for her seat in 2002 if she seeks re-election, said she voted for the measure when it passed the House last week on a 48-16 vote because 12-year term limits preserve "institutional memory." She also said that longer terms would reduce the power of lobbyists and state government workers during legislative sessions, however

that argument seems counterintuitive to us because legislators who view themselves as career politicians will be more inclined to trade political favors with lobbyists and others in return for support for their re-election.

Besides, Rep. Duniphan said, "voters always have the right to vote (lawmakers) out of office."

Voters do have the right to vote lawmakers out of office, but the power of incumbency often discourages qualified candidates from running in the first place, giving voters less choice at election time. It is a fact that the voters have already voted all of the incumbents out of office after eight years when they enacted term limits.

Former state Rep. Don Frankenfeld agrees that the lack of term limits on the national level is a much more serious problem than at the state level where turnover is considerably higher. But he said the will of the voters who supported eight-year limits should be respected. "The republic won't come crashing down because a few lawmakers have to leave office."

U.S. Term Limits, the national advocacy group for term limits, released a survey conducted Jan. 31 that found South Dakota voters still

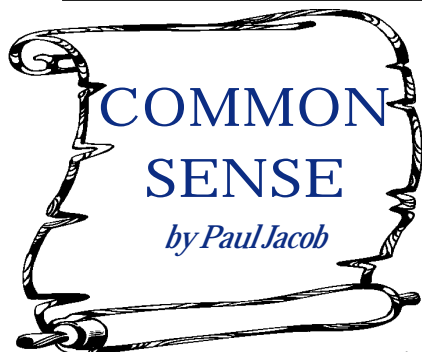
support eight-year term limits by a 68.2 percent to 24.8 percent margin, and that 55.1 percent of voters believe lawmakers want to extend term limits because "they simply want to stay in power longer."

We disagree with the argument that term limits chases capable people out of office. The president of the United States is limited to two terms, and the American people trust a rookie to run the country for no more than eight years. Thirteen state senators out of 35 cannot seek re-election this year and four more must leave after 2002; in the House, 20 representatives out of 70 are barred from running again this year, and eight more must retire after 2002.

Nevertheless, the people of South Dakota were not naïve when they changed the Constitution in 1992. Let's allow their decision to take effect before trying to change it. It is our belief that term limits will be barely noticed by anyone other than state lawmakers. The state Senate should reject this proposed amendment.

State lawmakers should listen to the voters: At the end of eight years, pack up your stuff and go home! ■

Reprinted from the *Rapid City Journal*



The Weekly Radio Commentary of the U.S. Term Limits Foundation

“My Favorite Quitters”

As the presidential campaign heats up, politicians are apt to get even nastier in attacking their opponents. No one does that better than Vice-President Al Gore.

Gore has claimed to be the inventor of the Internet, the inspiration for the book *Love Story*, and a ghostwriter for Hubert Humphrey in 1968. In each case, our impressive Vice-President has been forced to admit his claims were, let’s just say, not true.

Now comes an ugly scene in New Hampshire where Gore’s campaign workers splashed mud on Senator Bob Kerry of Nebraska and called Rep. Jerry Nadler of New York “fatso.” All of this came as both men were campaigning for Gore’s Democratic opponent, Bill Bradley. It was intended to prevent the two from speaking to reporters. Gore’s spokesman later defended the thuggish behavior as merely an exercis-

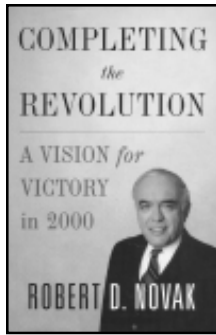
ing of the First Amendment.

But here's the kicker: Gore has attacked Bradley for stepping down from the U.S. Senate after 3 terms, as if everyone should worship the idea of a lifetime of Washington power-wielding. And now his campaign workers chant “Quitter, quitter” at Sen. Kerry, who is leaving office after 18 years.

Our country was founded by those striving to limit political power. George Washington stepped down after two terms as president to make the point that our country shouldn’t allow anyone to monopolize political power. Abraham Lincoln stepped down after one term in Congress.

Were Lincoln and Washington quitters? Ask Al Gore. ■

Does your local radio station carry COMMON SENSE? If not, ask them to call 1-800-733-6440 for a FREE subscription. Provided to radio stations three times a week.



Don't Be Afraid of Term Limits

Excerpts from Robert Novak's new book:
Completing the Revolution: A Vision for Victory in 2000

“**T**erm limits are . . . an underreported yet crucial aspect of the Republican problem. A self-term-limited member of Congress looked at things differently. It was a matter of in-and-out, not caring about the flesh-pots. The term-limited members were more radical, more interested in issues, less worried about losing. These definitely were not the leaders of the congressional party.”

“**[T**erm limits] really was about trying to install citizen-politicians who would pass legislation that was very difficult to pass otherwise — in particular, radical tax reform.”

“**I**n 1994, when the Republicans won control of the House of Representatives for the first time in forty years, one of the most popular items in their Contract with America was term limits. In every poll, term limits had broad support — almost always more than 70 percent approved — a level that reflected widespread dissatisfaction with the Clinton administration, disillusionment with politics in general, and a lingering influence of Ross Perot's 1992 campaign against professional politicians.”

“**W**hile the most stringent term-limit proposal of six years service in Congress is derided for being too short, perhaps it is too long. Enjoying the pleasures of leadership turns citizen-legislators into professional politicians all too soon.”

