CATO INSTITUTE BRIEFING PAPERS

Cato Institute Briefing Paper No. 21: An Antidote to Federal Red Ink: Term Limits

November 3, 1994

Stephen Moore, Aaron Steelman

Stephen Moore is director of fiscal policy studies and Aaron Steelman is a researcher at the Cato Institute.

Executive Summary

Term limits for members of the U.S. Congress have now passed in 16 states, and this November they are on the ballot in 7 more states. This study investigates how term limits might affect federal fiscal policy outcomes.

We examine recent key votes on budget and tax issues and compare the voting behavior of the members of Congress with 6 years or less in the House and 12 years or less in the Senate (junior members) with that of the members with more than 6 and 12 years experience (veterans). We find that if only the junior members of Congress had been voting in recent years--as would be the case if all members were term limited--many popular fiscal reforms would have been approved, including a balanced-budget amendment, a line-item veto for the president, and the Penny-Kasich spending cuts. We also find that both President Bush's and President Clinton's record tax increases would have been defeated. Because members of Congress become more pro-tax-and-spend the longer they serve in Washington, term limits would probably lead to more fiscal restraint on Capitol Hill.

Introduction

This study examines the question of whether congressional term limits might alter fiscal policy outcomes in Washington. We examine 13 recent key votes on budget and tax issues and compare the voting behavior of the members of Congress with 6 years or less in the House and 12 years or less in the Senate (junior members) with that of the members with more than 6 and 12 years experience (veterans). We discover that if only the junior members of Congress had been voting in recent years--as would be the case if all members were term limited--the following outcomes would have been achieved.

* A balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution would have been passed. The balanced-budget amendment would have passed both houses of Congress each of the last three times it was up for a vote--in 1994, 1992, and 1990. Instead, it failed on each occasion.

* The president would have been granted line-item veto authority. The line-item veto would have been approved by the House the last three times it was voted on--in 1994, 1993, and 1984. It would have passed the Senate in 1985, the only time it was voted on in the last decade.

* Both President Bush's and President Clinton's record tax increases would have been defeated. Clinton's tax increase would have failed in the House by eight votes. Bush's tax increase would have failed in both houses.

* The Penny-Kasich spending cuts would have been approved in the House. By a vote of 114 to 84, the House would have passed the $100-billion spending cuts in the Penny-Kasich bipartisan package.

It is possible that this study substantially under- states the impact that term limits might have on federal fiscal policy.

One argument for term limits is that if we imposed rules that would create a legislature of nonprofessional politicians, those running for office in the first place would be more broadly representative of the American public. The adverse-selection bias of the current political system might be mitigated by term limits. The methodology used in this study does not account for that important potential effect of term limits. Many opponents argue that term limits would have a minimal or even a negative impact on federal lawmaking. This study, confirmed by others, contradicts that assessment and suggests that term limits would tilt budget policy outcomes in the direction of increased fiscal restraint. Moreover, the changed fiscal policy results generated by term limits would more closely match the wishes of the majority of the American public.

The Cases for and against Term Limits

Over the past four years the term-limits movement has swept through the states with stunningly solid public support. The movement has become a broad-based, grassroots assault against business as usual in Washington, D.C., state capitals, and city halls. Since 1990, when they first appeared on the ballot in Oklahoma, Colorado, and California, term limits have been overwhelmingly approved by voters virtually everywhere they have been tested. Voters are imposing term limits on mayors; city council members; state legislators; and, most controversial of all, their congressional delegations. To date, 16 states have approved term limits for members of Congress. If the courts do not stand in the way, it is a realistic possibility that within the next five years, the entire U.S. Congress will be term limited.[1]

This study examines how term limits might affect budget and tax policy in Washington. Some opponents of term limits charge that such limits are merely a cosmetic political reform--that only the faces in Congress would change, not the policy outcomes. They also claim that Congress would lose the services of its "best" legislators if term limits were imposed.[2]

