The SPEAKER pro tempore. For what purpose does the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE] rise?

APOLOGY FOR MISUNDERSTANDING OF REMARKS

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. HOKE. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just say to the gentleman from Michigan that I think it is unfortunate what has occurred and has taken place. It was not my intent under any circumstances to direct my remarks in a way that you would be personally offended, and if that is the case, my remarks are directed at the larger debate with respect to term limits, specifically the parliamentary maneuvering that is taking place with respect to it and the substance of the debate.

And certainly, there was no intent on my part, not now, not during the debate, not in the future to make comments that would be taken personally by you in an offensive way, and to whatever extent you perceived them in that way, I am sorry, and I apologize.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HOKE. I am happy to yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I accept the apologies of the gentleman, and I thank him.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

□ 1316

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 73) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States with respect to the number of terms of office of Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, with Mr. KLUG in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, the following time remained in debate: The gentleman from Florida [Mr. CANADY] had 61½ minutes remaining; the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. CONYERS] had 39½ minutes remaining; and, finally, the gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. SHAYS] had 24 minutes remaining.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE] for the final 1 minute.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding.

I would like to conclude my remarks simply by saying that I rise in strong support of term limits today.

We have waited for many, many years to get this vote to the floor. We have had over 24 million Americans already choose in favor of term limits. Seventy-five to eighty percent of the Americans that have had the opportunity to vote on this have voted in favor of it. They voted ''yes.''

Clearly our constituents are saying, ''We want term limits. We want term limits now.''

I urge you to vote in favor of them, and what I would say is if this does come down to a partisan fight, what we need is just 50 percent of the Democrats to vote in favor of this. We are going to get 90 percent of the Republicans. If we can get 50 percent of the Democrats voting in favor of it, we are going to pass term limits. We are going to get 290 votes. That is all we need.

I urge you to vote in favor of it. If we do not, then so be it. The people, the voters, will make this decision in November 1996, and they will have the opportunity to decide whether or not they want term limits.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 30 seconds to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. GUTIERREZ].

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Chairman, I understand that when I left, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE] was wondering where I was it. I was back in my office doing the people's business and ensuring that things are carried out.

We speak here, and then we go about our other duties and responsibilities, but I understand he had a question, and the question may be the motives behind my speech.

And let me just be very clear with the gentleman from Ohio that he can sleep and rest assured that if a term-limit bill comes before this House that includes retroactivity, that is, immediacy, 12 years, that this gentleman intends to vote for it, and is encouraging and working with others to vote for it.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MEEHAN].

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise as a supporter of term limits, and I have to say, P.T. Barnum launched the Greatest Show on Earth with the idea that a sucker is born every minute.

Well, it looks like the circus is coming to town a little early, because the Republican Party is applying that same philosophy to term limits.

In the Big Top we call the Capitol, there are Members of Congress who promise lower taxes, higher defense spending, and a balanced budget all at the same time. Now, these career politicians say that they support term limits, only if they are not retroactive and do not have a chance of passing.

The long and the short of it is they support term limits as long as there is no chance that their own terms might be limited.

I have news for the political contortionists of NEWT's three-ring circus, the voters are not as dumb as you think. They believed you when you ran on the Contract With America and said you were not interested in a career in Washington and would limit your term in office. They know the House would pass the Sanford-Deal term-limits statute if it were put to an up-or-down vote today, and when you go home and tell them that you were for term limits, they will know that it was just a show.

Let me also make it clear I hear a lot of Republicans blaming Democrats in case term limits does not pass. The Democrats did not run on the Contract With America. Democrats did not say that there is a revolution in this country and term limits will be the cornerstone. The Republicans did.

And now there is too much party discipline to get one of the term-limits bills passed. Well, look, party discipline was not a problem when it came to cutting school lunches or preventing Congress from passing real lobbyist reform. So we all know the Republican leadership can get the votes when they want to.

The American people who support term limits are about to find out the dirty little secret around here: The vast majority of Republicans support term limits, but only if it does not apply to them.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Jersey [Mrs. ROUKEMA].

(Mrs. ROUKEMA asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Chairman, I think it is about time we had some straight talk on this subject, and I am opposed to the term limits.

As a former teacher of history and government, I consider myself a constitutionalist. The Constitution is a document that stood the test of time for two centuries and is the model for emerging democracies throughout the world.

You know, the Founding Fathers got it right. They established term limits when they wrote the Constitution. They are called elections. Yet here we are today in this debate, and we have heard that the majority of the American people, fueled by radio talk shows and pollsters, support term limits.

I believe their instincts are right, but they have come up with the wrong solution. We do need congressional turnover experience fresh ideas, but we also need that combined with experience and expertise and institutional memory for more senior Members.

Mr. Chairman, there is a learning curve to every job. The same is true for new Members of Congress. To impose automatic term limits would generally increase the power of paid congressional staff, unelected lobbyists, unelected government bureaucrats and regulators. This is something the people have not figured out yet.

I would also submit that term limits will only exacerbate the so-called revolving-door syndrome, elected officials spending their time and energy while in office paving the way for a lucrative job in the private sector with the special-interest groups they have been serving after they leave office. Automatic term limits will intensify

and institutionalize the resume-building that already occurs all too often in this Congress.

Voters already have the power to limit the terms of elected officials by exercising that right in the voting booth.

The most graphic evidence of this was seen in the last two congressional elections. As you know, large numbers of sitting Members, people right in here in this room, were elected to the point where nearly one-half of all House Members here today have served less than 3 years. The public spoke in the ballot box in the best tradition of democratic government.

And finally, I want to say that I recognize and I share the widespread public concern regarding the inevitable advantage congressional incumbents enjoy over their election challengers. I know something about this, because I had to defeat an entrenched incumbent to get here.

But congressional term limits are not the answer. The answer is genuine campaign finance reform, abolition of PAC's, limits on out-of-State fundraising, a ban on corporate soft money, and free access to radio and television time.

Mr. Chairman, we need reform, but term limits are not the solution. I urge a ''no'' vote on this resolution.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. ROUKEMA. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Chairman, would the gentlewoman be aware the Founding Fathers were aware of term limits and actually, in the articles, there was term limits that was not enacted?

Mrs. ROUKEMA. I have read the article as well. That is not my reading of the Constitution, and finally, the Constitution was adopted with 2-year terms.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. ROUKEMA. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the gentlewoman's very trenchant observations—and historically correct.

Mrs. ROUKEMA. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. LOBIONDO].

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding me this time.

I respectfully disagree with my colleague from New Jersey and the opponents of term limits.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of term limits.

Mr. Chairman, we have all seen the faces of angry voters. They want a change. They are tired of the status quo. They want Congress to work.

As a freshman Member who came here to change the status quo, I was proud to join with my colleagues to change the Rules of the House on our opening of the 104th Congress.

Back in January, we voted for term limits for the Speaker of the House. And on that first historic day, we voted for term limits for our committee chairmen.

Now, it is time to vote for term limits for the rest of us.

This will be the first time on this floor that we have had the opportunity to vote on term limits. And just as we voted overwhelmingly to reform Congress on that opening day, I urge my colleagues to vote yes on term limits.

Term limits is about changing Congress—it is about changing the status quo. That is why I ran for office in the first place, and changing Congress is why I am here today.

Opponents say that we don't need term limits. That the elections in 1992 and 1994 show that the people can change Congress anytime they want to.

Yet from 1976 through 1994, 9 out of every 10 incumbents were re-elected. Nine out of every 10 Members of Congress can pretty much count on having a political career in Congress as long as they want it.

Term limits will change that. It will create elections for open seats. It will ensure that we have new Members of Congress, who come here with different backgrounds, different experiences, and fresh ideas.

The concept of our democracy is that real people—average citizens—make the decisions that will effect us as a nation. Term limits will ensure that more Members of the House and the Senate have that real world experience.

Mr. Chairman, the people who elected us are watching. At least two-thirds of the American people support term limits and they want to see what we are going to do.

There is no place to hide on this vote. Will we vote to keep business as usual? Or are we willing to accept term limits on ourselves in order to create a better Congress.

The American people will be watching to see who votes for congressional reform, and who votes to keep the status quo. And make no mistake, they will remember.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on term limits, vote ''yes'' on final passage. And vote yes to end the status quo.

□ 1330

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I am delighted to yield 4 minutes to the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY].

Mr. MONTGOMERY. I thank the gentleman for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to these four substitutes which we will be voting on today.

As has been pointed out, we had term limitations on November 8, 1994, where the organizations of both the House and the Senate certainly were changed. Fifty-two percent of the members of the House of Representatives have been elected since 1990.

Mr. Chairman, excuse the personal reference, but talking about the Montgomery GI bill, which is an educational benefit for our active forces as well as the National Guard and Reserve.

