

# NO UNCERTAIN TERMS

The Newsletter of the  
Term Limits Movement

May-June 2002 • VOLUME 10 • NUMBER 5

## ANGRY VOTERS

### Idaho's Upcoming Election Most Competitive in State's History

According to the *Idaho Statesman*, it's the most competitive election in the state's history, with 414 candidates filing to run in state legislative and other contests.

The tsunami has been spawned by widespread disaffection with the Party of the Incumbent.

"Libertarians enlisted 40 candidates in the 11th hour," the *Idaho Statesman* reports. "Democrats entered candidates for every state office and all but 20 legislative seats. There will

even be Democratic primaries — the likes of which haven't been seen in years by the party, which holds a mere 12 of 105 seats in the Legislature."

Of the 76 legislators who voted to kill term limits, 67 are seeking re-election; only six are running entirely unopposed.

Most current legislators are Republican, but it's not that Idaho is anti-Republican all of a sudden. It's that voters are especially motivated this time around — especially upset, that is,

with the latest Incumbency Protection Act.

Among the issues being debated this year are education policy and tax policy. But in the minds of many voters, the matter that looms largest is how their own alleged representatives double-crossed them by scrapping the term limits they had passed in 1994 (and affirmed again and again at the ballot box in the years since).

To many Idahoans, it's as if lawmakers are saying, "Okay, we tried to do

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Idaho House Speaker Bruce Newcomb voted to kill his state's term limits law, then voted to overturn the governor's veto. Newcomb has called term limits "Un-American."

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## STAYING POWER

### Arizona Term Limits Remain Safe

A March bill sponsored by Arizona State Representative Debra Brimhall, designed to kill the state's legislative term limits, has been withdrawn.

"It doesn't look like Arizona voters are going to get a chance to weigh in on the subject of term limits, at least not this year," reported the *Arizona Daily Sun*.

U.S. Term Limits had denounced the bill in Arizona radio ads:

"Arizona voters made term limits a part of our state constitution

with 74 percent of the vote. And now, an out-of-touch politician thinks she's smarter than 74 percent of Arizona voters."

USTL held a March press conference in Arizona, pointing out that the overwhelming defeat of California's Prop. 45 indicates that voters have little tolerance for politicians who try to weasel out of term limits. This lesson is particularly applicable to a state like Arizona, which has such strong public support for the issue. ■



## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Founding Representatives

The Founding Fathers were wary of any prolonged concentration of political power — whether that power was held by a monarch or by an elected representative. So they advocated term limits — what they called “rotation in office.”

“In free governments the rulers are the servants,” wrote Benjamin Franklin, “and the people their superiors and sovereigns. For the former, therefore, to return among the latter is not to degrade, but to promote them.”

According to Roger Sherman, “Representatives ought to return home and mix with the people [so as not to] acquire the habits of the seat of government, which might differ from those of their Constituents.”

Thomas Jefferson concurred. “If the principle of rotation be a sound one . . . no pretext should ever be permitted to dispense with it, because there never will be a time when real difficulties will not exist and furnish a plausible pretext for dispensation.”

The pseudonymous pamphlet writer Brutus might have been reporting on our own time: “Every body acquainted with public affairs knows how difficult it is to remove from office a person who [has] long been in it. It is seldom done except in cases of gross misconduct.”

Term limits were not included in the U.S. Constitution ratified in 1789. Several state constitutions did provide for term limits, however. For example, the Virginia Constitution of 1776 declared that officeholders, quote, “should, at fixed periods, be reduced to a private station, [and] return . . . into that body from which they were originally taken.”

The Articles of Confederation, the law of the land prior to the U.S. Constitution, also required rotation in office. The articles said that no person should remain in office for more than three years out of any term of six years. It’s clear that the Revolutionaries wanted Citizen Legislators, not Career Politicians.

Indeed, Madison’s original plan for the Constitution did require term limits. But in the end, the drafters decided that a formal stipulation was unnecessary, since the rewards of serving in Congress were few and the privations many. (No million-dollar pensions for ex-congressmen in those days.) Remarkably, this assumption of good faith, which we would now consider rather naïve, held good for more than a century. Our first President, George Washington, inaugurated a tradition of a voluntary two-term limit on the Presidency that lasted until the age of FDR.

