

# No Uncertain Terms

The Newsletter of the Term Limits Movement

May/June 2005 • VOLUME 13 • No. 2

## Voters and citizens: Just a bunch of monkeys?



**MONKEY BUSINESS:** Jeff Koterba's controversial cartoon

**When people hold power, strange things start to happen.** They begin to think the world cannot turn without their expert guidance. They start to see the taxpayers as uninformed boobs who too often resist their brilliant schemes to run our lives and spend ever more of our money. In short, they get arrogant.

These facts of political life are why people are so fond of term limits.

Add some newspaper editorial staffs to lobbyists and politicians when it comes to condescending and arrogant attitudes. An outrageous political cartoon in the Omaha World-Herald, for instance, recently portrayed ordinary citizens as incompetent monkeys. Nebraskans, fortunately, aren't taking insults like these sitting down.

**"The World-Herald cartoon is incredibly insulting, and shows the elitism of those who want to destroy term limits,"** said Nebraska Don't Touch Term Limits spokesperson Don Hoppes.

"Nebraskans have voted for term limits three times," Hoppes continued. "It is high time their vote was respected. If legislators want to show us how completely arrogant and out of touch they are, they can put an attack on term limits on the ballot--and watch voters defeat it."

**For more on the battle for term limits nationwide, see inside.**

### INSIDE:

Is eight years enough? Floridians think so, but their legislators "need more time."

Notable quotes, p.3

Outrageous stories

A word from Beatle Bailey, page 3

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# Porking Proudly

By Paul Jacob

**Republicans and Democrats** are getting along better in Congress. Why? Because it was time to lard up another bill with fat slabs of pork.

The latest porkfest is a \$287 billion transportation bill, which was passed 417 to 9 by the House of so-called Representatives. Now it goes to the Senate.

No doubt, we have some roads that need fixing, but this bill is as messy as day-old roadkill.

It's being promoted as economic stimulus. Always a bad sign. It does create jobs, yes, but hardly anyone could spend \$287 billion dollars without creating a few jobs.

**Republicans and Democrats are getting along better in Congress. Why? Because it was time to lard up another bill with fat slabs of pork.**

Of course, taxing us that much costs us jobs, too.

Congressman Don Young, chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, says, "This is just a small step forward." He wants to spend half a trillion on transportation. Of course, as chairman, he's best able to loot for his state. Two Alaska projects dubbed "bridges to nowhere" will receive over \$300 million from taxpayers.

Over 4,000 such projects got stuffed into the bill for individual lawmakers at a cost of \$12.4 billion — for stuff such as snowmobile trails, bike paths, horse trails, transportation museums, and museums that have nothing to do with transportation.

Mr. President, it's time to remind Congress that you have a veto pen. And I'm reminded that it never makes much sense to send our tax dollars to Washington so they can send a lesser amount back. Something gets lost in the . . . transportation.

**This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.**

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# STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

## Guess who wants four more years?

Legislators in the Sunshine State, that's who--even though the voters they represent feel otherwise. Florida's political class is working overtime to circumvent the state's "Eight is Enough" term limits law. Why? Apparently governing is just too plain confusing...

**"It's very difficult to learn the process. I'm not implying that our members--please don't read this into it--don't know what's going on."**

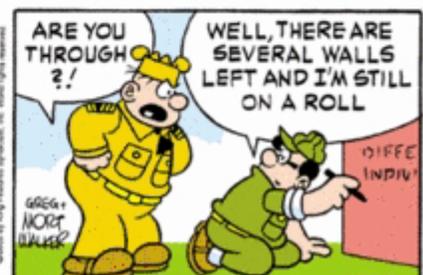
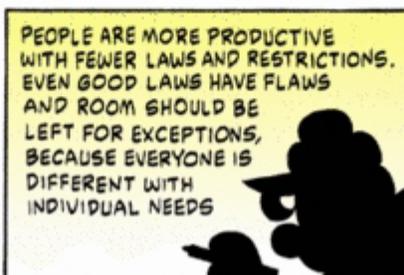
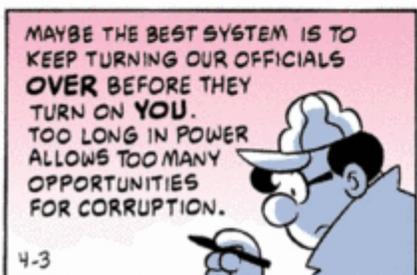
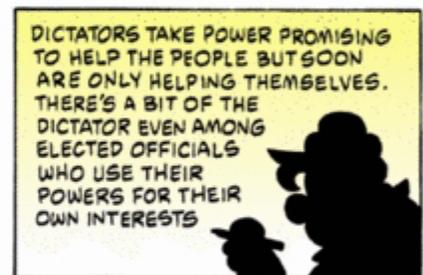
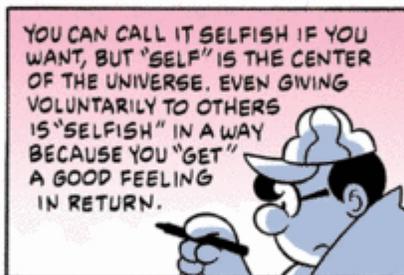
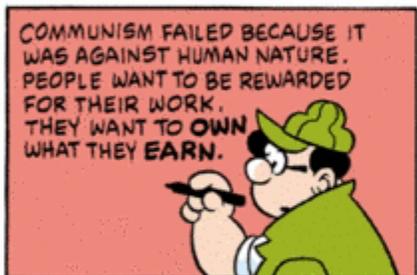
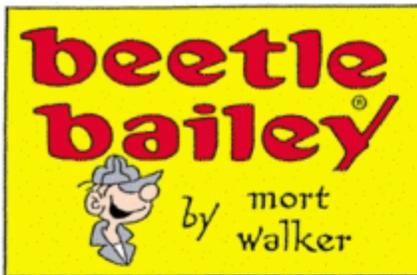
--Allan Bense, Florida Speaker of the House, Associated Press, February 9, 2005