“The most important betrayal of principle by the Republicans in Congress was their deception on term limits. The party had gladly accepted the contributions and the votes of the term-limits movement in 1994, but actually liked the idea no better than the Democrats did.”

“**R**epublican leaders fail to see that term limits will help to enact their agenda, even if they are not personally in Congress to see it take effect. The concept of term limits remains popular with ordinary Americans because it embodies the ideal of the citizen legislator, and only the citizen legislator can take the necessary action on spending, on reforms, on taxes, on Social Security, on Medicare, to reduce government.”

“**T**he Republicans really didn't mean it when they supported term limits in 1994. They were using term limits as a device, and that was made quite clear right after the election when Dick Armey, the new House majority leader, said, “Now that we have elected a Republican House, maybe there is no more need for term limits.” He later claimed he was misquoted, but he wasn't. And his cynicism was lethal to the cause of term limits in the 104th Congress.”

Candidate Spotlight:

Tim Johnson – Illinois Congressional District 15

Looking Out For Constituents

It's not too often that a 23-year member of a state legislature makes a convincing self-limited candidate for Congress. But Tim Johnson, candidate for the 15th Congressional District of Illinois, says he's always believed in citizen legislators as much as he does now — and the reason he stayed so long in state office is because he was able to work outside his part-time legislative office in his private law practice.

“As a legislator in Springfield I was just a short drive from my district, routinely able to make trips home after a day in the legislature,” Johnson wrote in a letter to constituents.

“I would never make the self-limit pledge if I thought it would harm my ability to represent the citizens of my congressional district. In fact, I believe the contrary is true. The seniority system in Congress hurts all of us because it rewards those who put their own reelection concerns above all else.”

**– Tim Johnson,
candidate for Illinois's
15th Congressional District**

“This has enabled me to live, work, and speak with my constituents every day.”

But since the rules of Congress prevent him from continuing to

work in his law practice, and since “Washington is more distant” from the daily lives of his constituents, Johnson is “committed to limiting my own terms in Congress.”

Johnson brings a wide range of both real-world and political experience to his candidacy, as a father, grandfather, and the founder and senior partner of an Urbana law firm.

Johnson has demonstrated a commitment to smaller, more-accountable government through the years, supporting “the elimination of the Illinois Inheritance Tax, the elimination of the sales tax on food and medicine, and property tax relief.”

But perhaps the best sign of his commitment to serving his constituents is his signature on the U.S. Term Limits Declaration.

“I am fully aware of how the seniority system works,” Johnson wrote. “I would never make the self-limit pledge if I thought it would harm my ability to represent the citizens of my congressional district. In fact, I believe the contrary is true. The seniority system in Congress hurts all of us because it rewards those who put their own reelection concerns above all else.” ■



Tim Johnson

Washington's culture of elitism

By Rep. Tom Coburn

The reporters who cover Congress must have been amazed to find, in a complicated funding bill passed by the Senate, a provision renaming the Centers for Disease Control and the National Library of Medicine after two incumbent members of the U.S. Senate — Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, and Arlen Specter, R-Pa. Even more surprising was the fact that, when this amendment was brought up, not a single senator spoke up to suggest there was anything improper in this self-flattery.

After all, Specter is the chairman and Harkin the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee that controls funding for the CDC and the Library of Medicine, and it was in their bill that the renaming provision was inserted. The amendment, proposed by Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, was moved on the floor by Sen. Harkin and accepted by Sen. Specter as part of his manager's amendment. They can't exactly claim this was done behind their backs. Apparently, the honorees thought it was a good idea to memorialize themselves with the Thomas R.

Harkin Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Arlen Specter National Library of Medicine.

We have reached a new low in Washington's culture of arrogance when federal agencies and their headquarters are renamed in honor of the career politicians who control their budgets.

Of course, there is a long tradition in Washington of naming things after former elected officials — but only after they are no longer in office. This time the Senate decided to stroke the egos of two current members, the two who happily control the purse strings of the agencies in question. Worse yet, it was done in a bill brought to the floor by these very senators.

When I learned about this, I issued a statement expressing my sadness at how out of touch so many of our political figures have become. The worst thing, I felt, was that no one in the Senate even seemed to think there was anything wrong with such obvious self-service! Reporters seemed to agree. The ones who called my office were incredulous. "Do you think maybe they didn't know this was in the bill?" "Didn't anyone object?" "Do they realize how this makes them look?" Those were the kinds of questions asked by journalists who are not at all naive about the arrogance of certain politicians.

Fortunately, the light of additional publicity helped Sens. Harkin and Specter realize their error. The self-congratulatory amendment was removed from the bill in conference committee. But the question remains, where is the judgment of a senator who thinks it is appropriate to rename a federal institution in honor of himself? How can they



Rep. Tom Coburn (R-OK)

expect to be taken seriously as servants of the public interest when they indulge in such an embarrassing act of self-flattery?

Those two senators, and their colleagues who apparently failed to notice how inappropriate this amendment was, seem to have forgotten that elected officials are supposed to be the servants of the people. Career politicians are inevitably tempted to forget that truth and to think of themselves as masters who deserve all the honors that can be heaped upon them.

That's why citizen legislators — people with real lives and real jobs who sacrifice some time from their careers to serve their country — are so vital to preserving our form of government. The whole Congress benefits from the presence and the perspective of those whose self-esteem does not depend on holding public office. And that is one reason why I am keeping my promise to serve no more than three terms in Congress. ■

Reprinted from *WorldNetDaily.com*

“We have reached a new low in Washington's culture of arrogance.”
— Rep. Tom Coburn (R-OK)