Our forces in the 1970's were having problems. We were not getting the quality into the military. So we had to come up with something to attract these people into the Guard and Reserve and the active forces. We came up with educational benefits. We started working to help the military to get the motivated young men and women into the Service in the 1980's. Mr. Chairman, it took us 5 years to get the educated benefits enacted into law. We had the same bill number, H.R. 1400, and we used it from year to year. Finally, in 1985, we were able to get this legislation into law, which gave educational benefits to the military service.

After 1985 it took us 5 years to actually get the program implemented, to be used by the different Services. Now it is working well. Over 95 percent of the young men and women who come into the Service used these educational benefits.

My point is that major legislation, if you are in Congress, it takes longer than 4 or 8 years. It took 10 years to get this type of implementation of something that really helped our country.

So I say again that you cannot do major legislation in 6 years, it takes longer. You have to pass the bill, then you have to nurse it through the Congress of the United States.

Mr. Chairman, I am working on a 2-year contract with the people of the Third District of Mississippi. They have chosen to renew that contract over the years. They should continue to have that right without having a term limitation imposed upon them.

I ask you to vote ''no'' on the four substitutes and ''No'' on final passage.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON].

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Chairman, I point out to my colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MEEHAN], that when you blame the Republicans for not passing term limits and just say, ''You have party discipline,'' I would remind him that, as best I know, we have 230 votes and it takes 290 on vote to pass a constitutional amendment. We simply cannot do it by ourselves. My home State of Arkansas has passed term limits. It has been a very positive development. It has meant new blood, it has meant fresh ideas. It has meant different perspectives. And it will mean the same thing for the U.S. House of Representatives.

In Arkansas, it strengthened the political system by increasing responsiveness and accountability. It will

move us in this body toward a true citizen legislature.

Long-term tenure too often results in Members becoming allies of big government, not checks on big government. Members lose touch with their constituents. Members become arrogant and, too often, they become elitist when they stay here for long tenures.

Mr. Chairman, since 1990, 22 States, including Arkansas, have passed laws respecting tenure of Federal legislators. Recent polls indicate that 70 to 80 percent of the American people support term limits. Critics say, ''Don't limit the choice the American people have by imposing limits.'' I say, don't thwart the choice of the American people by stopping term limits. That is their desire. We should pass it.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER].

Mrs. SCHROEDER. I thank the gentleman for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Chairman, I have a lot of difficulty with this issue because the Republicans have survived over 200 years without term limits mainly because everybody knows we have term limits every 2 years when we are up for election. That makes all the sense in the world to me. If you really think about it, the dream debate I wish we could have on this would be for everybody to have their ''spoil date'' on their foreheads; in other words, determining whether you are going to have 6 years, 12 years, figure out when you came and then put your ''spoil date'' cross your forehead.

Now, if it had been in effect when I got elected, my ''spoil date'' under 12 years would have been January 1985. If it had been 6 years, it would have been January of 1979. Those would have been my ''spoil dates.''

I do not really feel I was rotten at that time, and I do not feel I am rotten now. I think if you look at many, many people who would have ''spoil dates'' which would have expired long ago and have them talking about term limits, you begin to wonder what this is really all about.

Well, I think I am beginning to get a little idea of what it is about. You know, human nature is such that people love to make laws for other people but hate to have them apply to themselves. Of course, because Congress is made up of human beings, we have that same problem too. But I think it has been really interesting this year that we have been willing to limit school lunches, we have been willing to take on student loans and limit those. We have been willing to limit the number of children on foster care. We have been able to limit all sorts of things that did not affect us. And now we have a term limits bill that will be wonderful. We can pass it, pose for holy pictures, and, guess what, it still will not affect us, because here I would be standing with my ''spoil date'' of January 1985 if it had been in effect for 12 years after I got elected, and if it passes today I can still go for at least another 12 years plus how long it takes to adopt this thing.

Now, that is pretty remarkable. In other words, what we are talking about here are term limits that will only apply to other people, other people who will come in the future. So this is a great kind of reform. We will reform the new guys whom we know will never be quite as good as we old guys were.

Now, I just think that that really puts it down where everybody, hopefully, begins to understand it. We also hear people talking about the reason for this is the citizen legislature. Well, now, if you are really going to have a citizen legislature, the way you would do that is to say that you are going to run for only one office and that is it. Because the other thing term limits does, as we know from countries like Mexico that have it, you create a new professional class that hopscotches around the chairs of government. If you are a Member of Congress, you are going to be a mayor and you are going to be a Governor, and you go on and on and on and on and on.

The great thing about that is you never learn any of the jobs very well and you continually are trying to figure out how you could use the job you are in now to get the next job you want later.

So term limits do not do anything about citizen legislatures or citizen government, if you look at the countries that have tried it and found out they ended up with a more professional government than we ever dreamed of.

I think this is all about the relationship between the person and the district they come from. That district can have that option to reelect them or not reelect them. That is their choice under the Constitution. That is what it should be.

But to decide that some term limits should apply to every single person no matter how well off they are, I think is very artificial, it does not belong in the Constitution, and I certainly hope that we can have a little more thoughtfulness before we eagerly run out and do something that does not apply to us, it will only apply in the future, and call it reform and think that we helped.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. FAWELL].

(Mr. FAWELL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FAWELL. Mr. Chairman, politics is the science of government. Government reflects the people's interest or neglect. Too often it is the latter. In the last election roughly 50 percent of the people didn't vote—most of them, I suppose, because they didn't have enough interest in government to vote. But then enough people did have enough interest in government in the last election to vote a monumental change of control of the Congress.

Are we to now draw a conclusion that the people of this land can enjoy all the blessings of representative government in the future by giving up a significant portion of the most fundamental responsibility of citizenship—full participation in the choice of our political leaders? For more than 200 years we have changed people in office through elections. Why, in this generation, has it become such a burden that we must find some automatic, no-bother way to help us do the job? Doesn't freedom, personal responsibility, tradition, respect for experience, mean anything? These are values that ordinarily mean a lot to conservative people.

Do we believe that a competitive and accountable political marketplace can't work; that people can't decide for themselves when and who to vote out of office and who to keep? Do we really believe experience in Congress or, for that matter, in any other public office, is a handicap?

Didn't James Madison, one of our Nation's Founding Fathers, state a point when he observed that ''a few of the members (of Congress) * * * will possess superior talents; will, by frequent reelections, become members of long standing; will be thoroughly masters of the public business * * *''? Do we reject this?

Why should we now limit the democratic right of ''we the people'' to select their representatives in the House of the people—the U.S. House of Representatives?

I am not persuaded that term limits is a wise course for a free and democratic people; it subtracts—not adds—from the Bill of Rights of the people. The burden and responsibility for determining term limits belong fully and irrevocably to the people who care enough to vote.

I have examined whether a 12-year term limitation would be an effective long-term solution to Congress' problems. While at first glance term limits are an appealing quick and easy fix, I have always felt there are many problems with term limitations.

It is a little known fact that the great majority of Congress already turns over every 12 years. Of the 435 Members of the House of Representatives serving 5 years ago, less than one-half are serving today.

We already have a mechanism to ''throw the rascals out.'' It's called an election. All 435 members of the House face election every 2 years. At these intervals, incumbents must face the voters and win their active approval. Citizens who dislike their incumbent Congressman already have a powerful tool to remove them—the vote. Members of the House can be challenged twice every two years (in a primary and general election). And, this is precisely what happened last November 8, when voters imposed term limits on much of the 103d Congress.

One argument for term limits is that we will get enlightened amateurs—people who will leave top posts in commerce, industry, and other professions to spend a few years in

Washington before returning home. In practice, it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract and keep the best and the brightest, in part because of term limits.

Moreover, like anyone taking a new job, there is a learning curve. In Congress, it can be a long curve. As much as we desire simplified government and policy, it is impossible to imagine government getting less complicated, given the incredible complexity of the world economy, the enormity of a $6 trillion domestic economy, and the mind-boggling $1.5 trillion Federal budget and the thousands of programs it entails. As a result, I fear that term-limited members would be more dependent on staff and more influenced by special interests.

Term limitation advocates correctly point out that some incumbent Congressman use the advantages of their office unfairly—but there are ways to eliminate these unfair advantages without eliminating the fundamental democratic right of Americans to vote for the candidate of their choice.

I have cosponsored and/or voted for the following congressional reforms to: Sharply curtail unsolicited congressional mailings; reduce congressional staff; eliminate congressional perks and make Congress subject to the same laws it mandates on the private sector; fully enforce congressional ethics and disclosure rules; enact congressional finance reforms; and, mandate that members rotate House committee membership. The new House of Representatives has instituted a 6-year limit on committee and subcommittee chairmanships—this is the type of limit I support.