**"The learning curve is too steep. We're asking people to give up too much to learn policy and procedure in such a short time."**

--Florida Senate President Tom Lee, *The Alligator*, University of Florida, February 11, 2005

**"But imagine telling your boss in the private sector that you need a few more years to get up and running. You'd be running to the unemployment line."**

--*St. Augustine Record*, Editorial, February 11, 2005



## OUTRAGEOUS STORIES: HIGHLIGHTS FROM COMMON SENSE



### The Root of All Evil

#### **Life is trouble. A Washington Post headline caught my eye: “Growing Churches Trouble Prince George’s.”**

In Prince George’s county, Maryland, there is a growing rift between churches and the county government over money. Tax money. Tax money the churches don’t pay.

The Post reports that tax-exempt religious properties “occupy” 3,450 acres. Occupy seems a funny word to use. After all, they own the land. It’s their property. Kinda. Years ago the Cottonwood Church in Cypress, California, was taken by local government using eminent domain. Why? So that the city could arrange for the big retail outlet Costco to move in.

Not that bad — yet — in Prince George’s.

“We don’t oppose churches,” says Council Chairman Samuel Dean. “The concern we have is that sometimes churches eat up a lot of land that could be used for other things.”

Though churches and synagogues, mosques and temples account for less than 2 percent of the county property, if they were taxed, that’d be \$9 million dollars that politicians would like to spend. And the Post reports that the council has already been using zoning to block the growth of churches.

“None of us are against God,” said another council member. But, “We’re losing tax money and retail.”

Cain Hope Felder of Howard University’s divinity school says that the churches need to be more sensitive because when they build “it hurts the county in providing vital social services.”

But don’t forget that churches provide social services, too — without taxes. You know, religious freedom. . . I think we’ll keep it.

**“None of us are against God,” said another council member. But, “We’re losing tax money and retail.”**

**This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.**

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# Florida Legislators Attack Term Limits; Voters Say 'Eight is Enough'

By Paul Jacob

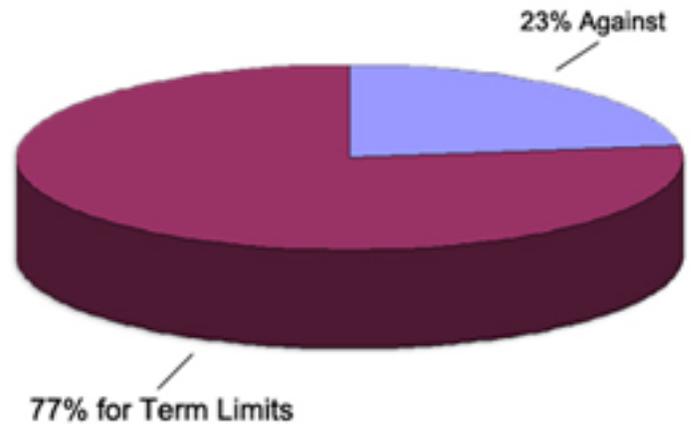
**With a vengeance, Florida legislators are proving the old adage that no one's life, liberty or property are safe while the legislature is in session.**

The Florida House has already passed a constitutional amendment by a 92 to 24 vote, which, if also passed by the Senate and then by voters in 2006, would weaken term limits by 50 percent, from the current eight-year limit to a limit of 12 years.

The Senate seems likely to pass the measure, but voters are not. Legislators have ignored a recent poll showing support for term limits is even higher today than in 1992, when 77 percent of Floridians passed the 'Eight is Enough' law. Today, voter support is at 78 percent. Not close.

