

CITIZEN LEGISLATORS

More Self-Limiters Keep Their Word in 2002

Six members of Congress who pledged to limit their time in office are beginning their final term. Scheduled to leave office in 2002 are Reps. John Baldacci (D-ME), John Cooksey (R-LA), Dan Miller (R-FL), John Thune (R-SD), Ron Lewis (R-KY), and Bob Schaffer (R-CO).

Baldacci, Cooksey, Miller and Thune have all reconfirmed their pre-election pledges at this early stage.

According to a Aug. 8 article in the *Yankton Press and Dakotan*, Thune said, "I've had a lot of people come up to me and tell me to forget that I said I would only serve three terms but I just can't do that. . . . In my mind,

that is not an acceptable course of action. I believe you have to say what you mean and mean what you say."

A seventh congressman who pledged to leave in 2002, Rep. Rick Hill (R-MT), has decided to leave office earlier than he originally planned. He's stepping down after the current session ends.

They will join the ranks of the citizen legislators who are leaving office at the end of this term, thanks to similar pledges — Reps. Matt Salmon (R-AZ), Tom Coburn (R-OK), Mark Sanford (R-SC), Charles T. Canady (R-FL), Jack Metcalf (R-WA), Helen Chenoweth-Hage (R-ID), and Tillie Fowler (R-FL). ■



Rep. John Thune (R-SD) recently reconfirmed his self-limit pledge

INSIDE

Committee Chair Limits
— page 2

Time Runs Out
— page 2

Newcomers
— page 3

Anything Can Happen
— page 5

Term Limits & Diversity
— page 7

INTERACTIVITY

Web Site Sees Record Usage

In the days surrounding the 2000 elections, the U.S. Term Limits web site set one usage record after another as web surfers logged on to check for news of how term limits fared across the nation. The site's highest-traffic day, November 8, surpassed the previous record (set on November 7) by over 39 percent.

Of course, we had good news to report, with Nebraska joining eighteen other states with term-limited legislatures, measures

overwhelmingly passed in California, Florida, Maryland and New Mexico limiting locally-elected officials, three new self-limited congressional candidates elected to Congress, and a universal rejection of professional politicians' attempts to repeal term limits.

Visit www.termlimits.org frequently in the coming year as we update the site with new information, news, features and interactivity. ■



MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Factions Unbound

Recently I talked about how one of our Founding Fathers, James Madison, diagnosed the problem of special interests long before they became the kind of headache they are today. Madison knew how the sugar lobby would behave before there was a sugar lobby.

We say special interest. Madison's word was faction. There are two ways to try to control "the violence of faction," Madison explained. One is to limit the causes of faction. But you can't stop people from having different opinions and interests and we must never stop people from expressing or acting upon those opinions and interests. Sadly, that's what some proposals for Campaign Finance Reform threaten to do.

Liberty is to faction what air is to fire, said Madison. You can't save freedom by destroying freedom. So

instead of trying to limit the causes of special interests, we should try to limit the effects.

Madison thought the Republican principles enshrined in the Constitution would go far to "secure the public good and private rights" against the dangerous effects of faction. He was right. But he didn't realize how strong a faction politicians themselves would become, thanks to their virtually limitless hold on power.

The Founding Fathers thought about making term limits a part of the Constitution, but few people desired a political career back then. So in the end they decided it wasn't necessary. Big mistake, as Jefferson realized at the time.

Not one that's too late to correct, though. ■

ROTATION OF POWER

Term Limits on Committee Chairs to Remain

Term limits on committee chairmen in the House of Representatives are safe. On November 15 the Republican majority decided to keep the six-year limit intact. "As a result, some of the most powerful lawmakers in the House will have to give up their posts when the next Congress convenes in January," the Associated Press wrote.

Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) "called the rule a disincentive for term-limited chairmen to stay in the House, and was a primary reason some chair-

men decided not to seek re-election," according to the Associated Press report.

The *Washington Times* opined, "The Republican leadership in the House believed that a promise made should be a promise kept, and they have held to the mainsail of commitment in spite of the stormy congressional session that lies ahead. In doing so, they have demonstrated that they are a party of principle and law."

