

# No Uncertain Terms

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## Victory: USTL Resolution Passes in Tennessee & Louisiana!

Add two more states to the win column this year. Louisiana is the latest to call for the term limits amendment to the Constitution — a monumental step towards implementing term limits on Congress. Weeks earlier, the Tennessee state legislature also joined the growing list of states demanding congressional term limits.

In March, Louisiana State Senator Mark Abraham sponsored the resolution, SCR2, which was adopted by a vote of 26 yeas and 10 nays in the senate. On May 15th, the house concurred with overwhelming bipartisan support. The vote for the term limits initiative was sponsored by Rep. Mark Wright passed with 81 yeas, 11 nays.

Philip Blumel, President of U.S. Term Limits, said, “Senator Abraham and Representative Wright have been an integral part of the victory



The Louisiana State Capitol

in Louisiana. Their efforts helped put Louisiana at the forefront of states calling for term limits on Congress.”

In April, the state legislature of Tennessee passed House Joint Resolution 5 (HJR5) in the senate with 18 yeas and 11 nays. Less than a month earlier, the state house recommended the senate concur with its decision

to pass the congressional term limits amendment resolution. State Senator Richard Briggs, Representative Christopher Todd, and USTL state chair, Mayor Glenn Jacobs were instrumental in the passage of the measure. Our thanks goes out to them and to the many Tennesseans who took action to make this happen.

Victory in Tennessee was a culmination of a multi-year U.S. Term Limits initiative. It has been led by our people on the ground and bolstered by our investment in issue advocacy.

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## Are Politicians Too Old? North Dakotans to Vote in June.

Retire Congress North Dakota (RCND) has gathered enough signatures to place age limits on the ballot for the June 11 primary election.

“Serving in Congress has become a lifelong occupation for many members,” said Jared Hendrix, Chair of the organization. “Sadly, Congress has gone from the world’s greatest deliberative body to one of the nation’s best assisted living facilities.”

Recently, some members have served despite their cognizance being called into question.

According to a recent RMG Research poll, nearly 80% of voters in North Dakota support age limits for members of Congress.

Hendrix added, “The average age of retirement in America is 64. Everybody else retires, I don’t see why politicians should be different. There

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## May a Convicted Felon Become President?

You may wonder why U.S. Term Limits would even be asking such a question. Well, you may have heard our organization's name in the media a bit lately. Recently, our name was also invoked in, not one but, two court cases involving former president Donald Trump.

The first case was *Trump v. Anderson* in Colorado where the Secretary of State Jena Griswold sought to deny Trump access to the ballot as a presidential candidate. Griswold claimed that Trump was ineligible due to the 14th Amendment of the Constitution barring insurrectionists from holding federal office.

In that case, U.S. Term Limits submitted an Amicus brief pleading with the U.S. Supreme Court to not cite a landmark decision from a lawsuit that ruled against us in 1995. In *U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Thornton*, the SCOTUS set precedent prohibiting the states from imposing any barriers to running for office other than those already codified in the qualifications clauses in the U.S. Constitution.

In the early '90s, 23 states imposed term limits on their own congressional delegations until Arkansas Rep. Ray Thornton challenged the state Constitution and won in a 5-4 split decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. That ruling made unconstitutional any state laws that place ballot access requirements, including

term limits, on congressional candidates.

The USTL Amicus brief in the Trump case was neutral in support of neither Trump nor Anderson. Because Colorado was not attempting to use its own laws to disqualify Trump but rather the 14th amendment of the U.S. Constitution, USTL claims that Thornton is not relevant to Trump's case. Additionally, our position is that Thornton should be overruled by the Court in the near future.

Not only did the SCOTUS cite the Thornton case, it also doubled-down on it and reinforced it.

Back to whether or not that precludes his name from appearing on the ballot...

U.S. Term Limits v. Thornton is again being invoked in reference to the New York case, *People v. Donald J. Trump (Criminal)*.