Along with internal congressional reform there are also reforms that could be made to the budget process that would be far more effective in controlling spending than term limits. For instance, I have cosponsored the following reforms: Legislation amending the Constitution of the United States to require that the Federal budget be balanced, and legislation giving the President the authority to line-item veto appropriation bills, thereby giving the President the power to veto pork barrel and other wasteful spending projects.

What concerns me most about term limitations is the implicit assumption that people cannot be trusted to make up their own minds about who should represent them. Term limit advocates presume that people are too easily influenced by incumbency, that they are too readily gulled by professional politicians. Term limit advocates seem to believe that free citizens are unable to make the changes they feel necessary in the political process.

I want to stress that my views of term limits do not result from my position as an incumbent in Congress. The fact is that I would not gain by voting for this measure; by the time the term limits would take effect, I will likely have retired from Congress.

I believe that most Americans know that Democracy is not easy. ''Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty,'' said Thomas Jefferson. Term limits are a false cure to a problem that can only be solved by an electorate willing to hold their representatives accountable. That is why our Founding Fathers twice rejected term limits.

I encourage my constituents to look into my record and hold me accountable. I believe my effectiveness in pursuing the objectives of the voters of the 13th district—cutting billions of dollars in wasteful spending, for instance—is increasing each year. This effectiveness is in large part due to what I've learned as a Member of Congress—about the budget process and the rules of the House, to name just two.

In the end, I believe that we the people should be the final arbiters of who should represented us. A set limit only curtails our choices.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. ZIMMER].

Mr. ZIMMER. I thank the gentleman for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Chairman, the founding fathers did not intend for Congress to be a career. And Congress was not a career, by and large, for the first 150 years or so of our history.

But in recent decades it has come to pass that the people who run this institution are people who have been around for a long time. They get out of touch, become unresponsive, they are more a part of the Washington culture than the culture which elected them.

We are told this is not a problem because we have term limits in the form of a 2-year term in the Constitution for Members of Congress. But the fact is that incumbents have so many advantages in the late 20th century that that 2-year limit is meaningless in most instances for most incumbents.

Gerrymandering protects incumbents, particularly those with considerable seniority.

Campaign finance patterns protect incumbents, particularly those with considerable seniority.

Campaign finance patterns protect incumbents. In the 1992 election cycle, 50 percent of challengers received less than $90,000. The median receipts for incumbents were nearly $500,000. You cannot oust an incumbent if you do not have a minimal amount of money.

We have other benefits that come with out incumbency, such as the franking privileges. Even if it is not used for overtly political reasons, it allows us to keep in touch with our constituents in a way that a challenger would never be able to do.

□ 1345

We have a million dollars a year in staff allowances, and we have easy access to the press. Even if we do not use these assets in a way that is overtly political, if we simply do our job right, if we simply do the casework for the people who come to us with their problems, it will be very difficult for us to be defeated.

So, no wonder, even in a year when the gentleman from Illinois said that we had monumental change in the Nation, even in 1994, we still reelected as a Nation more than 90 percent of the incumbents who chose to stand for reelection. That is not a 2-year contract. That is a contract for life, barring an extraordinary local political upheaval or being caught in an ethical or legal problem. I think that that is not in keeping with the vision of the Founding Fathers who intended for Congress continually to reflect the views of the people who elected us. The only sure way to accomplish that objective in this age with this many incumbent advantages is through term limits.

Now I do support reforming redistricting law, I do support reforming campaign finance law, and I support franking reform. But even after we have accomplished all of those reforms one by one, we will not have dealt with a problem that still exists, which is that it is too difficult to oust an incumbent, it is too difficult to have a competitive election in this day and age. That is why, my colleagues, we should support term limits.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. FRANK], the ranking subcommittee member from whose committee term limits came.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I have heard some fascinating arguments today. My favorite though is the one where Republicans get up and say that they could pass this very important item in their contract if they only got 50 percent of the Democrats. Now that is a fascinating concept.

Mr. Chairman, the University of Massachusetts', my home State, basketball team did very well in a recent tournament, and they lost, but, if they had only gotten 50 percent of the points of their opponents, they would have won. I mean Massachusetts lost a congressional seat in the last redistricting, but, if we could have only gotten 50 percent of the population of our friends from Connecticut, we would have a couple more seats.

I say to my colleagues,

> I think this is a wonderful concept. You promised to do something, and then you say, ''By the way, my promise is conditioned,'' after the fact of course, after they get people to do what they want, they then say, 'Oh, by the way, if I can get 50 percent of the opposition to be with me, then I'll win.

Well, I think that is pretty good odds, and I will make this statement on behalf of the Democratic Party, and I do not, I do not often, speak for the whole Democratic Party, but anytime we get 50 percent of the support of the Republicans, we will accomplish our goal.

I say to my colleagues,

> Now, if this is your idea of a contract, that you tell people you're going to do something, you forgot to mention that you wouldn't be able to do it unless you got 50 percent of the opposition—if this is your idea of the contract, no wonder you don't like the Federal Trade Commission, no wonder you want to make it harder for people to sue, because you would be in serious difficulty, but let's get beyond this wonderful concept that I can do anything I promise you if 50 percent of the opposition would be with me.

We are told this is the first time this has come to the floor. Last year, what about a discharge petition? Well, finally toward the end they filed a discharge petition. They got about a hundred Republicans to sign it.

Mr. Chairman, there are more people in this body voting yes and praying no

on term limits than there are on pay raises.

Yes, term limits gets a lot of lip service, but there are not many teeth behind it. The people here got the longest extended lips I have ever seen, and I suppose, if they had 50 percent of our lips, they would go even further on that wonderful, give me half of what you got and I can have more than you have policy, which I think is a very attractive policy. I mean we would not have an export-import problem with Japan if Japan would give us half of their exports. Our balance of trade would be 100 percent. That would be very good.

I keep going back to that concept because I love it, and I am going to borrow from it from time to time, but it is also clear that the Republican Party's commitment to term limits is rather slender.

Now I understand the problem. They had to really break some arms to do welfare last week. They are going to have to break some arms to do taxes next week. Do my colleagues know the problem that the Republican leadership has? Their Members only have two arms. The grab one arm for welfare, they grab one arm for taxes. They got nothing left. But do my colleagues know what? If they would take 50 percent of our arms, then they would all have three arms, and then they could do it because they could twist three arms. That is the problem. Once again it is the magic 50-percent solution.

I say to my colleagues,

> If you could take one arm for welfare, and one arm for taxes, and then you could take 50 percent of our arms, then you could twist a third arm for term limits, but the term limits supporters should know that they're getting the third arm. That's what you're giving the term limits people; you're giving them ice in the winter. You are saying, yes, you'll give them some votes. There's very little energy on the other side.

By the way, I think that makes perfect sense because one of the things we would be doing wrong, if by some miracle we pass this, and no one, including their side, expects that—one of the things we would be doing wrong would be for the first time amending the Constitution in a way that detracted from popular choice. Constitutional amendments have expanded the options of the voters. Women have been allowed to vote. Blacks; we erased that terrible sin in America. Eighteen-year-olds. This would be the first time the Senate went to popular election. This would be the first time we took something back.

So, Mr. Chairman, I say, ''In this case I'm glad you don't have our 50 percent.''

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. BLILEY].

(Mr. BLILEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Chairman, my colleagues, term limits is a bad idea. Where I come from we have a saying, ''If the pump ain't broke don't fix it.'' Over 50 percent of the Members of this body have come since 1990. That is 4 years, or less, experience. Now that is turning them over pretty fast.

Who will challenge an incumbent? Everybody says it is tough to challenge an incumbent. I say, ''Well, if you know he's only going to be there for 6 years, who would bother to challenge? Who would go try to raise money? Who would contribute money and say, 'Well, wait your turn. he's going to be gone in 4 more years, and then you can run.'''

No, Mr. Chairman, it is a bad idea. It is a bad idea because today committee staff has too much say-so, and, if we do term limits, they will be omnipotent because they will be the only ones who know—with an institutional memory to know how this place works.

Finally, history. I am privileged to represent a district that was once represented by James Madison himself. As my colleagues know, under the Articles of Confederation, we had term limits. Under the Articles of Confederation the founders said, ''You cannot serve more than 3 years in a 6-year period,'' but in 1787, at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, after a long argument, they took it out.

Robert Livingston said, ''This is not democracy, term limits. You're limiting the voters' choice.''

James Madison said, ''Frequent elections; that's the answer, that a voter should be able to decide whether he wants somebody new or whether he wants somebody with experience,'' and that is the way it ought to be today, and that is the way it ought to be tomorrow.

Please vote this down.