Supporters of term limits counter that such limits would lead to different and better policy outcomes. That might be true for two reasons. First and foremost, supporters say, term limits would substantially reduce the adverse- selection bias of those who run for Congress in the first place. Today, it is argued, the political system by and large attracts to public office people who wish to become career politicians. For those who might wish to serve in Congress for a short time, the initial investment to win a House or Senate seat is prohibitive. That expense is not only the huge monetary cost of running a successful campaign against an incumbent but also the years required to have any influence on the policymaking process in Washington, thanks to the seniority system. The adverse-selection bias means that only people willing to serve many years in politics are likely to run for office at all.[3]

With term limits, however, we might attract candidates who were more representative of the American public at large--both in their views on government's role in America and in their professional backgrounds. In other words, the nation might get a higher caliber Congress with term limits. Before the imposition of term limits, many members of the California legislature listed their occupation as "full-time legislator." Now California elections are attracting teachers, businessmen, nurses, and workers from a wide variety of occupations.[4]

The second argument for term limits is that even if there were no improvement in the quality of the people initially running for office, just the process of limiting elected officials' time served in Washington would have a benign impact on voting behavior. It seems that the longer elected officials serve in Congress, the more removed they become from the wishes of the voters, the more influenced they become by lobbyists and special interests, and the less fiscally responsible they become. Former Democratic congressman and now Delaware governor Thomas Carper recently summarized that effect: "Once you're there [in Congress], you tend to forget who is the servant and who is being served."[5]

Political scientist James L. Payne has described that phenomenon as the "culture of spending."[6] In other words, the longer members of Congress serve, the more acculturated they become to the virtues of big government. Term limits might be an effective antidote.

Testing the Proposition that Term Limits Matter

We cannot test empirically the proposition that term limits would attract more fiscally responsible people to serve in Congress.[7] But we can test the proposition that junior members are less prone to support more government and higher levels of spending and taxes than are veterans.

In this study we test that hypothesis by examining 13 recent key votes in Congress on fiscal policy issues. We compare the actual policy outcome with the outcome if only members with less than 6 years in the House and 12 in the Senate (the junior members) had voted. In other words, we assume that under term limits the entire Congress would vote the way that the junior members do now.

The key votes we chose to examine were those in which a clear fiscally responsible position was rejected by Congress. In addition, on virtually all of the 13 issues, there was a clear voter preference, expressed in public opinion polls, for the fiscally responsible outcome, but Congress chose the other. In some cases, we chose votes on the same issue in different years in order to examine whether the results are consistent over time and with different Congresses. The 13 key votes examined are

1. the 1994 balanced-budget amendment (House and Senate);

2. the 1992 balanced-budget amendment (only the House voted);

3. the 1990 balanced-budget amendment (only the House voted);

4. the fiscal year 1994 Budget Reconciliation Act, the "Clinton tax increase" (House and Senate);

5. the fiscal year 1991 Budget Reconciliation Act, the "Bush tax increase" (House and Senate);

6. the 1994 line-item veto (only the House voted);

7. the 1993 line-item veto (only the House voted);

8. the 1985 line-item veto (only the Senate voted);

9. the 1984 line-item veto (only the House voted);

10. the 1993 Penny-Kasich spending reduction package (the House rejected the measure, and the Senate then took a meaningless vote);

11. the 1994 $30-billion crime bill;

12. the 1992 congressional pay raise (only the Senate took a recorded vote); and 13. the 1989 Congressional pay raise (House and Senate).

Tables 1 through 13 compare the actual vote on the 13 bills with the hypothetical vote of a term-limited Congress. The vote under term limits indicates what the outcome would have been if the veterans in Congress had been excluded from voting and only junior members had voted. In 12 of the 13 cases, the outcome would have been different with term limits.

Balanced-Budget Amendment

Public opinion polls have consistently found that two- thirds of the American public support a balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution.[8] Congress has consistently rejected it.

* In 1994 a balanced-budget amendment fell short of the two-thirds requirement by 4 votes in the Senate and 12 in the House. Table 1 shows that the amendment would have passed both the House and the Senate by thin margins with term limits.

* In 1992 the House voted down a balanced-budget amendment by 9 votes. Table 2 shows that it would have passed by 11 votes with term limits. The Senate did not vote.