The Constitution lists only three qualifications for the office of President of the United States — the President must be at least 35 years of age, be a natural born citizen, and must have lived in the United States for at least 14 years. It says nothing about holding multiple passports, being born outside of the U.S.A. or being a convicted felon or even being imprisoned.

So, the Answer is "Yes." A convicted felon may serve as President of the United States until such time that there is an amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibiting felons from doing so.

## Are Politicians Too Old? (continued from page 1)

are lower age limits preventing candidates from running for president, senate or house. We now need an upper limit."

Many different careers have age limits — it is sometimes called "mandatory retirement." In North Dakota, state judges are expected to retire by 71 years old.

In North Dakota, there are two U.S. Senators

and one at-large representative all well under 70. The proposed state constitutional amendment does not target specific individuals, it targets the state's representatives as a whole.

With high profile incidences associated with age, including mental and physical decline, Hendrix hopes to prevent age related issues before they become an issue in the state.

# Tennessee and Louisiana Pass (continued from page 1)

In his remarks about the vote, Senator Briggs said, “I’m very proud to announce, the Tennessee legislature passed a resolution making an application to Congress for an Article V Convention for term limits on Congress. This was not an easy resolution to get passed, and in the end my colleagues realized that unless we break up the power structure in Washington, and send citizen lawmakers with practical life experience to Congress, we are not going to be able to address the serious issues affecting our country.”

Article V of the U.S. Constitution provides states the authority to impose term limits on Congress. For the term limits amendment convention to be called, a total of 34 states must pass similar resolutions. Once a term limits amendment is proposed, it must be ratified by 38 states for it to be added to the U.S. Constitution. This process allows the states to completely bypass Congress.



The Tennessee State Capitol

As noted by U.S. Term Limits’ CEO, Nick Tomboulides, “More than 87% of Americans have rejected the career politician model and want to replace it with citizen leadership. The way to achieve that is through term limits. We know Congress is too self-interested to do that without external pressure. That is why state legislatures must support and pass resolutions like the ones passed by Tennessee and Louisiana.

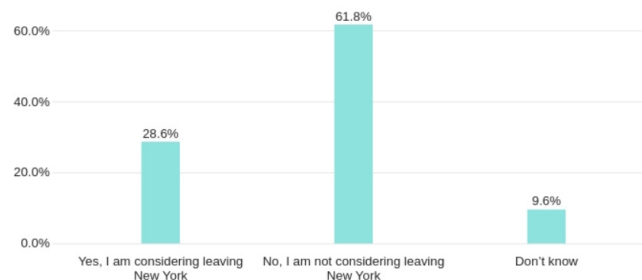
## Term Limits on N.Y. Governor?

In 2023, 42 percent of New York residents (2.8 million) said they were considering leaving the state. A more recent poll reveals that approximately two thirds of those who want to leave NYC cited a broken and corrupt government as their impetus to move. As such, our New York State Chair, Liz Whitmer Gereghty has been working with Unite New York (UNY), a non-profit, non-partisan organization, on a mission to impose term limits on the top statewide offices.

New York is one of just thirteen states that does not have term limits on its governor. Unite NY’s first course of action this year was to introduce assembly bill A9095, sponsored by Senator Monica Wallace.

USTL’s Holly Robichaud was involved

Continuing to think about New York government and politics, are you considering leaving New York because of the political environment here?



Results of a Recent Unite NY Poll

in multiple virtual discussions about our term limits plan in the Empire State, and encouraged supporters to attend lobbying days in Albany with the UNY.

With a mere 15% turnout for this June’s elections, UNY intends to implement reforms that will help increase voter engagement and reduce voter frustration.



# Term Limits Defended in Wilsonville, Oregon!

You may be one of the 40% of Americans who don't vote. Many constituents express that voting feels like a futile effort, because their voice appears to be nothing more than a single drop in the ocean. On the contrary, that notion couldn't be further from the truth. In Wilsonville, Oregon, the City Council introduced two resolutions to modify the charter that established term limits in 2020. Thanks to the power of your vote, the charter remained favorable to the people of Wilsonville.