Indeed, although term limits on com-

mittee chairmen seems to be a bipartisan issue in Congress. Last April, House minority leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO) said he was prepared to keep the limits in place if the Democrats regained the majority.

USTL's National Director, Paul Jacob, said, "While the term limits movement takes no position on which party we prefer to see in the majority, we are very pleased that regardless of who is in control, term limits on committee chairmen are here to stay." ■

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Time Runs Out For Legislators

By Kathleen Gray

State Rep. Hubert Price couldn't open the drawer of his desk in the state Capitol.

"This is the third time I've asked to have this drawer fixed," the Democrat from Pontiac said to anyone who would listen.

"I don't have much time left, you know, and I want it fixed before I leave."

His half-joking tirade was borne out of frustration.

This week, he and 20 other state representatives will leave their seats in Lansing, forced out of office by term limits.

Approved by voters in 1992, term limits allow state House members to serve three 2-year terms, while senators and the statewide elected offices of governor, attorney general and secretary of state can serve two 5-year terms.

And for people who have dedicated much of their professional lives to elected public service, the transition is challenging.

"I'm only 54. I'm still a young man," said Price, who served for 17 years on the Oakland County Board of Commissioners before being elected to the state House in a 1993 special election. "I look at this as merely a hiatus because I'd like to think I can still make some contribution."

But for at least the next two years, it will have to be in the private sector.

Price has created a company, tentatively called Synergistics Consulting, to follow up on one of his passions in the Legislature — strategic workforce development training. He plans to line up clients, such as

colleges and private industry, to develop training programs in areas where workers are needed, such as computer-aided drafting and Web page design.

He concentrated in that area as a member of the House Appropriations Committee, trying to get money for training people who were going from welfare to work. During his term, Price was instrumental in getting \$2.2 million in state funds to start an advanced training program at Oakland Community College that trained poor residents for computer jobs at EDS and Kelly Services.

For state Rep. Terry Geiger, R-Lake Odessa, the challenge is staying in the public eye for the next two years while he waits to run for the state Senate seat now held by the term-limited Sen. Joanne Emmons, R-Big Rapids.

Geiger said he will stay active in party politics, both on the local and state level. He is hoping to use his chairmanship of the Appropriations Committee, which helps craft the state's \$37-billion budget, to land a job with the administration, perhaps with the state's Department of Management and Budget.

For Rep. Paul Tesanovich, D-L'Anse, it's not too hard to keep his name in the public's mind.

"My name isn't one that people generally forget," he said, explaining that his name is an unusual one and that it is well-known in the Upper Peninsula.

"But by the same token, my opinions aren't as newsworthy when I'm not in the seat." ■

—Excerpted from the Detroit *Free Press*

This week, [21] state representatives will leave their seats in Lansing, forced out of office by term limits. Approved by voters in 1992, term limits allow state House members to serve three 2-year terms, while senators and the statewide elected offices of governor, attorney general and secretary of state can serve two 5-year terms.

Newcomers to the Legislature

The Los Angeles Times

It's back to school day in the Capitol—actually, the first day of school for 28 new legislators.

The buzzer sounds for a new two-year legislative session. But the institution's not what it used to be. The main reason is term limits.

Better because rapid turnover has generated more diversity. There will be 27 Latinos among the 119 lawmakers sworn in, according to the Associated Press. There were only seven in 1990 when California voters imposed term limits. There'll be 34 women; in 1990, there were just 18. Credit the women with assuring passage of school reform.

Worse because institutional memory is almost gone except for a handful of veterans. New lawmakers now don't have enough time to acquire policy expertise or the power to really lead.

The position's also less desirable. The stipend's OK—\$99,000 annually; \$113,850 for a house leader. Plus there's a daily \$121 tax-free expense check. But voters have refused a pension plan for all lawmakers elected after 1990.

And no matter how competent they are, Assembly members get booted after six years; senators after eight. So there's a distracting game of musical chairs, a perpetual plotting toward the next political post.

