No Uncertain Terms

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TERM LIMITS MOVEMENT • Jul.-Sep. • VOLUME 34 • No. 3

North Dakota Court Sides with Voters on Term Limits

In a monumental victory for grassroots accountability and citizen-led democracy, the North Dakota Supreme Court has unanimously blocked a deceptive legislative attempt to gut the state's voter-approved lawmaker term limits.

The high court's decisive ruling orders the Secretary of State to completely remove "Constitutional Measure 1" (formerly Senate Concurrent Resolution 4008) from the upcoming November 2026 general election ballot, declaring the legislature's actions *void ab initio*—void from the very beginning.

In the unanimous opinion authored by Chief Justice Lisa Fair McEvers, the Court dismantled the Legislative Assembly's efforts to bypass the state constitution. The ruling permanently protects Article XV, the citizen-led initiative passed by North Dakota voters in 2022 that established a strict eight-year cumulative service limit per chamber. Crucially, the 2022 law included a safeguard explicitly stripping career politicians of the power to alter or repeal these term limits, reserving that right solely to the people via citizen-led initiative petitions.

The legal battle was ignited after the Legislative Assembly passed S.C.R. 4008 during the 2025 session, trying to force a repeal of the voter-enacted safeguards. Former members of the original Term Limits Initiative sponsoring committee, Terence B. Bjerke and Leverrett Oley Larsen, bravely filed a petition in January 2026 to stop the lawbreaking measure in its tracks.

The state legislature fiercely fought the petition using a laundry list of procedural excuses—claiming the issue wasn't "ripe," that citizens lacked standing, and even bizarrely arguing that restricting their ability to alter term limits violated the U.S. Constitution. The Supreme Court thoroughly rejected every single defense, ruling that because the legislature failed to follow mandatory constitutional steps, immediate judicial intervention was entirely justified.

By granting a formal writ of injunction against Secretary of State Michael Howe, the Court has ensured that North Dakota's hard-won term limits remain fully intact, safe from the hands of the politicians they are designed to regulate.



The North Dakota State Capitol in Bismarck



President's Corner By Philip Blumel

The Misleading Math behind Congress' Tenure

Every once in a while, I see a politician opposing term limits saying they aren't necessary because the average tenure in the Senate, for example, is only 11.2 years. So why do we need a 12-year term limit on the Senate if they don't serve 12 years anyway?

First of all, that statistic includes all the senators who were just elected or are early in their careers, so they might serve for 30 or 40 years before they're done. Therefore, it's more useful to ask how long does the average senator who eventually leaves the Senate serve in total—and the answer to that question is approximately 18-20 years. Those who chair powerful committees—such as appropriations, finance, judiciary, etc…—serve 29 years on average.

Now, these numbers are much more useful, but it still doesn't encompass the other consequences to long tenure. Incumbents don't face competitive elections, so they are reelected more than 90% of the time. In Congress' seniority-based system, those long-term incumbents get entrenched in the most powerful positions, so they're the only ones who ever come close to the levers of power.