The first measure determined whether or not a two-term city councilor could serve two additional consecutive terms as mayor (ci.wilsonville.or.us). The city council wanted to double the amount of time someone could serve who held both positions. This measure would allow a lateral move from the council to mayor and vice versa. This would inhibit the circulation of new people and ideas. Fortunately, 56.83% of voters were against the addendum, so it will not go into effect.

The second measure was an attempt to allow an extra year in office for those who fulfilled a portion of vacated seat. Had it passed, it would exempt the days of a councilor's term if it were less than 365.25 days. Thankfully, 52.89% of voters stopped the amendment.

Had either measure passed, Mayor Julie Fitzgerald would have been permitted to seek re-

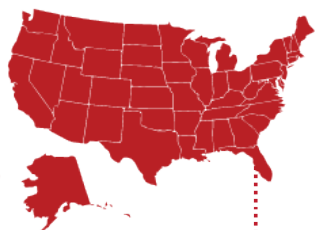


election for another four year term. Few realize that the originally proposed titles violated Oregon's statutory standards for ballot titles. This is hardly surprising, considering that the proposed measures claimed to "refine mayoral term limits." The vaguery was intentional. We at U.S. Term Limits find that the only time term limits lose, when put to a vote of the electorate, is when the ballot language is intentionally deceptive.

In this case, the term "refine mayoral term limits" may be perceived as strengthening the benefits of term limits when in reality the attempt was to weaken them.

Voter frustration and apathy lead citizens to think their votes are inconsequential. However, voting is power, so it's critical that we educate ourselves on the measures and exercise this right in support of term limits whenever the issue is presented.

**134** pledge signers in Congress



**>1025** pledge signers in state legislatures



**87%** of America

resolutions introduced in **19** states



# Modern Day Bonnie and Clyde Times Two... in Congress?

Jail was the sole denouement for Bonnie and Clyde's crimes — but a politician's place after indictments is the general election. U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar of Texas and U.S. Senator Bob Menendez of New Jersey, and each of their wives, have been indicted, on multiple charges, including bribery and acting as foreign agents. The former is running for reelection while the latter is also running, but as an Independent.

While nearly 80% of Americans are living paycheck-to-paycheck (forbes.com), Texas Rep. Henry Cuellar has allegedly accepted bribes from Azerbaijan's oil company and a Mexican bank. His is accused accepting remuneration in exchange for pushing through legislation favorable to the oil company (justice.gov). Cuellar pressured Executive Branch officials to make beneficial measures to the bank. Collectively, he accepted approximately \$600,000 in bribes. According to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), his wife, Imelda, was involved with front companies and minimal show employment contracts. Ultimately, they were indicted with two counts of bribery of a federal official, two counts of conspiracy to commit honest services wire fraud and five counts of money laundering. (justice.gov).

As 44.2 million Americans suffer from food insecurity (frac.org), New Jersey's Senator "Gold Bar" Bob Menendez was literally lining his pockets with hundred dollar bills; the Department of Justice states that in excess of \$480,000 in cash was found stuffed in envelopes and hidden in clothing bearing his name. An



additional \$70,000 was found inside of his wife Nadine's safe deposit box. Gold bars valued at more than \$100,000 were also found in their home.

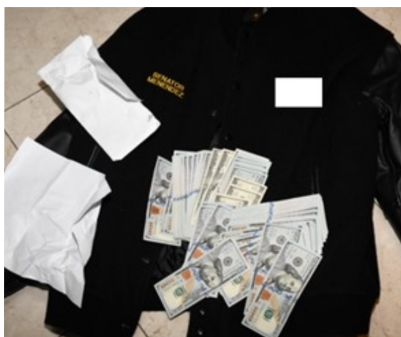
Aside from the money the Menendez's were given upfront, their "business partners" were making payments towards their mortgage, a luxury convertible, home furnishings, compensation for a low effort/no show job for Nadine, and more. In exchange for these benefits, Menendez used his power as Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee to protect the interests of his coconspirators Wael Hana, Fred Daibes, Jose Uribe, and the Egyptian Government (justice.gov).