There are still voluntary self-limiters. Former Representative Matt Salmon, now running for governor of Arizona, is one congressman who kept his promise to step down after three terms.

“The fact is, people do cast their votes based on their political longevity,” observed Salmon during his last term in office. “If you intend to be here twenty years, build up that pension, make a career out of this place, it’s a frightening thing to have your job on the line every two years. . . . Well, being safe never changed the course of American politics. This is my last term. And I’ll be damned if I’m going to come back here and just mark time. Come back to make a difference, that’s the name of the game.”

The modern term limits movement has been around little more than a decade. But the idea has been around for centuries. If you want to be inspired by a citizen legislator, you could read up on modern-day statesmen like Matt Salmon, Mark Sanford, Tom Coburn, and other such men and women of integrity.

Or you could read up on the Founders. And there’s no better place to start than with David McCullough’s wonderful new Pulitzer-prize-winning biography of our second President, John Adams (see our review on page 4). Enjoy! ■

<p><b>NO UNCERTAIN TERMS</b>  MAY-JUNE 2002 • VOLUME 10 • NUMBER 5  Edited by Eric D. Dixon — <a href="mailto:eric@termlimits.org">eric@termlimits.org</a>  Contributing Writers:  David M. Brown  Kurt A. Gardiner  Craig Albers  A Publication of  U.S. TERM LIMITS FOUNDATION  10 G St., NE, SUITE 410  WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002  <b>1-800-733-6440</b></p>	<p><b>USTLF BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>Peter Ackerman</td><td>Travis Anderson</td></tr> <tr><td>Steven Baer</td><td>Terence Considine</td></tr> <tr><td>Edward Crane</td><td>Mike Ford</td></tr> <tr><td>Neal Goldman</td><td>Jerry Hirsch</td></tr> <tr><td>M. Blair Hull</td><td>Sally Reed Impastato</td></tr> <tr><td>Paul Jacob</td><td>Kenneth Langone</td></tr> <tr><td>Ronald Lauder</td><td>Paul Raynault</td></tr> <tr><td>Howard Rich</td><td>Joseph Stilwell</td></tr> <tr><td>Donna Weaver</td><td>Bill Wilson</td></tr> </table>	Peter Ackerman	Travis Anderson	Steven Baer	Terence Considine	Edward Crane	Mike Ford	Neal Goldman	Jerry Hirsch	M. Blair Hull	Sally Reed Impastato	Paul Jacob	Kenneth Langone	Ronald Lauder	Paul Raynault	Howard Rich	Joseph Stilwell	Donna Weaver	Bill Wilson	<p><i>No Uncertain Terms</i> is published monthly at an annual subscription price of \$15. Third class postage paid, Washington, D.C.  <b>POSTMASTER:</b> Send address changes to U.S. Term Limits.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Term Limits On-Line!</b>  For the latest developments on term limits across America, visit our web site on the Internet at  <b><a href="http://www.ustermimits.org">www.ustermimits.org</a></b></p>
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## **PALM BEACH PETITION**

# Term-Limits Petition Effort Gathers Steam

By George Bennett, *Palm Beach Post*  
April 22, 2002

If Philip Blumel were pushing some other issue, politicians would be falling over themselves to cozy up to him and the grass-roots network he has quietly assembled. With a limited budget and a cadre of volunteers, the 36-year-old financial planner and registered Libertarian has guided the collection of more than 45,000 petition signatures — the most prolific local effort of its kind in more than a decade.

Blumel's issue, however, is one that's been ignored or scorned by much of the county's political elite: term limits for county commissioners.

So when Blumel and about 70 term-limits supporters gathered for a fundraiser in Lake Worth last week, only one candidate showed up. That was Boca Raton attorney Peter Feaman, a Republican seeking a state House seat that's open because legislative term limits are forcing out incumbent state Rep. Bill Andrews, R-Delray Beach.

The event raised \$10,703, and attendees turned in 995

new signatures.