Today, however, is about assigning desks, taking oaths and reconfirming leaders. After warm handshakes and hugs, the lawmakers will recess until Jan. 3. Then, presumably, they'll begin dealing with such dilemmas as electricity rate rip-offs and how to spend another multibillion-dollar tax surplus.

But don't minimize the importance of this day for the 28 freshmen, all elected to the Assembly. (There actually are 31 new Assembly members, but three have previous legislative experience. And 10 new senators have shuffled over from the Assembly.)

Assemblyman Abel Maldonado (R-Santa Maria) remembers his first swearing-in two years ago:

"I was overwhelmed—a young Hispanic from a family that once had nothing, there in the big state Capitol. My father was an immigrant bracero irrigator. To have his son sworn in 35 years later as a state representative, I gotta tell you, it was the best day of my life.

We both had tears in our eyes. This is a man who has a sticker on his truck: 'Broken English Spoken Perfectly.'"

Maldonado, 33, had another big day last summer when he spoke in Spanish to the Republican National Convention in prime time.

His advice to freshmen: "Don't forget where you came from."

I also asked other legislators what advice they'd give freshmen.

"Keep your mouth shut," suggests Assembly Speaker Bob Hertzberg (D-Sherman Oaks). "Don't get out there and offer your opinion on every issue. Listen. Do your homework and do it again."

Spoken like a leader who doesn't enjoy back-talk.

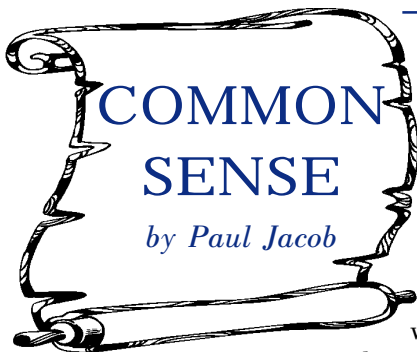
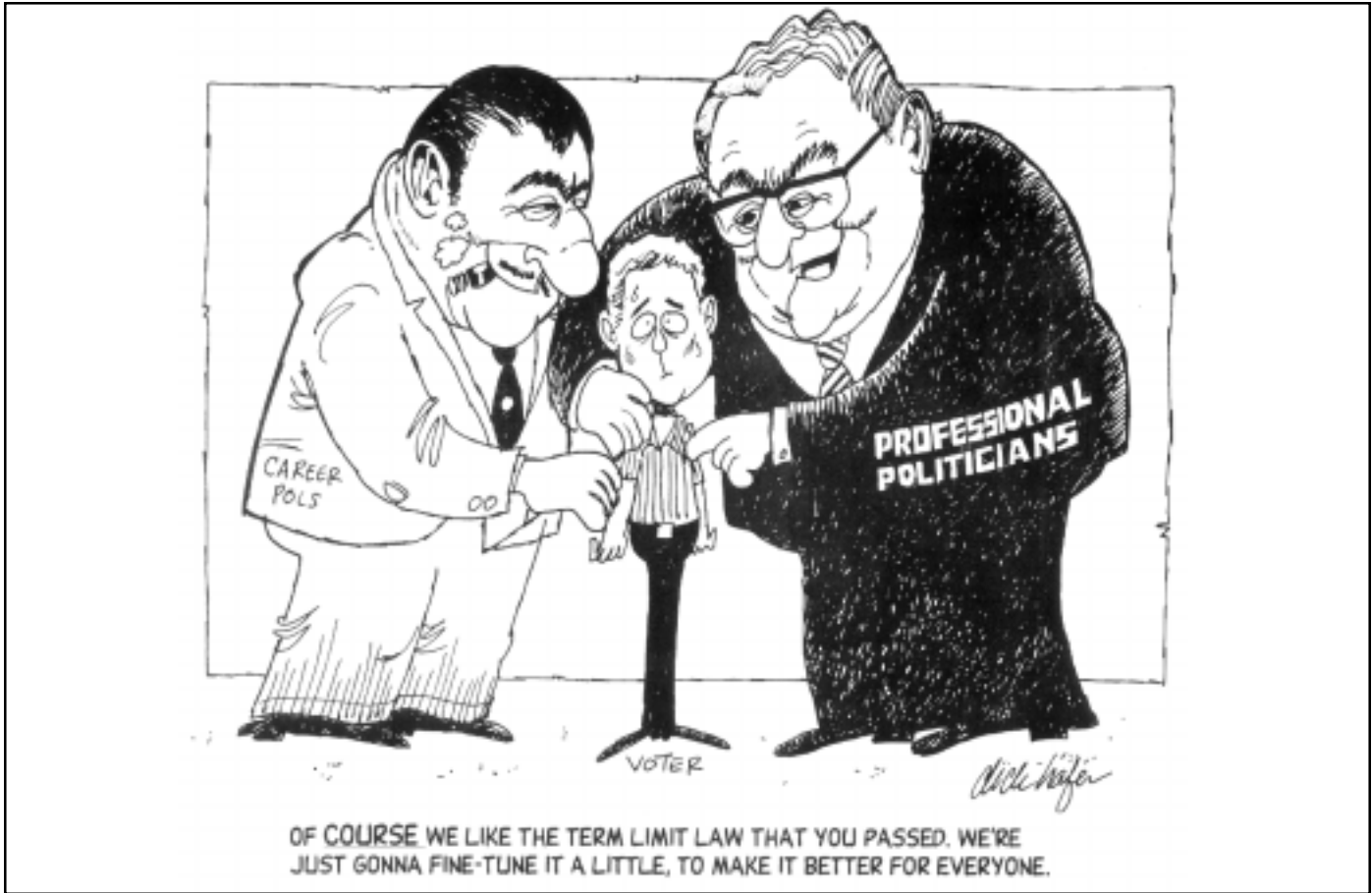
Under term limits, observes sophomore Assemblyman Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento), "it's not as if members can afford to sit on the back bench and wait their turn. They're expected to get right on in there."