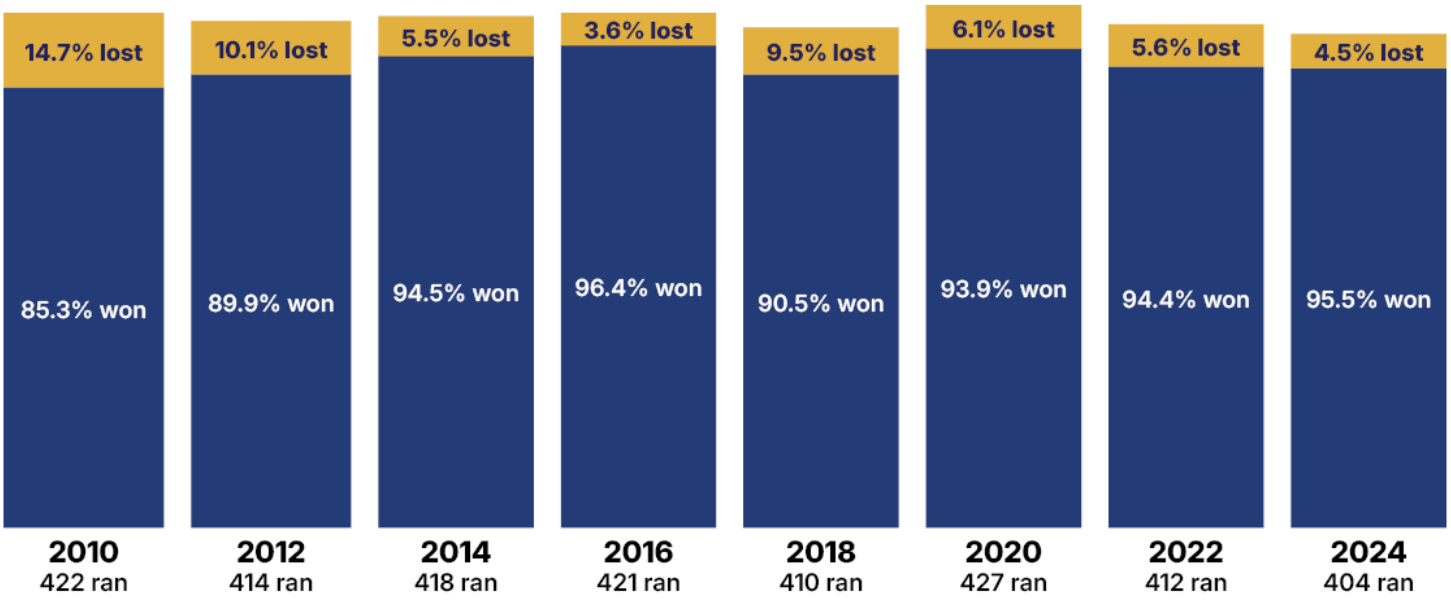
And the same problem exists in the House, of course. Congress members must commit to a political career to have any real influence. And that means Washington only attracts people who are resigned to be entrenched politicians.

The purpose of 12-year term limits in the U.S. Senate is not simply to make sure that the average tenure stays below 12 years. That's meaningless. It's to ensure that power in Washington is not stagnant, reserved for career politicians and beyond voter control. It's to make sure that we have rotation in office, informed by the voters in regular competitive elections. Only term limits can fix the U.S. Congress.



Number of congressional incumbents who won and lost re-election 2010-2024

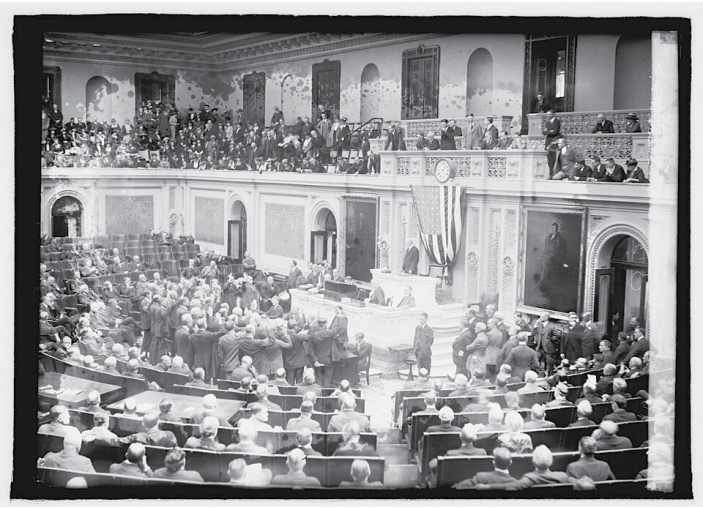
Data sourced from ballotpedia.com



No Uncertain Terms - U.S. Term Limits
1250 Connecticut Ave. NW Suite 700 • Washington, DC 20036

The Real Crisis in Congress: A Shortage of Public Perspective

Americans increasingly view Congress's entrenched political class not as an asset, but as part of the problem. A new poll from Scott Rasmussen reveals that 68% of Americans would replace the entire Congress if given the choice, while a mere 13% would keep the current roster of lawmakers. When asked whether a group of randomly selected citizens from each congressional district would do a better job than current members of Congress, 54% said yes. Fewer than one in five said no.



