

U.S. Term Limits
2875 S. Ocean Blvd #200
Palm Beach, FL 33480
February 3rd, 2014



To all members of the South Dakota legislature:

As I'm sure you're aware, the House State Affairs Committee is currently debating a bill (HJR 1002) which would create a referendum to lengthen legislative term limits from eight years to twelve. I encourage you to oppose it in the name of doing right by your constituents. The proposal is a particularly egregious one, as South Dakotans have never given any indication that they don't fully support the current limits.

I'm simply stunned to see that longer term limits are on the agenda once again. The voters passed eight-year limits with a 63 percent majority in 1992, and defended them in 2008 with an even greater percentage of the vote (76%). Recent [polling](#) shows that little has changed, since 63 percent of voters say they'd be *angry* if legislators tried to lengthen term limits to stay in office longer.

To move forward with such a bill in spite of overwhelming opposition is a direct slap in the face to the people of South Dakota, who have always stood for citizen legislators over career politicians. There is no sense in making individuals spend time, money, and effort to defeat at the ballot box a measure they've already rejected several times.

The state's eight-year term limits have proven themselves to strike the right balance between the benefits of experience and the better representation that comes with regular rotation in office. Under eight-year term limits, South Dakota is [ranked](#) second of all fifty states in fiscal health – a metric which includes solvency, overall economic conditions, and a funded pension system. Any arguments saying term limits impair the legislature or the state's fiscal health are easily refuted by this data.

Our broad array of experience shows that longer term limits do not deliver the full benefits of this popular reform. While longer limits often feel “reasonable” to

people close to political insiders, from the citizens' point of view they are weak, unexciting, and keep the legislature further removed from the populace.

While HJR 1002 is a direct assault on the peoples' rights, a group of legislators has introduced an alternative term limits proposal which I believe merits your support.

HJR 1003 would maintain the status quo for the length of South Dakota's term limits, but change them from consecutive to lifetime limits. So rather than return to the career of politician after a brief hiatus, termed-out legislators couldn't come back. They would have to leave that seat open for fresh faces and ideas to emerge.

Both of these bills relate to term limits, but only HJR 1003 tightens them in such a way to protect citizens from unaccountable politicians. Make no mistake: a vote for HJR 1003 is a vote for term limits; a vote for HJR 1002 is a vote against them.

Regardless of what happens, we will be surely be monitoring the situation. Whether the grassroots is rallying this fall for the good amendment or against the bad one, we will assist in every way possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Blumel', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Philip Blumel
President, U.S. Term Limits