Mr. Chairman, the public's disdain is the people's greatest check on Congress. The power unleashed by the people on November 8, 1994, was another chapter in history's greatest example of man ruling man: democracy in America. As the current occupant of the congressional seat once held by James Madison, the father of the Constitution, I oppose congressional term limits.

Term limits are not consistent with freedom and the political institutions that make it possible to live free—the rule of law, democracy, and individual liberties. Term limits proponents hypothesize that shortened tenures in Congress will revitalize American democracy, but the consequence of term limits would actually be a limitation of democracy.

Term limits do more than limit the terms of public officials. They limit the choices of the voters. Why should we deny American citizens the full democratic principles our Nation was established upon?

When the Founding Fathers met in Philadelphia in 1787, they gathered for the purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation. During that summer, James Madison and the Founding Fathers' concept of democracy was far more limited than it is today. The concept of rotation in office was embodied in the Articles of Confederation, which provided that delegates to Congress could serve for no more than 3 years in any 6-year period. After extensive debate, the Founding Fathers rejected these term limits, citing the right of the people to freely elect and the importance of experienced legislators. Robert Livingston stated during the debates:

> The people are the best judges who ought to represent them. To dictate and control them, to tell them whom they shall not elect is to abridge their natural rights * * * We all know experience is indispensably necessary to good government. Shall we, then, drive experience into obscurity? I repeat that this is an absolute abridgement of the people's rights.

The Founding Fathers made a conscious decision to do away with term limits. They left this matter to the judgment of the people; not only because they trusted the people but because it was the logically proper place to leave it. In view of the deliberate rejection by the Founding Fathers, it appears that the Constitution's qualification clauses can only be interpreted as a prohibition on the States from limiting the reelection of their congressional delegations. Thus, the policy of State-imposed term limits was rejected.

How did Madison propose to protect the society—especially the supreme values of liberty and property—against the encroachment of a potentially ignorant majority which could be swayed by demagogues? Madison knew from history that such a peril did exist. But the answer, Madison argued, lay not in depriving the people at large of any voice in the Government but in increasing group interest and participation.

From 1776 on, Madison was almost continuously in public life until his retirement from the Presidency in 1817. James Madison served in the Virginia House of Delegates, Continental Congress, the Constitutional Convention, four terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, Secretary of State, and President for 8 years. In the name of returning power to the people, term-limit proponents would have denied the Nation Madison's wisdom and experience in the early days of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

In Federalist No. 57, James Madison queried: ''Who are to be the electors of the Federal representatives? The electors are the great body of the people of the United States,'' Madison responded. Madison studied the bond between the people and the elected representative. Madison found this bond ''involving every security which can be devised or desired for their fidelity to their constituents.'' The citizens would have distinguished the representative with their preference in the electoral process. Second, the adulation of victory would have produced an ''affection at least to their constitutions'' as they enter public service.

Madison also observed:

> All these securities however would be found very insufficient without the restraint of frequent elections. The House of Representatives is so constituted as to support in the Members a habitual recollection of their dependence on their people.

The majesty of democracy is an informed electorate, and the ballot box is the cornerstone of a free and democratic society. To deny the people's basic democratic right to have whoever they choose to serve at their pleasure is a vote of no confidence in American democracy. Why should we deny the voters this right? They possess both the ability to throw out representatives who are ineffective and keep those who serve them well.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may

consume to the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. GANSKE].

(Mr. GANSKE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to rise today as a strong supporter of term limits.

For too long, the U.S. Capitol has been filled with career politicians and the special interests to which they are beholden. I campaigned for term limits and am pleased that I will be able to fulfill that pledge this week. On my own, I have promised the people of the Fourth District that I will serve no more than five terms, and I intend to keep that pledge, too.

Our action this week is significant, because the American people have long been ahead of Congress on the issue of term limits. In the last 5 years, 22 States have adopted term-limits legislation.

Career politicians have become the norm in Washington, with turnover in this body running at only 10 percent. And the prevalence of career politicians have created the tremendous debt problem we face today. According to the National Taxpayer's Union Foundation, House Members who have been here more than 8 years supported an average of 55 percent more spending than Members with less than 8 years of service. The numbers in the Senate are even more stark, as those in their first term voted for 8.5 times less spending than their more senior colleagues.

Limiting the terms of Members of Congress will open our Government to more citizen involvement and will make the legislature more responsive to the American people. Term limits are strongly supported by the vast majority of the American people. And those who stand in the way of term limits will have to answer for their arrogance at the polls next November.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to join me in voting in favor of term limits. I urge them to heed the wishes of their constituents. And I urge them to have the courage to make Congress a legislature which is truly of the people.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH].

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Chairman, as my colleagues know, being in Congress is a good job by anybody's standard, the pay at $130,000 a year, good retirement benefits, good health benefits. But I ask, ''What happens when you're a career politician, and you don't have those job opportunities outside, and you want to stay with this job that you've decided is the way you want to live and raise your family?''

Mr. Chairman, I will tell my colleagues what my observation is. It is: ''You become somewhat more susceptible to those forces that might threaten that job, so, as you look at the special interest lobbyists, and when they come to you with threats and money for your next election, I would suggest that you're a little more considerate of their point of view if you think they have the opportunity to discharge you from what's a good job here in Congress.''

Career politicians that want to perpetuate themselves in office have become abusive with their power to the extent that we have jeopardized the future of this economy. Look what we have done:

We have increased the Federal debt by $5 trillion. We spent $5 trillion on a welfare program of putting poor people into their own sect and making them worse off.

As far as what the history is of the Founding Fathers, certainly American democracy starts with the Athenian democracy, but a lot of it comes from John Locke, the British philosopher who says government is simply a nuisance that we have to put up with to deal with some of the inconveniences. His position was that we should not have to have the kind of giant government for people to interact and deal with themselves in society, and I call to the Members' attention what happened when we reexamined the Constitution in the year 1788 and thereabouts.

It was George Mason that said, ''Nothing is going to make that legislator more conscious of the decisions that he or she makes than having to return to his home community and live under the laws which he passed.''

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New York [Mr. NADLER], a member of our Committee on the Judiciary.

(Mr. NADLER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the popular, but misguided, idea of term limits. The push for term limits is profoundly antidemocratic. It takes away the right of the people to choose whomever they want as their Representatives in free elections.

What arguments have we heard for limiting the right of people to choose their Representatives? We are told that incumbents are too entrenched and that challengers do not have a fair chance of unseating them. Well, nearly half of this House has been elected for the first time since 1992, and I am part of that new wave. Senior Members, committee chairmen, even the Speaker, have been voted out of office. Entrenched incumbency just does not seem to be what it used to be.

Still, Mr. Chairman, it is true that incumbents often do have an unfair advantage in elections. We should remedy that unfair advantage by passing meaningful campaign finance reform, including giving challengers access to the publicly owned airwaves so the voters will have an opportunity to learn more about them. That is how to battle the problem of entrenched incumbency, by making elections more fair and more democratic, not by making them less democratic, carelessly casting aside the right to vote for which Americans have struggled and died for more than two centuries.

Besides, if term limits is my colleagues' solution to making elections more fair, what they are really saying is, ''Let's have a fair election once every 12 years; once every 6 years let's have a fair election. The others, let them be one sided.'' That is ridiculous. Every election should be a fair and free election. Campaign finance reform, not term limits, is the way to make that happen.

We are told that politicians who have to worry about reelection often fail to do the right thing and, therefore, term limits would promote better government. What a vile, elitist idea. We have elections precisely because we want our Representatives to be always mindful of what the people want. The word for that is ''accountability,'' and accountability to the people is what good government in a free society is all about.

A lame duck, who is more likely to be thinking about his or her next job instead of thinking about representing the people as they wished to be represented will be more accountable to the special interests with jobs to offer than to the people whose ballot will be debased to irrelevance.

□ 1400

Let us not replace the ballot box with the revolving door as the symbol of our democracy. We will always have Representatives who believe they know better on a given matter than their constituents, and from time to time they may be right. They have the responsibility to do and vote as they believe to be right, and then to try to persuade the voters that they were right or that they nonetheless merit reelection. But a free people has the ultimate right and responsibility to control its own destiny and to live with the consequences of their judgments. We should not take away or restrict that freedom.

There is one final argument that must be answered, that Congress should be composed solely of people serving relatively short stints before returning to their real careers, that a career in service to one's community and country is somehow dishonorable.

I reject that. We have elections to ensure that the people retain the power to judge the quality of their representation. But if they deem that representation to be good and honorable, then they should be permitted to continue it if they want. Are we to deny the people the right to choose modern-day Henry Clays or Daniel Webster if they want to? The proponents of term limits would say yes. I say no. I believe we should be about democracy and accountability, and I therefore oppose this dangerous, antidemocratic, and fundamentally elitist constitutional amendment.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon [Mr. BUNN].