Supporters of the eight-year limit on county commissioners have until Aug. 22 to turn in 45,969 signatures from registered county voters. They aim to turn in about 55,000 in early June, because many signatures inevitably turn out to belong to people who aren't voters, don't live in the county or have signed petitions more than once.

If the question gets on the county's November ballot, it's likely to pass. When term limits for state legislators were on the statewide ballot in 1992, 74.1 percent of Palm Beach County voters were in favor.

The last successful petition drive in Palm Beach County was a business-backed effort in 1988 that led to the creation of single-member districts for county commissioners. That campaign cost about \$225,000 (more than \$330,000 in today's bucks). The term limit effort has cost about \$40,000 so far. ■

**[Term limits for Palm Beach county commissioners] is the most prolific local effort of its kind in more than a decade.**

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## **RADIO WARS**

# Activists Fight Campaign to Kill Michigan Term Limits

In March, Eric O'Keefe, president of Americans for Limited Terms (ALT), denounced efforts by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan to have radio stations refuse to air his organization's term limits ads.

ALT began airing radio spots on select Michigan stations informing voters that Blue Cross and Blue Shield is engaged in an effort to weaken the term limits overwhelmingly imposed by the voters on the state legislature in 1992.

Blue Cross representatives telephoned radio stations asking them to refuse to air the ads. They then faxed an "Advisory to Station Managers," calling on them to "consider refusing

to run this ad." The advisory was signed by Steven Hess, "Senior Vice President, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary."

The letter claims that Richard Cole's efforts to weaken the term limits law are not done on behalf of Blue Cross. During this two-year period Cole has repeatedly identified himself by his Blue Cross title, including on signed columns attacking term limits. His title is "Senior Vice President for Corporate Communications." His job primarily involves dealing with the legislature, the media, and corporate lobbyists.

"It is clear that Mr. Cole is using his Blue Cross capital, the network of poli-

ticians, media contacts, and corporate lobbyists he has developed at Blue Cross, to organize an effort to weaken term limits," charged Mr. O'Keefe. He called the Blue Cross claim that it takes no position on this campaign by their head of Corporate Communications "ridiculous."

"If Mr. Cole had organized a petition drive to repeal the huge pay and pension increases the legislature grabbed last year, Blue Cross would have told him to shut up or retire. But they clearly nurtured his anti-term limits campaign. He is working to ingratiate Blue Cross with politicians who have a major say over issues very important to Blue Cross." ■

## Maintain an Independent Character

*John Adams* by David McCullough  
(New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001)

He was a one-term President, wedged between George Washington on the one hand and Thomas Jefferson on the other. You won't find his face on any bill or coin. Yet John Adams probably had as much to do with getting this country going as anyone.

If you want to get a real feel for the man, you could do a lot worse than to read David McCullough's sweeping biography *John Adams*, for which McCullough has just won the Pulitzer Prize (his second; McCullough also snagged a Pulitzer for his 1993 tome, *Truman*).

The Revolutionaries not only Thought but Did, on a grand scale. Adams was a farmer, a lawyer, a diarist, a rebel, an ambassador, a statesman. A constant writer, he left a gold mine of primary documents. These include a legendary correspondence that he maintained with his beloved wife Abigail during many enforced separations. Late in life, he corresponded voluminously with Thomas Jefferson, friend, colleague, and occasional adversary.

These two men were opposite in temperament, opposite in many of their ideas, opposite even in physique — Jefferson the tall, lean and reserved one, Adams short, portly and garrulous. They sometimes clashed, and bitterly: over the French Revolution, for instance — and, obviously, over the conduct of the Presidency.

Yet they also complemented each other. The story of their parallel careers is one of the most illuminating threads of McCullough's narrative. Prior to the Declaration of Independence, Adams was perhaps the most influential voice in the Continental Congress calling for full independence from England. Jefferson, of course, gave eloquent voice to that Declaration. By a coincidence that was not coincidence at all, Adams and Jefferson died on the exact same day: July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration's signing. They shared a love of liberty and a love of country.