* In 1990 the House failed to pass a balanced-budget amendment by 7 votes. Table 3 shows that it would have passed by 15 votes if only the junior members had voted.

The Clinton Tax Increase

In 1993 the Clinton administration's first budget proposal contained a $275-billion tax increase--the largest tax hike in American history. The budget was hugely unpopular. Only 38 percent of the American public thought the package was "fair," whereas 48 percent thought it "unfair." Nonetheless, Congress approved the measure by just one vote in the House and the Senate and it was signed into law by the president in August 1993.

Table 4 shows that even with term limits, the tax increase would have been approved by the Senate--by a narrow margin. The measure would have failed in the House, however, by 8 votes. But since a "no" vote in either house prevents passage of legislation, this particular bill would have failed--although it is likely that even a term-limited House would have accepted a package containing some new taxes.

The Bush Tax Increase

In 1990 George Bush renounced his no-new-taxes pledge and proposed a $250-billion five-year tax hike. The president was able to secure victory in the Senate by 4 votes and in the House by 13 votes.

Table 5 shows that with term limits, Bush's tax hike would have been defeated in both chambers. It would have failed by 3 votes in the Senate and 10 votes in the House.

Line-Item Veto for the President

Roughly two-thirds of the American public support a line-item veto for the president. In the past 10 years Congress has voted on this measure four times--twice in the House and twice in the Senate.[9] On each occasion it was rejected.

* Table 6 shows that the measure failed by 7 votes in the House in 1994. Assuming term limits, it would have passed by 5 votes.

* Table 7 shows that the measure failed by 11 votes in the House in 1993. With term limits, it would have passed by 6 votes.

* Table 8 shows that the Senate fell 2 votes short of invoking cloture on a filibuster against the line-item veto in 1985. With term limits, the filibuster would have been defeated with 1 vote of the three-fifths necessary to spare. If the filibuster had been defeated, it is generally assumed that the measure would have passed.

* Table 9 indicates that the Senate fell 1 vote short of enacting the line-item veto in 1984. The measure would have passed by 4 votes, had term limits been in place.

Hence, in both houses a line-item veto would have been approved if only junior members had been voting.

The Penny-Kasich Spending Cuts

In late 1993 the House voted on a package of more than $100 billion in spending cuts to reduce the budget deficit. After intense special-interest lobbying against the measure, the bill was defeated by just 4 votes in the House (Table 10). With term limits, the measure would have sailed through the House by a 14-vote margin of victory. (There was a no vote in the Senate that year after the House defeat.)

The $30-Billion Crime Bill

In the summer of 1994 Congress voted on a $30-billion crime prevention bill. Nearly one-third of the money was dedicated to social spending with little connection to fighting crime.[10] Despite strong public opposition to what became identified as a "pork-barrel" spending bill, the measure was approved and signed into law by President Clinton.[11] We find that the bill would have passed even with term limits, but by a much narrower margin in both houses (see Table 11).

Congressional Pay Raises

Pay raises for Congress are enormously unpopular. Opinion polls reveal persistent public disapproval of salary hikes for the legislature. In 1989 and 1992 Congress ignored the public's attitude and voted themselves a pay raise.

* The pay raise of 1989 increased House members' salaries by 25 percent to $125,000 and Senate salaries by 7 percent to $102,000. Table 12 shows that the bill passed by 6 votes in the Senate and 38 in the House. It would have failed by 4 votes in the Senate and 32 votes in the House under term limits.

* In 1992 Congress raised the pay of senators to $125,000 to match the salaries of members of the House. Table 13 shows that the measure passed by 3 votes in the Senate (it was approved by a voice vote in the House). Assuming term limits, the measure would have been defeated by 6 votes in the Senate.

Policy Implications

Our analysis of the 13 key votes suggests the following fiscal policy implications of term limits.

The Propensity to Spend Increases with Time in Office

This analysis confirms the existence of a culture of spending in Congress. Even if there were no improvement in the quality of candidates running for and winning seats in Congress as a result of term limits, such limits would still lead to more fiscal restraint and discipline. This result would be achieved simply by requiring a rapid turnover in Congress and preventing members from building careers in the House or the Senate.