Mr. BUNN of Oregon. Mr. Chairman, it is interesting to hear over and over that somehow this is anti-democratic, yet through the Democratic process

State after State after State has adopted term limits. Now, many States are not as fortunate as we in Oregon are because we have an initiative and referendum process that allows us to do that. Other people do not. So we need to step forward as Congress and make that happen.

One of the things that is very, very clear today is that this has to be bipartisan. There simply are not enough Republicans. With 230 Members, every Republican voting for this cannot make it happen.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BUNN of Oregon. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. I do not have my copy of the contract. Would you show me the footnote in the contract where it says this one is dependent on getting 50 percent of the Democrats?

Mr. BUNN of Oregon. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, if you read the contract, you would know very clearly the contract commits to bring this to the floor, have an open debate and a vote for the first time. Now, I am a Republican that did not sign the contract, but at least I know what it says. It says we will get this to the floor, which we have done, and we will give it a vote.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. If the gentleman will yield further, simply by having this brought up and defeated you have satisfied the contract?

Mr. BUNN of Oregon. Absolutely not. By finally bringing it to the floor, we have given the American people the opportunity, and if the Democrats will cooperate, we will deliver to the American people what they deserve.

Now, I am willing, if the Democrats can get their version through, I will vote for it. And if the Republicans can get their version through, I challenge you to vote for it. There are four versions coming to us today, every one of which is better than the status quo, and I am willing to support any one. Whether they are retroactive or prospective, whether they are in the 6 or 12 years, the people have a right to term limits.

We are going to deliver two-thirds of the Republican votes and better. Can you deliver two-thirds of the Democrat votes? I do not think so. And if term limits fail, it is going to be once again the Democrats have thwarted the will of the American people. It is about time that you line up and support term limits, support a unified bipartisan effort. we can make a difference.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. TORKILDSEN].

Mr. TORKILDSEN. Mr. Chairman, today the Republican majority is keeping its promise to take the historic step of bringing term limits to the floor for a full and fair vote.

Never in history has a proposal to limit congressional terms been allowed to come to the floor.

When I first ran for Congress in 1992, I pledged to live by self-imposed term limits. Some of my colleagues wondered why, especially since I was one of the youngest Members elected. There was one very simple and direct answer.

It is important to lead by example.

I will lead by example, with a self-imposed limit.

Serving in Congress should not be a lifetime job. Any Member elected should work for whatever change he or she deems important, and then move on. If you haven't changed things within 12 years in the majority, chances are you never will, and you should step aside to let someone else try.

Voters in 22 States have approved term limits, and chances are that, if the other States had an initiative petition process, the voters there would approve term limits too.

I urge all my colleagues, Republican, Democrat, and anyone else, to support term limits. The voters will demand nothing less of this and any future Congress.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, before yielding, I just want to note for trend watchers, today a lot of Republicans are talking about how we must do what the public wants. Next week when we are dealing with the tax cut, which I believe public opinion polls will show is much less popular, look out for a change. We will be told then that it is important to stand up for what is right no matter what a temporary poll shows. So enjoy the allegiance to the short-term popular vote. It will pass with the weekend.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. DINGELL].

(Mr. DINGELL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Chairman, I want to begin by paying respect to all of my colleagues. Members here are said to represent their people. We are sent to go home and to justify what it is we do and what we have done and how we have served our people.

I regard public service as an honorable calling. I have heard talk about citizen legislators and lack of citizen legislators. Under our system, we have seen people like Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Clay. We have seen Rayburn, we saw Michel, we have seen NEWT GINGRICH, we have seen Tom Foley, we have seen all of the other leaders, GEPHARDT. We have seen my friend HENRY HYDE. No one is going to tell me these are not citizen legislators.

There is a huge turnover in this place. If you look, better than 50 percent of the Members are new. Very few remember Watergate. Virtually none remember World War II. We need to have people here who are able to understand history, some who can recall it, some who can understand what it is we did and why, and why it was right, and why it was wrong, and why we should have done it, and why we should have not.

That is what makes this institution great, the fact that we do produce people who are able to go home year after year and justify to the people the propriety of their service, what they have done, how they have done it, and why, and then come back and assist us by providing us with a corporate memory and an understanding of what it is.

I regard public service as a great calling, as an honorable calling, as something in which we give back to the people we serve something for what they give us. And we work together as their spokesman, as their voice, as their representative in the Congress, to do what it is that they would like to have done.

Government is an honorable calling. It exists to enable the people to rule themselves, to keep order, to see to it that we have a just society, to address all of the proper responsibilities of government, such as the national defense, or seeing to it that we have a just society which sees to it that no one suffers unduly in times of distress or hardship, to take care of the old, to educate the young. These are great callings, and these are callings in which we are at the center.

It cannot be said that Members will not seek this job under the current situation. Look and see the number. Look at the number of new Members who have come here. There has been a turnover. But it is necessary to have people who understand what it is, why it is, how this institution works, and why, and where the public interest lies. Those are the real things which are important.

According to the Congressional Research Service, the average length of service in the 104th Congress is 7½ years in this body, 10 years in the other body, well under the 12 years that we are talking about here in some of these amendments. Throughout history only 13½ percent of all House Members have served for more than 6 years. I would observe that in the 19th century, the total percent was only 2.6 percent.

It is important we recognize not only the honor of this calling, but we recognize the right of the citizens to choose who it is will serve them. That is why we have elections. We go home to talk to our people, to tell them what we did. I have a home in Michigan. I live there. I stay there. I talk to my fellow citizens. I find out what their concerns are. And were that not so, I can assure you, I would not still be serving in this institution.

One thing that has to be observed, I oppose term limits. I think they are unwise and I think they rob the people of a choice. However, if we are to do something about term limits, they should commence immediately.

Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DINGELL. I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina.

Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I would make two points, observations, if you could underscore them.

One, am I correct you are opposed to term limits?

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, absolutely, and I have made no bones about it, and I have told my people so. By the way, I was elected by a very large majority.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, I am delighted to yield 3 minutes to the gracious gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. JOHNSON].

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman.

First, Republicans have done exactly what we promised to do in the Contract With America. We have brought the term limits debate to the floor of the House so that the arguments can be publicly and thoroughly aired. That is what we promised, and that is what we are delivering.

I believe the interest in term limits reflects people's belief that Congress has been out of touch, that we have not in recent years debated the issues that people felt were at the heart of their concerns, and in that I agree with them. I agree that this body has been out of touch, but it is not for lack of Member turnover.

More than 50 percent of the Members have been here less than 4 years. What great corporation with formidable responsibilities would seek greater turnover than that?

The problem has been the entrenched power structure that governs what this body is allowed to consider. That is the problem. The solution is the solution adopted by the Republican majority this term. We have limited the terms of committee chairmen, limited the terms of all of our leadership, so that we will assure that turnover in committee chair and in leadership positions will guarantee that indeed the agenda will change, that there will be no chairman that can limit the agenda to his interests and the interests of those who sent him to Congress.

Limiting the terms of committee chairmen and reforming our campaign finance laws so that challengers have a genuine opportunity to win are the answer. The solution is not term limits, because that simply transfers power to staff. They stay longer than Members, they get to know the law better than Members, and they end up steering Members and controlling the agenda when they are not elected and do not go home.

I do not want to transfer power to staff, but I also do not want to compromise the quality of the solutions that we develop here as this Congress. And if we limit terms, we will surely compromise quality. Limiting terms will not simplify the problems. The problems are complex because American manufacturing and agriculture now employ highly toxic chemicals to produce their products. That means we have to have clean air laws, clean water laws, and when we write those laws, we have to know a lot about industry, agriculture, and chemistry.

Our security depends on understanding what kind of conflicts we will be a part of in 20 years, and for that reason then we need to understand what force structure we will need, what armaments we will need, and what investments in research and development we must make now for the security of our children. These issues take time, they take study, they take years of understanding, knowledge, and work.

Our economic security depends on our success in the international market. Child and family security depends on getting rid of drugs.

The issues demand an intelligent, knowledgeable, and dedicated Congress. Vote against term limits.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 15 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HYDE], the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary.

□ 1415

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Chairman, I ask that no Member ask me to yield until I finish because I do not want to be interrupted.

I want to tell you how unpleasant it is to take the well in militant opposition to something that is so near and dear to the hearts of so many of my colleagues and Members whom I revere, but I just cannot be an accessory to the dumbing down of democracy. And I think that is what this is. I might also say, parenthetically, that it is a little amusing to see the stickers that have been worn by so many of my colleagues. It says, ''term limits, yes.'' It does not say, ''term limits now.'' It says, ''term limits, yes.''

I am reminded of the famous prayer of Saint Augustine who said, Dear God, make me pure, but not now.