McCullough's tale begins on the "Road to Philadelphia," shortly after the outbreak of the Revolution. Immediately we are swept away by the drama not just of the era, but of Adams's complex and fascinating character, a fascination that propels the reader through 656 colorful, fast-paced pages.

"He was John Adams of Braintree and he loved to talk. He was a known talker. There were some, even among his admirers, who wished he talked less, and he had particular regard for those, like General Washington, who somehow managed great reserve under almost any circumstance.

"John Adams was a lawyer and a farmer, a graduate of Harvard College, the husband of Abigail Smith Adams, the father of four children. He was forty years old and he was a revolutionary.

"Dismounted, he stood five feet seven or eight inches tall — about 'middle size' in that day — and though verging on portly, he had a straight-up, square-shouldered stance and was, in fact, surprisingly fit and solid. His hands were the hands of a man accustomed to pruning his own trees, cutting his own hay, and splitting his own firewood."

Adams was a man of incorruptible integrity and independence, a hard worker and a hard thinker. He had his shortcomings. He could be self-conscious, pugnacious, thin-skinned. As president, Adams bungled big-time by giving his blessing the Alien and Sedition Act, which sought to muzzle dissent, an act Jefferson rightly rescinded. Yet Adams also saved the nation from an unnecessary war, when many clamored for it.

He was a citizen legislator. Like many of the other Founders, Adams believed in "rotation in office," what we today call term limits. Representatives should be "Like bubbles on the sea of matter borne, They rise, they break, and to that sea return." In this way they will learn "the

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**"Like bubbles on the sea of matter borne, They rise, they break, and to that sea return.' This will teach [representatives] the great political virtues of humility, patience, and moderation, without which every man in power becomes a ravenous beast of prey."  
— John Adams**



"Book Review," cont. from page 4

great political virtues of humility, patience, and moderation, without which every man in power becomes a ravenous beast of prey."

In a marvelous letter to his son Thomas, Adams relates his vision of a true servant of the republic:

"Public business, my son, must always be done by somebody. It will be done by somebody or other. If wise men decline it, others will not; if honest men refuse it, others will not. A young man should weigh well his plans. Integrity should be preserved in all events, as essential to his happiness, through every stage of his existence. His first maxim then should be to place his honor out of reach of all men. In order to do this he must make it a rule never to become dependent on public employments for subsistence. Let him have a trade, a profession, a farm, a shop, something where he can honestly live, and then he may engage in public affairs, if invited, upon independent principles. My advice to my children is to maintain an independent character."

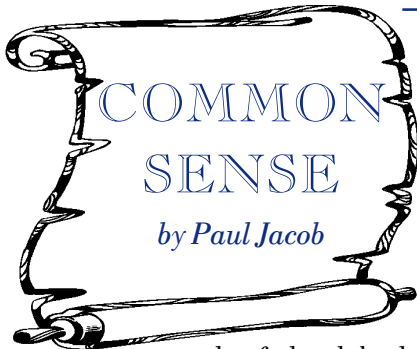
Those were the days. ■



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

### Their Reelection Budget

If you would like to receive  
**COMMON SENSE**  
by email, write to us at  
[CommonSense@termlimits.org](mailto:CommonSense@termlimits.org)



What's your favorite part of the federal budget? Education? Defense? Healthcare? Transportation?

How about reelection? That's right: reelection. To career politicians, "reelection" isn't just one item in the federal budget. It seems to be the whole point of almost everything they do.

The *Washington Post* editorial page, which despises term limits, ought to read the *Washington Post* news pages, particularly a recent article headlined, "Writing a Budget for Reelection." The *Post* says that U.S. Senator Tim Johnson of South Dakota has one big advantage in his reelection campaign: "It's called the federal budget."

Senator Johnson, recently appointed to the Appropriations Committee, is campaigning on his ability to wrestle chunks of money out of the federal budget and deliver them

to special interests in South Dakota. In short, don't elect me because of what I stand for, elect me because of the bucks I can spread around to those who play ball with me.

But the problem is much deeper than just Senator Johnson. As the *Post* reports, "leaders of both parties have routinely leaned on the appropriations panels to make extra efforts for lawmakers in tight races." In the last four years, special earmarks for spending in specific districts have more than tripled. An average of 15 such pork projects for every congressman.