"My advice," he adds, "is focus, focus, focus. The key is to find issues that have not received real political prominence, but need leadership. That's where you can really make an impact."

Second-term Assemblyman Herb Wesson (D-Culver City) cautions: "These guys should never fall in love with their bills." Measures often are butchered, he notes, and authors shouldn't take it personally. Compromise. ■

Excerpted from the *Los Angeles Times*

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**THE WEEKLY RADIO COMMENTARY OF
THE U.S. TERM LIMITS FOUNDATION**

Anything Can Happen

America is a place where if you work hard enough anything you can dream can happen. Well, thanks in part to term limits.

Take the story of Phillip Brutus. Many years ago this Haitian immigrant was a part-time janitor at a law firm. While emptying the trash one day, he overheard the senior partner quizzing junior lawyers on Latin legal terms. When the junior lawyers were stumped, Brutus spoke up with the correct answer.

In that room full of raised eyebrows and jaws dropped wide open, he decided to become a lawyer. After years of poverty and sacrifice, Brutus earned his law degree and opened up a practice.

Then he dreamed of serving his community in the state legislature. In Florida, incumbency effectively blocked new people. Most incumbent legislators didn't face any competition at all. Phillip's challenge of a powerful

incumbent went the way of virtually all such challenges: he lost.

Then Florida's term limits law took effect and all that changed. Suddenly there were more candidates running then you could shake a stick at. Brutus sought an open seat where there was no entrenched incumbent and he won — becoming the first Haitian-American elected to Florida's Legislature.

When incumbents can no longer monopolize our politics, voters get real choices and anything can happen. Our economy has long been open to those who work hardest and best serve their customers.