Swearing in new members of the 67th Congress
April 11, 1921

History disproves the myth that a high turnover rate paralyzes government; in reality, Congress performs at its best when its members couple their experience with the deep understanding of the crises and struggles of their generation. That foundation is the basis of true institutional knowledge.

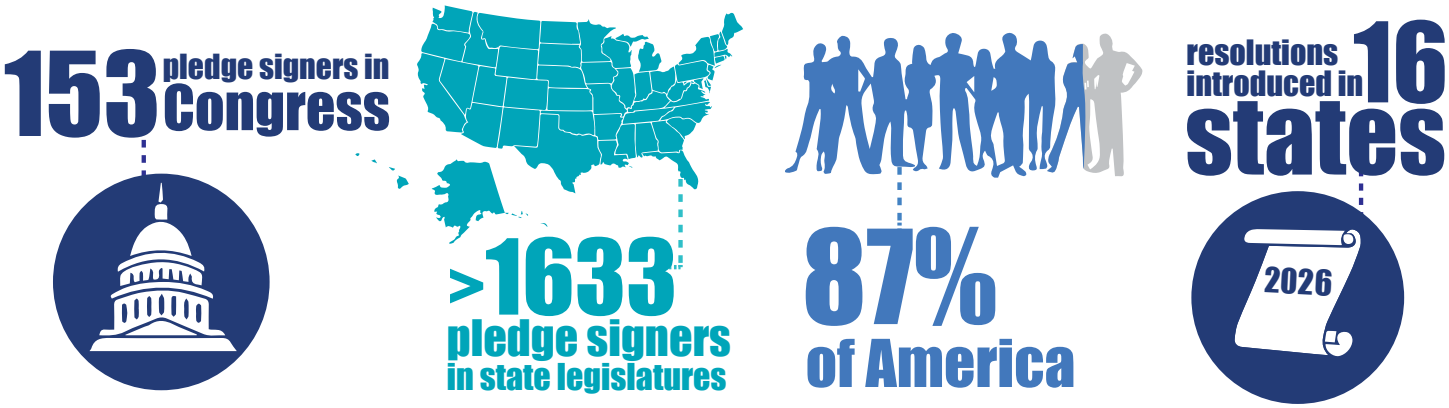
The 73rd Congress (1933–1935): Convening at the height of the Great Depression, this session saw a massive wave of 158 new Representatives. Driven by the immediate suffering of their constituents, they passed 15 major bills in their first 100 days to stabilize banks and revitalize the economy.

The 64th & 68th Congresses: Seeing influxes of 139 and 125 new seats respectively, these sessions are examples of representatives keeping the gears of government running smoothly.

The 67th Congress (1921–1923): With 117 new Representatives, this body ended the war with Germany and successfully established the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

This is not to say Congress is only as effective as the number of laws they pass, but these influxes of representatives in a short period of time demonstrate that turnover replenishes Congress' ability to maintain nationwide stability and respond decisively to crises.

Restoring a functioning legislative branch begins with redefining what "institutional knowledge" truly means. Implementing term limits would consistently provide the variety of fresh perspectives necessary to break today's gridlock—serving as the oil to the wheel that makes Congress run for the people once again.



The 2026 Legislative Horizon

With congressional approval currently stalled at a dismal 10%, the American public has reached a breaking point with the "permanent class" in Washington. While the federal government remains in gridlock, U.S. Term Limits is executing a multi-state project designed to force a constitutional solution.