The Propensity to Spend Increases for Members of Both Parties

It is noteworthy that the acculturation to big government occurs among members of both political parties. We find that in 10 of the 13 key votes examined, the percentages of junior Republicans voting for lower taxes and spending was larger than that of veteran Republicans. We even find that on some key votes the acculturation effect was more powerful than the party effect. In other words, although Republicans typically vote for more fiscal restraint than do Democrats, in some instances veteran Republicans voted for more spending and taxes than did junior Democrats. That was the case with the Bush tax increase, on which newcomer Senate Democrats voted nay in larger percentages than did veteran Senate Republicans. In both the Senate and the House, a large majority of GOP veterans voted for the congressional pay raises, whereas a majority of Democratic junior members voted against the pay raises.

The Propensity to Spend Increases More in the House Than in the Senate

The impact of the culture of spending is more evident in the House than in the Senate. The differences between the voting behavior of junior members and veterans in the House are much wider than the differences in the Senate. The House is supposed to be the body closer to the people, reflecting more closely the public's preferences and attitudes. That role is diminished as members spend more time in Congress, suggesting that term limits would provide a more citizen-responsive House of Representatives.

Term Limits May Reduce Party Discipline

One admitted defect of this study is that it is unclear how party discipline would be affected by term limits. On some key bills--when the margin of victory or defeat is secure--the leadership of Congress allows junior members to vote the preferences of their constituents rather than imposing strict party discipline. In such cases, junior members are given a "free vote." Yet the junior members might have voted differently if their votes had been needed to ensure a bill's passage or defeat. We saw that effect in 1993 when several sponsors of the balanced-budget amendment voted against their own bill when the leadership required their votes to defeat the measure. That suggests that junior members might alter their voting patterns if veterans were not in Congress. On the other hand, party discipline would probably be weaker in a term-limited Congress. With term limits, the "leadership" could no longer hold a legislator's career hostage if he or she voted "the wrong way" on key issues, as happens today.

Confirmation of Results

The results of this study indicate that the longer members serve in Congress, the more pro-tax-and-spend they become. The fact that longevity and fiscal restraint are in direct conflict on Capitol Hill has been documented by other studies as well.

James Payne analyzed National Taxpayer Union fiscal ratings of members of Congress from 1978 through 1989. In the House, members with six terms or less had a more fiscally responsible voting record in each of the 12 years examined. On average, junior members were about 16 percent more fiscally restrained than veterans (see Table 14). In the Senate, junior members showed more fiscal restraint in 10 of the 12 years (see Table 15). That confirms the conclusion of the present study that term limits would make a larger difference in the House than in the Senate.

Another analysis of National Taxpayers Union budget data also confirms the efficacy of term limits. The union has devised a system for tracking the cost and savings of every bill introduced in Congress.[12] They then calculate the total budget cost and savings of the bills sponsored by each member. Table 16 shows that in the first session of the 103rd Congress, House veterans sponsored about five spending-increase bills for every spending-reduction bill. The junior members sponsored about one and a half spending- increase bills for every spending-reduction bill. In the Senate, the veterans sponsored about seven spending-increase bills for every spending-reduction bill. The junior members sponsored about three spending-increase bills for every spending-reduction bill. Both veterans and junior members fare poorly on this measure. But the veterans fare much worse.

Finally, the Competitive Enterprise Institute examined all of the economic policy votes taken in Congress from 1985 through 1991. Table 17 shows that junior members of the House and Senate voted pro-free market about 20 percent more often than did the veteran members. CEI obtained the same result when it examined just budget votes (Table 18). In sum, veterans were consistently more pro-spending than were junior members.

Conclusion

The past seven Congresses have probably been the most fiscally irresponsible in American history. Over the past 14 years Congress has taken the national debt from one to more than four trillion dollars. Persistent public demands for budget restraint, balanced-budget requirements, a line- item veto, and no new taxes have been ignored by elected officials in Washington. That has fed the current voter cynicism that the national media has so decried.

This study demonstrates that a term-limited Congress would create more fiscal responsibility and less red ink. Many pro-tax-and-spend initiatives over the past few years might have been defeated if we had had term limits in effect. Most fiscal restraint measures would have passed.