This included pressuring an official in the U.S. Department of Agriculture to protect a monopoly granted to Hana by Egypt. Menendez allegedly intervened in a N.J. Attorney General's criminal investigation of Uribe and other accomplices.

As an American citizen, you would be justifiably horrified that two members of Congress are working on behalf of the interests of Azerbaijan, Egypt, and other foreign entities, in exchange for self enrichment.

Career politicians Representative Cuellar has been in Congress for nineteen years, while Sen. Menendez has been there for eighteen years. Their length of service has seen an entire generation grow from newborns to adults.

Because members of Congress may hold office indefinitely, corrupt careerists in positions of power may operate in the shadows. While term limits is not a silver bullet, it opens those positions up regularly which decreases the ability of special interests to form long-term corrupt relationships and increases transparency since there is a limited horizon with regular rotation of office. All this is to say, term limits will help neutralize instances of the modern day political Bonnie and Clyde.



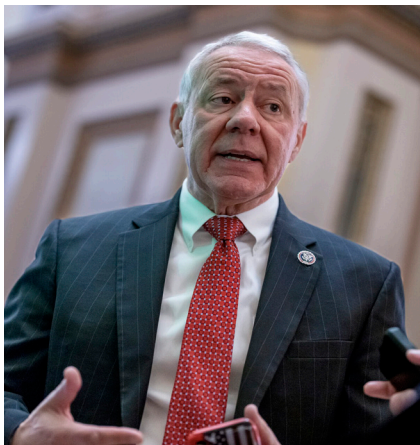
# Mass Evacuations from Congress Due to Frustration

It is common knowledge that Congress has been a flawed institution for decades, but did you know that the environment inside the legislative body has become so abysmal that at least 52 members of Congress will retire this year? As of May 20, 2024, eight members of the U.S. Senate and 44 members of the U.S. House, announced they would not seek re-election in 2024.

Yes, you read that correctly — even members of Congress are fleeing the institution they helped shape. In their exit interviews with the *New York Times*, they shed light on what truly happens behind closed doors; of course, they testified that Congress does not suffer from corruption, but the disconcerting revelations demonstrate the urgent necessity for term limits more than ever before.

Indiana Representative Larry Bucshon claimed that Congress is “misunderstood”, and it’s fallacious to believe that they are intentionally “trying to not accomplish goals on behalf of the American people.” If that were the case, why was his biggest frustration not being able to pass bills, even if they had hundreds of cosponsors?

Bucshon was not the only Congressman with troubling statements. Former Colorado Rep. Ken Buck revealed that members of Congress have to buy their committee seats. “I was told at the beginning that I had to raise \$250,000 if I wanted to be on certain committees. If I wanted to be on more important committees, or committees



Former U.S. Rep. Ken Buck

with broader jurisdiction, I needed to raise even more money.” In the workforce, it’s natural for those with more experience to have more prestigious

positions; however, imagine working in a career in which a promotion was barred until the employee raised one-quarter of a million dollars.

Washington Representative Derek Kilmer also added “The number of times over the course of the 11-plus years that I’ve heard one of my colleagues say... ‘I agree with you on that, but I could never vote that way because of a primary,’ is concerning.”



U.S. Rep. Derek Kilmer

Maryland Senator Ben Cardin also added that special interest dollars from corporations flow rampantly. How could members of Congress expect the American people to believe they work on behalf of our needs, when this all but confirms affluent organizations and the people behind them, own Congressmembers?

According to Michigan Representative Dan Kildee, “The thing that’s most frustrating now is that the environment seems to give permission for people to come to an understanding, to shake hands, and then erase all memory of that deal when it becomes convenient to do so.”

Maryland Representative John Sarbanes also added that many members publicize what they believe will go viral, instead of addressing pressing issues. If each cog in a clock were to spin in different directions, we would never know the time; that is the dilemma— when hundreds of individuals stand by a hidden agenda instead of their word, their perpetual oscillation culminates to the least productive Congress in U.S. history (govtrack.us).