One aide said, "That's what we do. You take care of your own." He didn't mean the folks back home; he meant incumbents who need yet another advantage to hang on to power. ■

*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 five times a week.*

## **THEY SAID IT**

### **S. Dakota Overhaul**

“When the legislative session starts next month there will be a lot of new faces in Pierre. The 8-year term limit takes its toll on some of the regular faces.

. . . There will be 32 lawmakers in the House and Senate who have never held office in Pierre.

—*KELO-TV* (Sioux Falls, SD)  
April 19, 2002

“**Most Folks Favor Term Limits**  
[Arkansas State Senator Mike] Beebe . . . talked about what he believes are the effects of term limits, which will have been completely implemented by the start of the next legislative session.

‘. . . The people of Arkansas wanted term limits. Whether you’re for term limits or against term limits, the will of the people still rules. It’s a little scary, but most folks favor term limits, so we have them and we have to live with them.’

—*Log Cabin Democrat* (Conway, AR)  
April 24, 2002

### **Term Limits Stops Good Ol’ Boy Politics**

“‘It’s good ol’ boy politics and term limits is the only way to stop them,’ [Morgan County, Alabama, District 4 Commissioner Stacy] George told his audience, which included people who have been protesting over issues at Decatur City Council and Board of Education meetings.

‘Anybody can do this job. I think Morgan County does a good job, but we can do a better job. I promise not to serve no more than three terms because after that you get stale.’

He added that politicians who stay longer than that become too powerful.

—*Decatur Daily* (Decatur, AL)  
April 23, 2002

## **Term Limits Dominate Idaho Election Issues**

**“The first comments out of the mouths of [Idaho state legislative] candidates have more to do with term limits and education spending than they do with the economy.”**

**—*The Idaho Statesman*  
April 20, 2002**

### **Term Limits Should Be Up to the Voters**

“[Maine] Republican gubernatorial candidates James Libby and Peter Cianchette faced each other in a debate Tuesday night [April 23], but had a tough time finding issues to disagree on.

. . . Term limits is [an] issue they differ on. Libby believes the term limits are a ‘good idea still,’ while Cianchette never supported it. However, both said it was not up to the Legislature to change the state’s term-limits law but up to the people to vote by referendum. Current law prohibits legislators from serving more than four consecutive terms in any one seat.

—*The Times Record* (Brunswick, ME)  
April 24, 2002

## MOVING ON

# Rep. Van Hilleary Maintains Term Limits Pledge

“It’s time to restore Tennesseans’ trust in state government, and the best way to do that is to sit down with people in their offices, schools and at their kitchen tables to talk about what matters most to them — jobs, education, and security.”

These are the words of Tennessee’s 4th District Representative, Van Hilleary, who has a reputation for candor and integrity.

**“Hilleary had said he considered term limits to be the most important plank of the House GOP’s ‘Contract With America.’”**  
—*Congressional Quarterly*

In 1994, while running for the House of Representatives, Hilleary was a vocal advocate of term limits and promised to serve no more than 12 years in Congress. When he leaves office at the end of this term, he will have kept his word.

Although he is stepping down from Congress, he hopes to continue to serve the people of Tennessee through public office. Rep. Hilleary has set his sights on his state’s gubernatorial race.

Rep. Hilleary began his campaign tour in early April, spending the first days in small Tennessee towns, family homes and local businesses across the state.

“We can fix the budget. We can reform TennCare. We can get our house in order,” said Hilleary. “But that’s the minimum you should expect from your next governor.”

(For more information on Hilleary and his race, visit [www.vanhillearyforgovernor.com](http://www.vanhillearyforgovernor.com)) ■



**Rep. Van Hilleary (R-TN)**  
Rep. Hilleary is leaving office at the end of this term, keeping the term limits pledge he made in 1994.

*“Angry Voters,” cont. from page 1*

this the polite way. We asked you to drop this term limits thing on your own; but you wouldn’t play along. So to heck with democracy and the constitution. To heck with that so-called ‘right’ of citizen initiative you think you have. We’re killing term limits on our own, unilaterally, regardless. Nyah nyah. Watcha gonna do about it?”