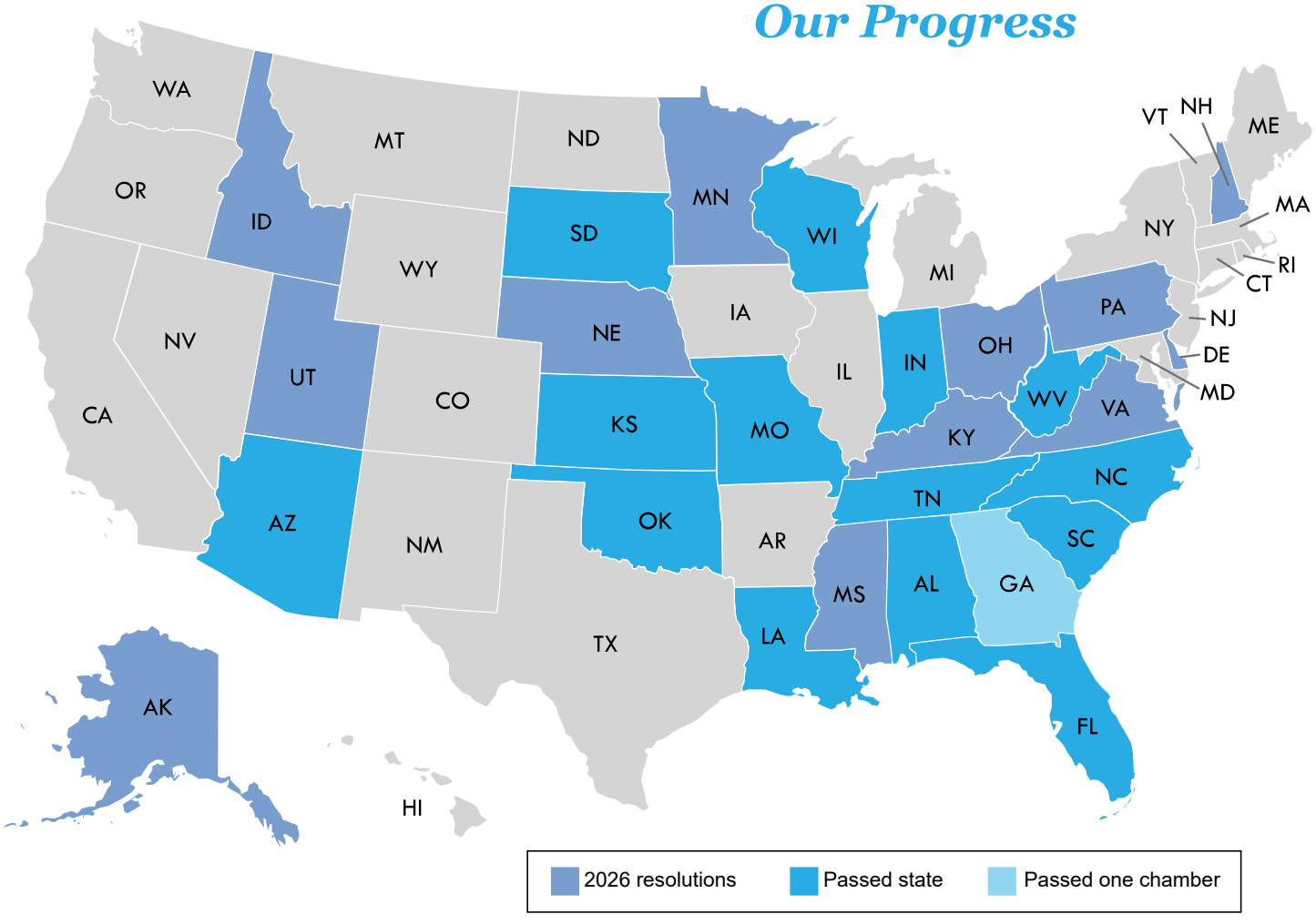
As of June 2026, our momentum is undeniable. We have successfully passed our Term Limits Convention resolution through both chambers in Arizona and Kansas, adding them to our growing map of "passed states" that includes Florida, Wisconsin, and Missouri.