If someone told you on election day you had to vote for a particular person, you would wonder if you were back in the Soviet Union. What is the essential differences if they tell you you may not vote for this person? They have limited your range of choices. You have narrowed the circle of possibilities. You have denied a fundamental right free people have in a free country. If this were a trial, I would call as my first witnesses the Founding Fathers who directly rejected term limits.

Chief Justice Earl Warren, in the famous case of Powell versus MacCormick, 1969, said, and I quote, ''a fundamental principle of our representative democracy is, in Hamilton's words, 'that the people should choose whom they please to govern them.' As Madison pointed out at the convention,'' still quoting Justice Warren, ''this principle is undermined as much by limiting whom the people can select as by limiting the franchise itself.''

In 1788, in New York, in debating ratifying the Constitution, Robert Livingston asked a haunting question: ''Shall we then drive experience into obscurity?'' He called that an absolute abridgment of the people's rights.

George Orwell, in a review of a book by Bertrand Russell, said it has become the task of the intellectual to defend the obvious. I make no pretense at being an intellectual, but defending experience against ignorance is certainly obvious.

Have you ever been in a storm at sea? I have, and I knew real terror until I looked up on the bridge and the old Norwegian skipper, who had been to sea for 45 years, was up there sucking on his pipe. And I can tell you that was reassuring.

When that dentist bends over with the drill whirring, do you not hope he has done that work for a few years?

And when the neurosurgeon has shaved your head and they have made the pencil mark on your skull where they are going to have the incision and he approaches with the electric saw, ask him one question, are you a careerist?

Is running a modern complex society of 250 million people and a $6 trillion economy all that easy? To do your job, to have a smattering of ignorance, in Oscar Levant's phrase, you have to know something about the environment, health care, banking and finance and tax policy, farm problems, weapons systems, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Korea, not to mention Nagorno-Karabakh, foreign policy, the administration of justice, crime and punishment, education and welfare, budgeting in the trillions of dollars and immigration. And I have not scratched the surface.

We need our best people to deal with these issues. We in Congress deal with ultimate issues: life and death, war and peace, drawing the line between liberty and order. And do you ever really doubt that America will never again have a real crisis? With a revolving-door Congress, where will we get our Everett Dirksens, our Scoop Jackson, our Arthur Vandenbergs, our Hubert Humphreys, our Barry Goldwaters, our Sam Ervins? You do not get them out of the phone book. Where did Shimon Peres and Yitzak Rabin get the self-confidence to negotiate peace for their people with the PLO? I will tell you where: experience, bloody, bloody experience.

To those of you that are overwhelmed by the notion that this is a very popular cause, let me remind you of what Edmund Burke told the electors of Bristol, November 3, 1774. He said, a Member of Parliament owes to his constituency his highest fidelity. But he also owes them his best judgment and he does not owe his conscience to anybody.

I once told an incoming class of freshmen back when they let me speak to them at lunch that they have to know the issues to be prepared to lose

their seat over or they would do real damage here. To me, this is such an issue.

The unstated premise of term limits is that we are progressively corrupted the longer we stay around here. In answer to that I say, look around. You will see some of the finest men and women you will ever encounter in your life. The 12 apostles had their Judas Iscariot. We have a higher ratio than that. And I will tell you, I will not surrender. I will not concede to the angry, pessimistic populism that drives this movement, because it is just dead wrong.

Our negative campaigning, our mudslinging, our name calling has made anger the national recreation. But that is our fault, not the system's. America needs leaders. It needs statesmen. It needs giants, and you do not get them out of the phone book.

News is always better? What in the world is conservative about that? Have we nothing to learn from the past, tradition, history, institutional memory? Do they not count?

They have a saying in the provinces, Ignorance is salvageable, but stupid is forever.

This is not conservative. It is radical distrust of democracy. It is cynical. It is pessimistic, devoid of the hope and the optimism that built this country.

This corrosive attack on the consent of the governed stems from two sources. One is well meaning but misguided, and the other are those who really in their heart hate politics and despise politicians.

I confess, I love politics and I love politicians. They invest the one commodity that can never be replaced, their time, their family life, their privacy, and their reputation. And for what? To make this a better country.

Oh, incumbents have an advantage. I guess they do, although not necessarily. You have a record to defend. You have voted on hundreds of bills. And you get socked with them by your challenger who has nothing to defend, and you better be ready to explain how you voted back in 1988 on Gramm-Rudman or something like that.

But listen to me, it is 11:30 at night. And it is January and the snow is whirling outside the window. And I am in a banquet hall. I am at my one-millionth banquet. I am sitting there as we are honoring the mayor of one of my local towns, and they have not even introduced the commissioner of streets yet. And I am exhausted. And I look out the window at the snowstorm and I wonder where my opponent is.

He does not even know he is my opponent. He is home, stroking his collie dog, smoking a Macanudo, sipping from a snifter of Courvoisier and watching an R-rated movie on cable. But I am at that banquet.

Again and again, I will tell you why you have a leg up, good constituent service, accessibility, and availability. You ought to have a leg up. You have made an investment challengers never make. I will not apologize for that.

The case for term limits is a rejection of professionalism in politics. Career politician is an epithet. Careerism, they say, places too much focus on getting reelected and not on the public interest. That is a perfect nonsequitur. You get reelected by serving the public interest. Professionals, my friends, will run this Government. Only they will not be elected, they will be the faceless, nameless, try-to-get-them-on-the-phone, unaccountable permanent bureaucracy.

There are two contradictory arguments which support this term-limits issue. One is that we are too focused on reelection, not close enough to the people. Then you have the George Will theory that we are too close to the people, too responsive, and we need a constitutional distance from them.

I suggest any cause that is supported by two contradictory theories like this is standing on two stools which, as they separate, will give you an awful hernia.

Term limits limit the field of potential candidates. What successful person in mid life will leave a career at 50 and try and pick up the pieces at 56 or 62? This job will become a sabbatical for the well-to-do elite and bored retirees. And if you listen carefully, if this ever becomes law, that shuffling sound you hear is the musical chairs being played in every legislature in the country. So the question of 1788 recurs. Shall we then drive experience into obscurity? Shall we perpetrate this absolute abridgment of the people's rights?

Listen, last June 6, I had the honor of standing on the beaches at Normandy with BOB DOLE, Bob Michel, SONNY MONTGOMERY, SAM GIBBONS, and JOHN DINGELL. I guess you would call us old bulls today. But we were very young when we fought in battle 50 years ago. I guess we were citizen soldiers and citizen sailors back then. By some perverse logic, you withhold from us the title of citizen legislators today.

But I heard the mournful, piercing sound of big pipes from a British band, scattered among the sea of white crosses and the Stars of David, playing ''Amazing Grace.'' And with eyes not quite dry, I read some of the names on the crosses until I came to one that had no name. It just had a cross, stating ''Here Lies in Honored Glory a Comrade in Arms Known but to God.''

Then I saw another and another like that. No name, no family, just heroism buried thousands of miles from home. It occurred to me what an unpayable debt we owe these people because they died for freedom, and a part of that freedom is to choose who will govern you.

I can never vote to disparage that freedom. I pray you cannot either.

I presume to speak for SAM GIBBONS, BOB STUMP, JOHN DINGELL, SONNY MONTGOMERY, and yes, BOB DOLE. Fifty years ago our country needed us and we came running. I think our country still needs us. Why do you want to stop us from running? Why do you want to drive experience into obscurity? Have you forgotten the report card we got last November?

I have one piece of advice: Trust the people.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, after that remarkable performance by our chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HYDE], I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. RICHARDSON].

(Mr. RICHARDSON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Chairman, let me say that that speech by the gentleman from Illinois made me feel proud to be a Member of Congress.

Mr. Chairman, we already have term limits. They are called elections. And every year the American people consider candidates and choose who they want to represent them. And the best argument against term limits is the 104th Congress. Fifty percent of the Congress has changed in the last 5 years. Term limits are an emotional response to political frustration. That is over. The voters spoke. We are the change, the 104th Congress.

Mr. Chairman, what happens if we have term limits? Staff, the bureaucracy, lobbyists would run the Government. Rural States will be hurt. How will a small State compete against the bigger States if they are not protected by the seniority of their Members?

□ 1430

How can New Mexico compete against New York and California when it comes to some basic interests?

Mr. Chairman, I saw the ad this morning by the term limits movement. They talked about the bank scandal, they talked about the midnight pay raise. That is over. That is years ago. There have been reforms in the Congress. Why do we keep beating ourselves up? There has been change. Why do we denigrate ourselves? What is wrong with experience?

Let us have campaign finance reform, Mr. Chairman. Let us have ethics reform. Let us have challengers have a better chance to defeat us, if that is the worry. Let us address the problems of the country. Mr. Chairman, let us not politicize this.

