

HJ5 Article V Resolution for Congressional Term Limits Amendment

Submitted by Ken Quinn, U.S. Term Limits

SUPPORT

Chairman Healey, Vice Chairman Holmes, and committee members,

My name is Ken Quinn with U.S. Term Limits and I am here today in support of HJ5 which is co-sponsored with bi-partisan support and seeks to have the States propose a Term Limits Amendment for Congress. Term Limits have been an integral part of our nation's founding and were formerly called "rotation of office". The Framers debated this subject of rotation at the Federal Convention of 1787, but unfortunately, they chose not to include rotation in the U.S. Constitution.

"A rotation in the senate, would also in my opinion be of great use. It is now probable that senators once chosen for a state will, as the system now stands, continue in office for life. The office will be honorable if not lucrative. The persons who occupy it will probably wish to continue in it, and therefore use all their influence and that of their friends to continue in office. Their friends will be numerous and powerful, for they will have it in their power to confer great favors; besides it will before long be considered as disgraceful not to be re-elected. It will, therefore, be considered as a matter of delicacy to the character of the senator not to return him again. Everybody acquainted with public affairs knows how difficult it is to remove from office a person who is has long been in it. It is seldom done except in cases of gross misconduct." ~ Robert Yates, 4/10/1788

Preventing individuals from holding office for too long was seen as a method of protecting our freedom and liberty. The Maryland Declaration of Rights and Constitution of 1776 both contained a rotation provision:

XXXI. "That a long continuance in the first executive departments of power or trust, is dangerous to liberty; a **rotation**, therefore, in those departments, is **one of the best securities of permanent freedom.**"

XXVII. "That the Delegates to Congress, from this State..., shall be chosen annually...**and that there be a rotation**, in such manner, that at least two of the number be annually changed; and no person shall be capable of being a Delegate to Congress for more than three in any term of six years;"

In the 1990s, **twenty-three states** passed laws imposing term limits on their own congressional delegations, mostly by the people at the ballot box. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court in the case *U.S. Term Limits v Thornton*, overturned all of those laws and ruled that congressional term limits could only be accomplished with a constitutional amendment under Article V.

Members of Congress have introduced term limits amendments over **200 times, mostly since the 1950s**, but they never come close to mustering two-thirds of both House to pass an amendment. This is the reason why we are seeking to have the state legislatures to propose one instead. We all know **Congress refuses to listen to the American people** and will never limit their own power. We are hoping that their state legislators will listen to them and support single-subject convention for Congressional Term Limits which has the support of 82% of the American voters (see attached).

In a poll taken by Pulse Opinion Research here in Maryland conducted between January 21-26, 2020 among 500 likely voters (26% Republican, 51% Democrat, and 23% Other) **75% of the people approve** of placing term limits on the members of Congress and **71% responded** that they would want their state legislator **to vote yes** on this resolution to call for a convention to propose a Term Limits Amendment.

The Many Benefits of Congressional Term Limits:

Elections are not Term limits: The **approval rating of Congress is consistently below 20%** while the **reelection rate is around 95%**! This is due to the many advantages incumbents have over challengers, making it virtually impossible to vote to vote them out of office. Term Limits will help to restructure the corrupt election system that we currently have to better represent the will of the voters.

Fair and Competitive Elections: Term limits provide ordinary people a real opportunity to run for office because they will not need to raise millions of dollars to go against the incumbent's war chest. We need more citizens legislators representing us in Congress, **not lifelong career politicians.**

Get Big Money Out of Politics: **97% of corporate PAC money** goes to the incumbents because the lobbyists and special interest groups already have them in their back pocket. Term limits will break this hold they have on the members of Congress and will reduce the amount of money spent on incumbents.

Stop the Dialing for Dollars Scam: Members of Congress spend **30-70% of their time on the phone** raising money for their reelection and their party instead doing the job they were sent to do. Term Limits will change this terrible system by allowing members to focus on their job, not their lifelong political career.

More Choices for the Voters: America faces an epidemic of lopsided elections dominated by incumbents. Term Limits break up that monopoly by ending the incumbent advantage and allow **for new people with fresh ideas** to run for office.

People not Political Parties: Primary challengers are discouraged to run by both political parties and oftentimes they are refused financial support, consulting services, etc. because the parties want to keep the incumbent in office **for as long as possible to gain more power.** Term limits will remove this barrier allowing more access to the political process.

More Experienced Leaders: Term limits increases the real-world experience of a legislature by providing people from all walks of life an opportunity to serve in elected office. We need more teachers, doctors, farmers, small business owners, etc. in Congress to better represent the nation.

Citizen Legislators Instead of Career Politicians: Term limits produce leaders who are closer to their constituents, because their limited time in office ensures a compulsory return home, where they too must live under the laws they've enacted.

Reduce Corruption: Term limits sever lobbyists' and bureaucrat's ties with politicians and jam the revolving door by making ex-lawmakers less valuable. In doing so, it safeguards public service from those who seek office to exploit it for personal gain.

Restore Political Courage: Under the status quo, members of Congress avoid making the tough decisions to solve big problems such as reducing the \$23 Trillion Debt, Immigration Crisis, Healthcare Crisis, etc. because it may threaten their reelection and job-for-life. Term-limited lawmakers know they've been elected to do a job, and won't shrink under pressure and will have the freedom to make those tough decisions.

Thank you for your time today and I encourage you to please vote to pass HJ5 on behalf the people of Maryland and voters across the country.

Ken Quinn
Bridgton, Maine