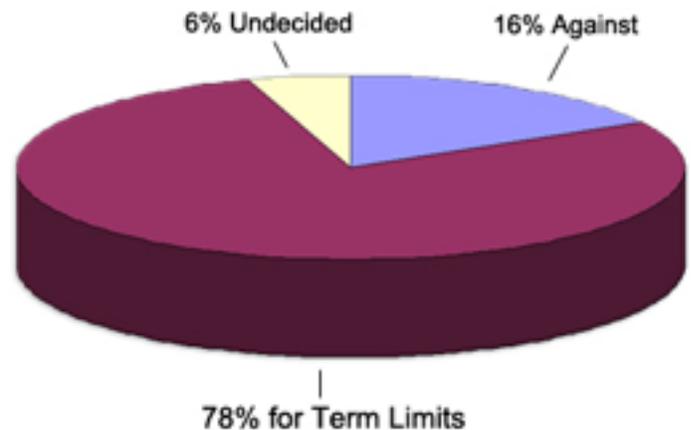
The recent survey of Florida voters also found that 85 percent felt any proposal to alter the term limits should come from voters, who originally enacted the law over the obstruction of legislators and lobbyists in Tallahassee, and not from self-interested legislators. Meanwhile, voters strongly favored the current term limits to the longer 12-year limit proposed by legislators by a whopping 74 to 21 percent margin, better than three-to-one.

**77% of Floridians Voted for Term Limits in 1992**



Source: Florida Department of State, 1992

**78% of Floridians say "Eight is Enough" in 2005**



Source: Rasmussen Reports

## Unintended...But Predictable

There's a so-called Law of Unintended Consequences that describes the negative results of well-meaning interventions in the affairs of men. However, If you know what's going to happen, can consequences ever be unintended?

I think we all know the basics: if you punish a behavior, you discourage it, and if you reward a behavior, you encourage it.

I'll tell you what made me put on my economics hat today. A new European Union regulation is forcing airlines to pay passengers if a flight is delayed. Just delayed. Not as a matter of agreement between customer and vendor but as a matter of law. A single flight delay can now cost an airline hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Now, delays usually have causes, including safety-related causes. So this regulation punishes airlines for safeguarding passengers.

You can predict what the consequences will be. Recently a British Airways plane was in the news after its pilot decided to fly across the Atlantic with a busted engine. Otherwise the airline would have had to pay over the \$280,000 to compensate the passengers. I'm not saying the pilot shouldn't be blamed for making a bad decision here. But a regulatory regime that punishes businesses for exercising reasonable diligence bears blame too.

And there's another unintended consequence to this over-regulation. This, of course, is just the sort of "innovative" rule that an American politician would look at and say, "Hey, why aren't we doing what the sophisticated Europeans are doing here? We have flight delays!"

It sounds like crash and burn to me.

**This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.**

**NICK STORY TO COME**

## EIGHT IS ENOUGH...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

The House sponsor, Rep. Baxter Troutman (R-Winter Haven), testified that “eight years just isn’t long enough.” Senate President Tom Lee told reporters, **“The learning curve is too steep.** We’re asking people to give up too much to learn policy and procedure in such a short time.”

The very idea that legislators cannot learn and accomplish something in eight years is ridiculous. As the *St. Augustine Record* put it, “But imagine telling your boss in the private sector that you need a few more years to get up and running. You’d be running to the unemployment line.”

In the private sector, people are expected to learn the ropes quickly, in a manner of weeks or even months. Not years!

Speaker of the House Allan Bense is Exhibit A in the twisted logic of politicians angling to stay in power, saying, “It’s very difficult to learn the process. I’m not implying that our members — please don’t read this into it — don’t know what’s going on.”

**Bense also explained his personal knowledge deficit this way: “In my first four or five years in the House, I was more involved in the political side of gaining support to become speaker. But now, focusing on public policy, there’s a lot to learn.”**

The reality is that the president of the United States is limited to eight years and voters expect the president to hit the ground running on Day One. The governor of Florida is also limited to eight-years. Whether one likes his record or not, it would be difficult for anyone to argue that Governor Jeb Bush hasn’t been able to learn the ropes and get things done.

**Bush weighed in on the issue, telling the *Associated Press* that, “I think eight works pretty well. It works for governors and I think it would work for senators and House members.”**

A *Don’t Touch Term Limits* group has formed, chaired by George Blumel. Blumel, a Palm Beach County activist who helped pass an initiative for term limits in his county in 2002, blasted House members for passing the anti-limits measure. “This vote won’t be forgotten,” said Blumel. “It shows just how arrogant and out of touch these legislators are to ignore the 77 percent of us who voted for term limits. The politicians in Tallahassee should be doing the people’s business, not their own.”

The group has vowed to battle the politicians and the most powerful special interests in the state to defend the ‘Eight is Enough’ law. Also involved in the Don’t Touch Term Limits committee are Jack Gargan, former national chairman of the Reform Party and a number of activists who have enacted term limits in their counties.

If the Senate passes the amendment, voters would face the term limits weakening measure on the 2006 ballot. As this newsletter goes to press, a vote in the Senate is expected shortly.

**While Florida legislators reach new heights of self-serving arrogance, voters will have the last word.**

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