Members heard the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HYDE], the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. LIVINGSTON], the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DELAY], distinguished Members from the other side. There are going to be 40 Members from that side voting against this.

Mr. Chairman, let us not politicize this. Let us give it the slow death that this issue deserves. Term limits are wrong for this country, and I am proud to say that.

Mr. Chairman, we already have term limits. They are called elections. Every election year, the American people consider candidates and choose who they want to represent them.

I have two letters from my constituents with me. The first letter is from Nicole Beers from Los Alamos, NM. She states, ''This letter is sent with many thanks and great appreciation for the prompt and courteous treatment I received from you and your staff * * * I will certainly be pulling for you in the next elections, as will my family.''

The second letter is from Bill and Phyllis Gaedke from Clovis, NM, who state, ''We regret that you escaped the gigantic broom that swept socialist liberals out of government Tuesday * * *''.

My point, Mr. Chairman, is that both of my constituents were able to vote the way that they wanted to. Nicole for me and Bill and Phyllis against me. That is democracy. Term limits will only take away the rights of the American people to choose their best voice in the legislative process.

It is also hard for me to believe that supporters of term limits believe these limits are long overdue, yet they exclude themselves from such limits. There is one word to describe this, Mr. Chairman, and that word is hypocrisy.

If the Republican Contract With America promised that Congress should abide by the same rules that everyone else must follow, then the Republican bill on term limits breaks the contract.

LOS ALAMOS, NM,
August 16, 1994.

Hon. BILL RICHARDSON,
House of Representatives, Santa Fe, NM.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN RICHARDSON: This letter is sent with many thanks and great appreciation for the prompt and courteous treatment I received from you and your staff. Once I contacted your office, the speed with which my problem was resolved was astounding. The frustration and helplessness that I felt regarding the situation I was in with the University of New Mexico's scholarship office is gone. Instead, I received the scholarship that I worked so hard for.

Within one week of contacting your office, I was contacted by someone from the scholarship office who informed me that my scholarship was still intact and that I would soon be receiving an award letter. This was a dramatic change from the long minutes on hold and trying to schedule appointments that I had previously experienced.

Your staff was extremely cooperative and unbiased. I value that tremendously. I want you to know that I have relayed my experience and expressed my gratitude to just about anyone who would listen. Particularly, my family has heard the entire story, and everyone has agreed that having a congressman that is as close to the people of New Mexico is a rare and special thing.

I will certainly be pulling for you in the next elections, as will my family. Thank you again to your superb office staff and also to you, Congressman Richardson.

Sincerely,

NICOLE BEERS.

P.S. Juan Wecaro is the gentleman that worked directly with me.

CLOVIS, NM,
November 11, 1994.

Hon. BILL RICHARDSON,
Rayburn House Office Bldg., Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE RICHARDSON: We regret that you escaped the gigantic broom that swept socialist liberals out of government Tuesday; however, we feel somewhat encouraged that the great event will serve as a very effective wakeup call that we will not tolerate business as usual in Washington, DC!

We know that you have already duly noted that you and your liberal policies were rejected here in Curry County and hope this fact serves as a guide to your getting into mainstream America.

You have been a very big spender; we hope now that you will be able to curb your insatiable appetite for our money.

Of course, we have been labeled obstructionist for many years; now we'll just have to see if anyone else wears that label.

[In percent]

Name	Curry County	Precinct 23
Bemis	50	60
Richardson	48	37

Sincerely,

BILL AND PHYLLIS GAEDKE.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. BARR].

Mr. BARR. Mr. Chairman, I thank my distinguished colleague from Florida for yielding time to me, to allow me to say a few words about an historic debate.

Mr. Chairman, as great as the debate is that we have already heard here today, most recently through the eloquence of the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, and Mr. Chairman, as great as the debates that have raged in these hallways over the ages have been, and as great as the debate will be that we will hear into the evening hours tonight on this issue, let us not forget where the greatest, where the most eloquent, where the most appropriate debate on this issue is and should be, and that is with the people.

Let us keep in perspective, Mr. Chairman, what it is that we are debating and will be deciding this evening. We will not be deciding whether or not the American people should have term limits. All we are deciding, the only issue that we are deciding, is whether or not the people of this country shall themselves be able to make that decision.

I do not think there is anybody here that would deny that that is precisely the method for making these decisions that our Founding Fathers had in mind. That is all we are deciding.

Let us not take from the people the ability to decide this fundamental issue. Let the debate go forward from this Chamber to the halls of our State legislatures and in the communities all across America, where it ought to be. Let us not here today stifle that debate. It is a vigorous debate, it is a great debate. Let it continue.

Mr. Chairman, also with regard to one of the specific proposals that we will be debating and voting on, and that is that proposal for a 12-year limit that would allow States to set lower limits, let me say that is a recipe for disaster. That is a recipe that guarantees that the issue will in fact be bottled up in our courts for decades or years to come.

Let us reflect back to the last time this body did decide a similar issue, and that is early in this century with the 17th amendment that provided for the direct election of Senators. Had those Members who voted for that, and had those States that voted to adopt that amendment at that time said, ''Let us have a national standard with an asterisk on it, and say some States can do it directly and some States can do it indirectly,'' is there anybody here that would disagree with the proposition that that would have thrown the issue into the courts and probably would have resulted in the rejection of the 17th amendment?

If we have the fortitude, if we decide that this is an issue that the people should decide, let us give it to them and say ''Do you want a national standard?''

Do we want to provide for that great process that brings us here today, for the people to decide that and set that standard based on the will of the people? Let this debate continue.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. MCCRERY].

(Mr. MCCRERY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCCRERY. Mr. Chairman, we limit the terms of the President, and we ought to limit the terms of Members of Congress.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of term limits for Members of Congress.

When I first arrived in Congress some 7 years ago, I had mixed feelings about term limits. But since arriving, I have witnessed the House Bank scandal, the House Restaurant scandal, and the House Post Office scandal. I believe all these sad events in the history of our legislative branch are due to the arrogance which results from human beings being in power for too long.

For those who contend that term limits run counter to our democratic principles and unduly restrict people's rights, I would point out that the people of this country, in their wisdom, chose to restrict their right to elect a President to only two terms. The people chose to so restrict their rights because they rightfully recognized the danger of allowing the executive branch to be controlled by any one person for too long. The same danger exists in the legislative branch. By not limiting terms of Members of Congress, we expose ourselves to the danger of a few men or women being in power, in positions of influence, in our legislative branch, for too long. We expose ourselves to the danger of the unbridled arrogance which can result from a set of human beings being in power for too long. I believe in the axiom, ''Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.''

Mr. Chairman, it is time to impose on our legislative branch the same kind of protection against the accumulation of power and the corruption which results from it that we have imposed on our executive branch of Government.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. HOEKSTRA].

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Chairman, as I listen to the debate today, I believe once again we see that Congress just does not get it. There continues to be a huge disconnect between Congress and

the American people, between this beltway mentality in Washington and the rest of the country.

I enjoy listening to the philosophical debate about the pros and cons for term limits, but coming from a business background, I think it is also important to come back and take a look at reality.

Let us take a look at what performance this Congress has been giving to the American people: huge deficits; a process which has unempowered the people by developing a campaign process where Congress is forced to raise huge amounts for campaign war chests, and other failed programs. We have developed a huge welfare state, a dependency on Washington rather than the American people.

It is time that we move back, that we empower the American people, that we even the playing field. We have to recognize that the only change and real reform that is taking place, is taking place at the State level, where voters are empowered to make change.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. FOWLER].

Mrs. FOWLER. Mr. Chairman, the debate on term limits parallels the debate over giving women the right to vote.

It took Congress 32 years to catch up with the public's desire for women's suffrage. The first vote in Congress on a constitutional amendment to give women the vote took place in 1887, and it was defeated. It was defeated again in 1918 and once more in early 1919. It wasn't until later in 1919 that Congress finally approved the amendment and sent it to the States for ratification.

During the three decades that Congress was opposing women's suffrage, however, 30 of the 48 States went ahead and gave women the right to vote in some degree.

The same thing has occurred with term limits. During the last few years, when the Democratic leadership refused to even bring this issue to the floor, 22 States have passed their own congressional term limits laws. The term limits provision in the Contract With America and today's vote are signs that under our new Republican leadership Congress is finally catching up with the States.

The very first bill I introduced when I came to Congress was a term limits bill tracking Florida's 8-year limit, and I introduced the same bill again this year. I will support both the Hilleary and McCollum amendments because they would not supersede Florida's law, which passed in 1992 with 77 percent of the vote. National poll numbers show about the same percentage of support for term limits across the country.