- U.S. Term Limits' 2026-2027 Strategic Roadmap:
- The Ground Game: USTL has introduced bills in 14 states and both houses of Congress.
- Voter Education & Pledge Recruitment: USTL's massive direct mail program—active through October—targets constituents in critical primary and general election districts.

The 2027 Targets: While the 2026 legislative session is still ongoing with states like Ohio and Pennsylvania, this is also an election year. Victorious term limits candidates in the 2026 elections are the foundation for our next major push. We have identified Wyoming, Georgia, Montana, Texas, Hawaii, Maine, Nevada, Colorado, and Nebraska as our primary targets for our term limits resolutions in 2027.

None of this momentum would be possible without the dedication of our supporters. As we head into this crucial election season and prepare for a historic 2027, your voice and your passion are what keep Washington on its toes. Thank you for standing with us in our mission to enact congressional term limits.

Our Progress



No Uncertain Terms - U.S. Term Limits
1250 Connecticut Ave. NW Suite 700 • Washington, DC 20036

County Sheriff Attempts to Police the Will of the People



Allegheny County Council Member Bethany Hallam

"There's 1.2 million people in this county. I don't think any one person should be in office for more than 12 years. If you can't get something done in 12 years in office, you probably should move on anyways," stated Allegheny County Council Member Bethany Hallam.

Hallam's remarks were in response to a civil lawsuit filed by Sheriff Kevin Kraus against the Allegheny County Council and Chief Executive. The legal challenge seeks to invalidate an upcoming November general election ballot initiative that would establish a three-term limit for several key county positions.

If approved by voters, the referendum will implement strict, 12-year lifetime caps via three separate ballot questions. The first question applies to the county executive, the second covers independent "row offices"—including the district attorney, controller, treasurer, and sheriff—and the third addresses the county council itself.

Sheriff Kraus contends that the council is attempting to unconstitutionally alter the core parameters of his office; however, council proponents point to a decisive legislative precedent set a decade ago, when a voter-approved referendum successfully eliminated three-fifths of the county's ten row offices to optimize government efficiency and reduce taxpayer expenditures.

In a subsequent statement to Chief Investigator Rick Earle, Hallam critiqued the Sheriff's double standard, noting: "...it's really disappointing that this is what the elected sheriff thinks about term limits, that he thinks that they should apply to anybody but him."

For USTL and advocates of good governance, this litigation underscores the systemic resistance often mounted by entrenched incumbents. Term limits are an institutional boundary that is necessary to invite new perspectives and ensure that public office remains accountable to its citizens by guaranteeing the passage of the torch to new voices.



Allegheny County Sheriff Kevin Kraus

U.S. Term Limits on the Ground



U.S. Term Limits Foundation Chairman Howard Rich (left)

Over the past several months, the U.S. Term Limits Field Team has maintained a rigorous schedule, representing our movement at key legislative conferences and civic events nationwide. Through strategic advocacy and direct engagement, we have continued to build critical momentum for congressional term limits and hold elected officials accountable to their constituents.

Key Highlights from the Field:

- Howard Rich, Chairman of the U.S. Term Limits Foundation, personally spearheaded advocacy efforts at a prominent event in Wyoming. His presence underscored our organization's commitment to fostering a true citizen legislature and engaging local leaders in constitutional reform.
- Regional Directors Shanna Chamblee and Debra Childs attended the Women in Government conference. Their participation allowed U.S. Term Limits to educate legislators nationwide and strengthen national coalitions.
- In Rhode Island, Grassroots specialist Katie Grantham engaged directly with state lawmakers to brief them on our mission. As a direct result of these educational efforts, several legislators formally committed to the cause by signing the U.S. Term Limits pledge.