Shouldn't our political process work this way, too? With term limits it does. ■

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THEY SAID IT

Term Limits Score

“Score one for term limits. The rapid turnover in the Legislature brings fresh faces and fresh troops, eager once more to roll the rock up the hill.”
—San Diego *Union Tribune*
December 11, 2000

Participation Essential

“[W]ith the emergence of term limits that allow state representatives to serve only three two-year terms, House members can't afford to sit on the sidelines if they want to have a meaningful role in legislative proceedings, [Arkansas State Rep. Steve] Schall said.”
—Arkansas *Democrat Gazette*
December 6, 2000

[New York City Council Speaker Peter] Vallone said “it's political suicide” to try to lift or revise term limits. . . . When asked about a possible revolt by Council members slated to get the boot in 2001, Vallone said, “There is none.”

**—New York *Daily News*
November 15, 2000**

The Nation is Watching

“The Nov. 7 election was the first in which the full effect of [Florida's] term limits, passed in the early 1990s, has taken hold. As a result, 75 members of the 160-member Florida legislature are new to their jobs, and their first task will be to meet in the national spotlight.”
—*Bloomberg*
December 1, 2000

New Faces Bring New Solutions

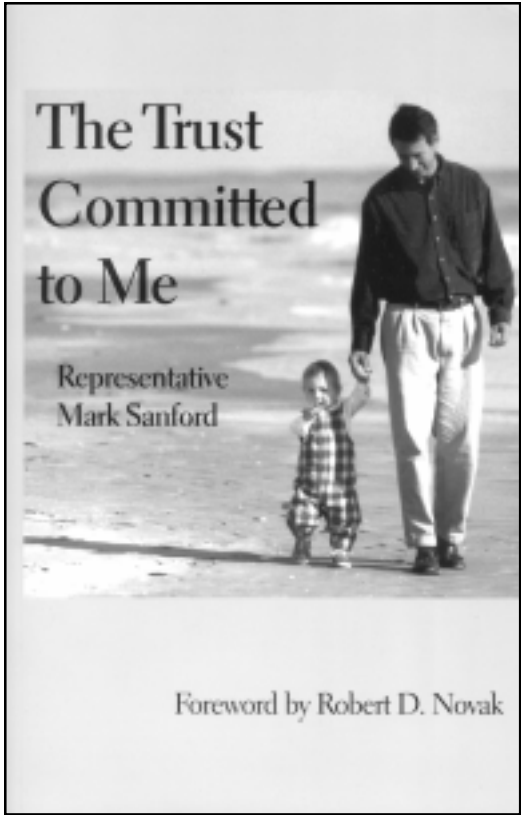
“Those who are worried about bureaucrats and lobbyists taking control of the State House because more legislators are relatively new should consider that the opposite just might be true. Fresh blood has had less time to build up the cosy chumships that grease wheels. And new faces may be more likely to look for new solutions, rather than settle for the ‘that's the way we've always done it’ sledgehammer that oldtimers use to squash rookie enthusiasms.”
—Portland (Maine) *Press Herald*
December 11, 2000

Veterans No More

“Next year, more than one-third of the 65 lawmakers in the [Colorado] House will be new. The veteran lawmakers in the House have six years' experience. Before term limits, lawmakers often served several decades.”
—*Rocky Mountain News* (Colorado)
November 30, 2000

New Focus on Quality

“The new six-year limit [on House committee chairmen] has created an atmosphere in which seniority is not as valued as it once was, and geography, legislative accomplishments, and fundraising prowess are becoming increasingly important.”
—*Bergen Record* (New Jersey)
November 15, 2000



A Testament to Principle

Excerpts from Rep. Mark Sanford's new book:
The Trust Committed to Me

“A well documented but little discussed study by the National Taxpayers Union showed that regardless of party, the longer a person is in office, the greater his tendency to spend the taxpayers' money. It's not that representatives become evil people — just that they're human. Basic biology teaches how remarkably adaptable human beings are to the world around us. Unfortunately, Washington is a place where large sums of money become rounding errors. Over time, congressmen become accustomed to the large sums and the inevitable rounding errors that are part and parcel of the political process. And while being in Washington may change the lawmaker's perspective, what it doesn't change is how hard folks at home must work to send that same money to Capitol Hill. For me this always meant less is more when it comes to term limits. The fewer the number of years in office, the less time to grow accustomed to the idea that \$50 million is a rounding error.”