Term limits will result in a Congress that is closer to the people. They will reduce the power of staff, since the most powerful staffers are always those who work for the most senior Members. And they will make the Congress more truly representative of America by resulting in a higher number of open seats, which are easier for women and minorities to win. Currently, 72 percent of the women and 81 percent of the minorities serving in Congress were elected to open seats.

Some say that we already have term limits in the form of elections. Unfortunately, voters are reluctant to oust their own incumbents—even in 1994, 90 percent of incumbents were re-elected. At the same time, however the voters in eight States enacted new term limits laws.

Others say that governing is too complicated to be left to citizen legislators. If our Government is too complex to be understood by its citizens, then we should be simplifying it, not creating a class of professional politicians to run it.

Take a look at the First Congress. That group of novices managed to rack up some pretty significant accomplishments. The Bill of Rights, for example.

I am sure there were a lot of lofty arguments put forward in this body 100 years ago as to why women's suffrage should not be written into the Constitution. But while Congress was debating, States were taking action.

It is no different this time around. To date, 25 million Americans in 22 States have voted for congressional term limits. When Members cast their vote today, I urge them to come down on the side of the American people. I urge them to vote ''yes'' on final passage of term limits.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I am delighted to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS].

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Chairman, the American people are angry and frustrated about the Congress and its lack of responsiveness to their needs. The rich get richer, the poor get poorer, and the middle class continues to shrink. Congress does not act and the people are angry.

The standard of living of the average American continues to go down, down, down, and we continue to lose huge numbers of decent-paying jobs to desperate third-world countries. Congress does not act and the people are angry.

The United States today is the only major industrialized Nation on Earth without a national health care system. Congress does not act and the people are angry.

What are term limits going to do about any of this? Nothing, except perhaps make a bad situation worse. Mr. Chairman, the problem with American politics is not that we cannot force out every Member of Congress every 6 years. That is not the problem.

The problem is that the U.S. Congress today is dominated by big money interests, and that this institution works primarily for the wealthy and the powerful, and not the ordinary American. That is the problem, and all of the term limits in the world are not going to change that reality.

Mr. Chairman, if we are going to make the Congress responsive to ordinary Americans, we need campaign finance reform, not term limits. We need to stop millionaires from buying their own seats, and end the absurdity of 20 percent of the Members of Congress being millionaires themselves.

We need to stop corporations from putting huge amounts of campaign contributions into political parties as soft money. We need to stop powerful interests like the insurance companies from buying the air waves to prevent real health care reform.

Mr. Chairman, let us pass campaign finance reform, not term limits, and return power back to ordinary Americans.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. GOODLATTE].

(Mr. GOODLATTE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of term limits. I have a great respect for some of those here today who have argued against them, but I think they have missed the point and missed the point entirely. It has been claimed that term limits will give strength and power to the congressional staff, to bureaucrats, to lobbyists who will be here in Washington, DC perhaps forever to come.

I think that is entirely wrong. I think in fact the current system gives strength to those institutions of Washington, DC, because those who have been here for 20, 30, 40, and 50 years are the ones who have institutionalized themselves as part of that process. They have been unwilling to change. That is what has been seen when we have actually had some turnover here recently.

Conventional wisdom is not being accepted right now. The status quo is not being accepted. It is because of the fact that we have new Members bringing that about. Term limits is the only way to assure that we will have this constant turnover, this constant freshness.

Those who suggest that the only kind of experience in this Congress is the experience of warming a seat here for 20, 30, 40, or in the case of one individual who set the all-time record of 54 years, are wrong. I keep hearing Henry Clay's name being mentioned. Henry Clay was elected Speaker of the House in the early 1800's, not after he had been here for 20 years, in his very first term. Why? Not because of experience in the House of Representatives, but because of experience in life. It is time that we recognize that and return this institution to the people. I urge support for term limits.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York [Mr. QUINN].

(Mr. QUINN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Chairman, later today the House will vote on the question of whether or not to assign term limits to all Members of Congress. This is truly an historic occasion.

I strongly support a 12-year term limit for both Senators and Representatives.

In fact, when I first ran for Congress in 1992, the need for term limits was item No. 1 on my 11-point platform for immediate congressional reform.

I will quote from that list:

''No. 1. Term limits: With incumbents winning re-election 90 percent of the time, America's electoral process is lacking the competition essential for true democracy. The life tenure of Members of Congress is the major contributing factor to most of the problems of Congress.''

Measures designed to effect congressional reform through term limitations appeared on ballots in eight States during the 1994 election, and, in all but one State, they were passed.

Congressional term limits would enhance the democratic nature of our national legislature by opening it up to a true, fair, and competitive election process.

□ 1445

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], chairman of a committee that focuses its attention around the world.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to rise in opposition to the term limits amendments. Just last week, after a historic debate, the Congress debated and approved the Personal Responsibility Act, sending a clear message: Americans must take responsibility for their own actions.

Two weeks ago, our debate on commonsense legal reform also focused on the proposition that individual responsibility is the hallmark of our Nation.

Is it not ironic that we are now considering stripping Americans of the most basic, crucial responsibility of all: the responsibility to remain alert, active, and informed; the responsibility to monitor elected officials; the responsibility to cast an intelligent vote on election day.

Term limits are being proposed to solve a problem that does not exist. Over half the current Members of Congress began their service in this Chamber since 1990. During the 8 years that Ronald Reagan was President, the House experienced a 60-percent turnover of membership.

Those Americans who have chosen to exercise their responsibility in voting have been remarkably discriminating. It is an insult to their intelligence, and to their patriotism, to contend term limits are the only possible way to turn out representatives who they feel have outlived their usefulness.

Our Nation already has term limits: it's called ''voting.''

I do not subscribe to the theory that public service is the only job in our society in which experience is an evil.

Throughout my many years of service as a Member of this body, I have never experienced an unopposed election. Every 2 years, I have defended the positions I had taken, explained my voting record, and accounted to the people for my conduct in office. I believe that this was the way our Founding Fathers intended Congress to work, and I see nothing wrong with that proposition.

Today, we are asked, for the first time in our Nation's history, to turn the clock back on 208 years of progress. After two centuries of expanding the electorate and the rights of our citizens, for the first time, an amendment is proposed that would restrict the rights of Americans to make a free and open choice regarding their representatives, and which would absolve them of the responsibility of remaining alert and active.

Mr. Chairman, term limits is much more than just a bad idea. It is a threat to our system of Government. I urge my colleagues to strongly reject this amendment and to get on with the business of governing.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. HEFNER].

(Mr. HEFNER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HEFNER. First of all I would like to say that I witnessed today from the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. HYDE] one of the greatest speeches I have ever heard on the floor of this House of Representatives. I think we are talking about the wrong thing in this debate on term limits.

Let's try to put it in focus for the millions of people that are fortunate enough to hear this very high-level debate today. I believe that if you went to the American people and you said to the American people, ''What do you think about term limits for Members of Congress in the other body?'' they would say, ''We support term limits.'' But if you gave them the full facts and you said the amendment that we are considering today, a 12-year limit, and you said to them at the very best it is going to take 5 years for it to work its way through the States, so that makes 17 years and everybody that has spoken on this for and against has been here at least one term, which is 2 more years, so you are talking about term limits to get rid of all the riffraff here, you have got 17 years. Term limits for 17 years.

I happen to believe that public service is the most honorable profession that you can practice. I am going if you will permit me to be personal for one minute. I had open heart surgery about 4 years ago and the second day out of surgery, how I will never know, they put through a call from North Carolina to my room, and this little old lady said to me, ''BILL HEFNER, I just want to call you and thank you because your office and your staff saved me from losing my home.'' Our constituent service went to work for this lady, and I do not know what we did, but in her mind it enabled her to save her home and that was precious to her.

I would hope that we would not pass an amendment that would prohibit any member of this House from having some precious soul in their district exercise their God-given right and their constitutional right to vote for whoever they want to if they get into the electoral process legally that they could express their vote on confidence in that person.

I think when you go to the American people and tell them the truth, this is not a 12-year term limits, it is actually at best a 17-year term limit prohibition.

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska] having assumed the chair, Mr. KLUG, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 73) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States with respect to the number of terms of office of members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, had come to no resolution thereon.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 831, PERMANENT EXTENSION OF THE HEALTH INSURANCE DEDUCTION FOR THE SELF-EMPLOYED

Mr. ARCHER submitted the following conference report and statement on the bill (H.R. 831) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the deduction for health insurance costs of self-employed individuals, to repeal the provision permitting nonrecognition of gain on sales and exchanges effectuating policies of the Federal Communications Commission, and for other purposes:

CONFERENCE REPORT (H. REPT. 104–92)

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 831), to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the deduction for the health insurance costs of self-employed individuals, to repeal the provision permitting nonrecognition of gain on sales and exchanges effectuating policies of the Federal Communications Commission, and for other purposes, having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses as follows:

That the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and