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# Mass Evacuations (continued from page 6)

The politicians who are against term limits often emphasize the need for individuals with political experience. However, term limits would serve to inhibit this problem. “Between January 2011 and February 2022, a total of 295 incumbents retired from Congress. Out of every election cycle from 2012 to 2020, the 2018 cycle had the highest number of retirements at 55, and the 2020 cycle had the fewest with 40 announcements” (Ballotpedia). Congress is aging rapidly, the last two Congresses have been the oldest ever. This is prompting an outcry for age limits on all three branches of government.

When Bucshon was asked how to fix Congress, he said that it’s up to the American people to mend it. That is one of the few statements that can be agreed upon; we cannot rely on our current legislature to represent us instead of their interests and large corporations. Congress has immense potential, but we need to buff out the imperfections, the stagnant politicians, to make our legislature shine. To enact term limits is to enact the will of the people, and we need it more than ever.

## Is Congress Worthy of All Its Elite Perquisites?

How would you feel knowing that your taxes contributed to elevator operators whose job is to hit buttons and hold doors for Congressmembers? What if you knew that expense totaled near ten million dollars in five years (Forbes Magazine)? These are the kind of incentives that keep congress members squatting in office for decades. It’s an obvious no-brainer that few individuals would work the same job for their entire career if there weren’t a litany of benefits; here are some interesting perks of being a member of Congress that will shock you!

Members of Congress take business trips all over the world. In a *New York Times* interview, Indiana Representative Larry Bucshon expressed, “When you’re sitting across from the Prime Minister of Japan, that’s pretty cool.” Maryland Rep. John Sarbanes adds, “You’re talking to experts who are shaping our future, and you get to talk to four or five of them in a single day.” Imagine being able to get the first look at new research

and developing technology; it’s the equivalent of brushing aside the partition for what the world will look like, and it’s an exciting privilege to be privy and actively involved in that research.

Many members of Congress argue that their salaries aren’t high enough to compensate for commuting between D.C. and their primary home. But it’s undeniable that they make a significant amount of money in comparison to the average American. According to [openthebooks.com](http://openthebooks.com), the congressional salary is \$174,000; Speakers of the House earn approximately \$233,000, and the President Pro Tempore, the majority and minority leaders, earn approximately \$193,000.



**Former U.S. Rep.  
Alan Lowenthal**

There’s an underlying expectation that Congressmembers have health insurance, but few know they receive a federal subsidy that covers approximately 72% of premiums ([axios.com](http://axios.com)). While it’s contingent on age and length of service, members of Congress may receive a pension worth 80% of their salary, which would equal approximately \$139,200

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## **Elite Perquisites (continued from page 7)**

(investopedia). In ten years, that pension would equal nearly \$1.5 million. There is no catch, no stipulations, no fine lines—this is all in addition to their social security or retirement plan. For the average American, pensions are approximately \$2,301 a month; in ten years, that would amount to \$276,170—less than 20% of the congressional pension in comparison (unbiased.com).

For most individuals, being successful in the stock market is like trying to hit a small piñata. While a person can have an idea of where it is (their faculty), ultimately, whether their swing connects with the piñata or not is largely dependent on luck; at least, that's how it's supposed to be.

And then there's proprietary knowledge they get from knowledge attained through committee

work. Members of Congress are privy to classified information and they set laws that may favor their investments. Many know this as “insider trading.” When the public trades on private information they are punished. Ask Martha Stewart. But, in Congress, it is a typical day at work.

For example, the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee released an indenture regarding the danger and safety concerns of Boeing's 737 MAX planes, as they were responsible for the death of 346 people. The day before this report, California Senator Alan Lowenthal—a member of the committee who released this document—sold his shares in Boeing (The Daily Show Report). The nature of stocks will lend itself to be in a perpetual state of being bought and sold, but a series of coincidences can only add up to a singular pattern—an abuse of power.