In addition to forging new relationships, our field team has been presenting formal plaques to state lawmakers who have not only signed the term limits pledge, but also upheld their promise through concrete legislative support.

The dedication of our staff, coupled with the steadfast support of our members, ensures that the call for term limits remains a priority in state legislatures nationwide. We look forward to sustaining this momentum in the months ahead.



Grassroots specialist Katie Grantham with Representative David Morales



Regional Directors Shanna Chamblee & Debra Childs

USTL vs. COS: Understanding the Crucial Difference in Our Efforts for Congressional Reform

If you've been following the movement to restore accountability to Washington, you've likely heard of both U.S. Term Limits (USTL) and the Convention of States (COS). Both organizations leverage Article V of the Constitution, but our strategies, goals, and core philosophies are fundamentally different.

The most distinct difference lies in the ultimate goal. While we call for an Article V convention, our primary objective is to use the pressure of that potential convention to compel Congress to propose a term limits amendment themselves—specifically targeting three terms in the House and two in the Senate to give the public a concrete goal to rally behind.

Conversely, COS aims to hold a full, multi-subject convention. They want the states to meet, debate, and draft several sweeping amendments aimed at limiting federal power, imposing fiscal restraints, and placing term limits on federal officials. Because their goals are not narrowly defined, it is virtually impossible for Congress to preempt them with standard legislation.

Ultimately, both organizations recognize the need for fundamental reform, but our tactical paths diverge. We believe the fastest, most effective way to break through Washington's gridlock is a single, concentrated effort focused entirely on congressional term limits rather than a broad, multi-front agenda.

Citizen Education Program: Postcards

Accountability is the cornerstone of an informed electorate. According to multiple statewide and national polls, over 80% of individuals support term limits (detailed data is available for review at termlimits.com/research). Given this overwhelming public consensus, it is vital that constituents know which candidates align with these values before casting their ballots.

As part of our ongoing citizen education program, we are actively sending informational postcards to voters highlighting the individuals who have signed the term limits pledge—both on the state and federal level. This initiative ensures transparency, keeping communities fully informed on where their representatives stand on this critical issue.



No Uncertain Terms

The Newsletter of the Term Limits Movement

A Publication of U.S. Term Limits

1250 Connecticut Avenue NW Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036

Inside No Uncertain Terms

North Dakota Court Sides with Voters on Term Limits...1

President's Corner...2

The Real Crisis in Congress: A Shortage of Public Perspective...3

Legislative Horizon...4

County Sheriff Attempts to Police the Will of the People...5

U.S. Term Limits on the Ground...6

USTL vs. COS: Understanding the Crucial Difference in Our Efforts for Congressional Reform...7

Citizen Education Program: Postcards...7

The Outrageous Congress

Jon Stewart recently spent a Daily Show segment on something that should trouble anyone who follows Congress. In a single term, six of its members have died in office, and a long list of others are dealing with strokes, heart attacks, broken hips, and cognitive decline. As Stewart put it, the entire Congress is "falling apart due to a lack of not just political will, but bone density."

The deeper issue is not just their age. It is the absence of any limit on their terms. Without term limits, no deadline ever keeps them accountable, and when they can no longer do the job, there is often a lack of transparency. Senator Mitch McConnell was recently hospitalized for nearly a month without explanation, and Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton has kept serving amid concerns about her memory. One might assume voters could simply replace members who can no longer serve, but in practice that almost never happens. Incumbents are re-elected more than 90 percent of the time even as approval of Congress sits near 10 percent. Term limits do what elections alone cannot. They guarantee regular turnover, passing the torch to new voices instead of leaving power in the hands of those who have served longest. Watch the segment: termlimits.com/bonedensity.

U.S. TERM LIMITS
Phone: (202) 261-3532 Email: info@termlimits.com
Web: termlimits.com Social Media: @ustermlimits

For those reading the hard copy, get hyperlinks on a digital version at www.termlimits.com/nut.