When the Grinch stole Christmas, all the little Whos of Whoville celebrated the holiday anyway, undaunted. Similarly, although the career politicians in Idaho may have made off with term limits — for now — they’re powerless to abduct the democratic spirit which made such a reform possible to begin with.

“I don’t think they have the right to override the people,” says Idaho citizen Athie Crouch. “It made me mad,

because they said the people didn’t know what they were doing.”

“I can’t figure out why something that’s been voted on by the people has been met by such an attitude from the Legislature,” says Phil Archey. “The people have spoken.”

“The people voted for it,” says Nancy Collins. “This is not a dictatorship.”

“Citizens are miffed at the Legislature,” concludes commentator Dan Popkey, who worked as signature-gatherer-for-an-hour to see how people felt about a new initiative to restore term limits. (Turns out most people like the idea.)

Jack Friesz is one of the candidates who entered the race because of the anti-term-limit coup. Friesz opposes term limits himself, but knows anti-democratic skullduggery when he sees it. “They decided what to do in a se-

cret caucus,” he said. “It was totally arrogant and self-serving. That’s what pushed me over the edge.” Friesz says his first order of business, if elected, will be to ensure that that kind of secretive conniving can never happen again.

Meanwhile, Don Morgan, the chairman of Idaho’s Citizens for Term Limits, will be asking candidates to sign a pledge stipulating that, if elected, they will never overturn a citizen initiative.

No, there’s no guarantee that any large number of Idaho incumbents will take a fall this fall. There are other big issues on the table besides term limits. And incumbency still remains a potent advantage.

But the writing is on the wall: Voters are tired of career politicians. And they’re not going to let them get away with politics-as-usual. ■

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## **RIGGING THE RULES**

# Why Have Elections?

By Steve Forbes, *Forbes*

April 1, 2002

Idaho State legislators gave voters the collective finger not long ago when they repealed term limits for themselves and other elected officials. They brazenly threw out a 1994 initiative enacting term limits, a restriction that's been reaffirmed by voters twice since then.

Incumbent politicians naturally hate term limits. They love the perks of office. They get very comfortable very quickly in an environment in which they have all the advantages against challengers. Lawmakers at the federal level — and most at the state level — get to send out taxpayer-paid, political reelect-me mailings that are, ostensibly, for “constituent information” purposes. Incumbents have the advantage in generating publicity. They collect contributions from myriad interests wanting “access,” and they write election laws with tax-code-like complexity to trip up challengers. Heck, if it weren't for the U.S. Constitution, Idaho-style pols would cancel elections and retain their positions for life, as “public servants” in many Third World countries still do. As it is, politicians here try to achieve the same result by rigging the rules.

Special interest groups also dislike term limits because they mean more work and a more unpredictable world. New lawmakers usually feel they have a mandate from the voters to do

certain things. Only after they've been around for a while do legislators lose their edge and sense of purpose. Lobbyists have to buttonhole and “educate” numerous rookie lawmakers each legislative session. Veteran lawmakers are already “housebroken.”

It's no surprise that those who are part of the permanent political culture go to great lengths to get out from under term limits. They can often count on sympathetic judges: Voter-

approved term limits have been tossed out by state supreme courts in Massachusetts, Oregon and Washington. But not once have voters rescinded term limits in a subsequent statewide referendum. In California voters recently resoundingly rejected watering down term limits.

We need more citizen politicians. Term limits make it easier for nonlifetime pols to enter public life, where they can achieve genuine influence within a few quick years. Term limits do not stop those who wish to devote their lives to public

service from doing so; they do, however, keep people from barricading themselves in particular offices. Most citizens, including those in Idaho, would undoubtedly agree with Thomas Jefferson, who said that the Constitution should have mandated the rotation of elected officials. ■

Reprinted from *Forbes*

**Incumbent politicians naturally hate term limits. They love the perks of office. They get very comfortable very quickly in an environment in which they have all the advantages against challengers.**

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