“It's . . . wrong-headed to believe that a self-limiter can't influence Congress as a whole. In fact, what Congress most needs is leadership, and this comes only with the independence of knowing that politics isn't your career. In the summer of 1999, Tom Coburn of Oklahoma gummed up the works on several appropriation bills because the spending course we were on entailed robbing money from Social Security. He thought it dishonest for Congress to pledge not to touch Social Security money, and then proceed on a path that would guarantee the opposite.

The supposedly powerful committee chairmen were going with the flow along with everyone else. They'd rather play along with the charade than jeopardize their chairmanships. With a few exceptions, committee chairmen vote in lockstep with leadership not necessarily because they like a budget or bill but because they feel they have to. But a citizen legislator like Tom Coburn doesn't feel he has to go along to get along. He's free to act on his conscience and fight for what is right. Tom did what the folks back home so often urge us to do: please stand up for the principles that took you to Washington. Staying true to those ideals is much more important to the people of my district than the federal money. It means that you're justifying their trust.”

“[T]he American people managed to wage a war of independence, erect a radical new form of government, and weather the storms of financial panic, civil war, depression, and industrialization, all without the divinely inspired vision of professional politicians. American was a country founded by political amateurs.”

“If self-limits do nothing else, they afford a legislator the freedom to stand up for what he believes. If any of us had harbored dreams of a long House career, or craved the title Mr. Chairman, none of us would have voted against a rule on legislation that the party leaders wanted. Such a vote would have doomed us to the backbench for decades.”

Order Rep. Sanford's illuminating book today!

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THE LAST WORD

Diversity Through Term Limits

by Bill Ainsworth

He's a conservative Republican who strongly supports the concept of term limits. His three terms ended in the Assembly this year and he's glad to be done with the Capitol.

In fact, former Assemblyman Steve Baldwin of El Cajon jokes that he'd only return to Sacramento under court order.

Still, Baldwin believes that term limits should be extended from the six years allowed in the Assembly to 10. Term limits allow state senators to serve eight years.

"You're not there long enough to become an expert in any one area," Baldwin said. "When I look at my colleagues, staff people are constantly whispering into their ear because they don't know enough about the subject."

Baldwin's support shows how broad the consensus is among lawmakers for lengthening terms, with conservative Republicans joining Democrats in the cry to extend the terms. There's only one problem with this view: The public doesn't buy it.

Numerous polls show strong public support for the term limits. Lawmakers feared these polls earlier this year when they rejected a proposed ballot measure to extend terms to 12 years in each house.

In November, voters showed their support by rejecting Proposition 33, a measure by legislators to restore the retirement benefits the term limits initiative took away. "It underscores a position I came to last year: The Legislature can't change term limits," said state Sen. Don Perata, D-Oakland. "It would seem too self-serving."

Supporters say term limits have loosened the iron grip that former Speaker Willie Brown held over the Assembly, elected a diverse new group of lawmakers and ended the embarrassing string of corrupt legislators who ended their careers in federal prison.

Ironically, term limits, which were aimed at ending the rule of one minority member — Brown, an African-American — brought far more minorities and women into the Legislature.

In the 10 years since term limits were passed, the number of women in the Assembly has grown from 13 to 25, the number of Latinos from four to 25 and the number of Asian-Americans from zero to three.

Supporters can also point out that there's been no legislative crisis since term limits took full effect in 1996.

In part that's because of people like Assembly Speaker Bob Hertzberg, D-Van Nuys. Two years ago Hertzberg set up a training institute for freshmen that already has helped all the new members being sworn in today to learn how to be a legislator. Last year, Hertzberg won election to the speakership with rare bipartisan support.

By running the lower house so smoothly, Hertzberg is undermining the political case for change. With no crisis, supporters of an extension, including Hertzberg, are limited to subtle arguments about the growing power of lobbyists and staff.

Those arguments might persuade students in a political science class, but their appeal to the public is bound to have strict limits. ■

Excerpted from the San Diego *Union Tribune*

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