Term limits can be expected to influence fiscal outcomes. That may partially explain the very strong special- interest opposition to this populist reform.

Table 1 1994 Balanced-Budget Amendment (SJ Res. 41, HJ Res. 103)					
Senate			House		
Party	Yea	Nay	Party	Yea	Nay
Actual Vote					
Dem.	22	24	Dem.	99	151
Rep.	41	3	Rep.	172	1
Total	63	37	Ind.	0	1
(67 needed for approval)			Total	271	153

Probable Vote Under Term Limits					
Dem.	14	16	Dem.	52	61
Rep.	20	0	Rep.	80	0
Total	34	16	Ind.	0	1
(34 needed for approval)			Total	132	62
			(130 needed for approval)		

Sources: Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, March 5, 1994; and The Almanac of American Politics, 1994.

Table 2 1992 Balanced-Budget Amendment (HJ Res. 290)					
Actual House Vote			Probable House Vote under Term Limits		
Party	Yea	Nay	Party	Yea	Nay
Dem.	116	150	Dem.	47	33
Rep.	164	2	Rep.	55	0
Ind.	0	1	Ind.	0	1
Total	280	153	Total	102	34
(289 needed for approval)			(91 needed for approval)		

Sources: Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1992; and The Almanac of American Politics, 1992.

Table 3 1990 Balanced-Budget Amendment (HJ Res. 268)					
Actual House Vote			Probable House Vote under Term Limits		
Party	Yea	Nay	Party	Yea	Nay
Dem.	110	145	Dem.	48	22
Rep.	169	5	Rep.	49	2
Ind.	0	1	Total	97	24
Total	279	151	(82 needed for approval)		
(286 needed for approval)					

Sources: Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1990; and The Almanac of American Politics, 1990.

Table 4 Fiscal 1994 Budget Reconciliation Act the "Clinton Tax Hike" (HR 2264)					
Senate			Senate		
Party	Yea	Nay	Party	Yea	Nay
Dem.	50	6	Dem.	217	41
Rep.	0	44	Rep.	0	175
Total	51	50	Ind.	1	0
(Gore cast deciding vote)			Total	218	216
			(218 neede for approval)		

Probable Voste under Term Limits					
Dem.	27	3	Dem.	91	26
Rep.	0	20	Rep.	0	20
Total	27	23	Ind.	1	0
(26 needed for approval)			Total	92	106
			(100 needed for approval)		

Sources: Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1993; and The Almanac of American Politics, 1994.

Table 5 Fiscal 1991 Budget Reconciliation Act, the "Bush Tax Hike" (HR 5835)					
Senate			House		
Party	Yea	Nay	Party	Yea	Nay
Actual Vote					
Dem.	38	20	Dem.	181	74
Rep.	19	25	Rep.	47	126
Total	54	45	Total	228	200
(50 needed for approval)			(215 needed for approval)		
Dem.	19	14	Dem.	43	27
Rep.	10	19	Rep.	9	43
Total	29	33	Total	52	70
(32 needed for approval)			(62 needed for approval)		

Sources: Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1990; and The Almanac of American Politics, 1990.

Sources: Congressional Record, July 14, 1994; and The Almanac of Amer

Table 6 1994 Michel-Solomon Line-Item Veto (HR 4600)					
Actual House Vote			Probable House Vote under Term Limits		
Party	Yea	Nay	Party	Yea	Nay
Dem.	32	217	Dem.	25	90
Rep.	173	0	Rep.	78	0
Ind.	0	1	Ind.	0	1
Total	205	218	Total	103	91
(212 needed for approval)			(98 needed for approval)		

Sources: Congressional Record, July 14, 1994; and The Almanac of American Politics, 1994.

Table 7 1993 Line-Item Veto (HR 1578)					
Actual House Vote			Probable House Vote under Term Limits		
Party	Yea	Nay	Party	Yea	Nay

Dem.	33	214	Dem	24	87
Rep.	165	4	Rep.	78	0
Ind.	0	1	Ind.	0	1
Total	198	219	Total	102	88
(209 needed for approval)			(96 needed for approval)		

Sources: Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1993; and The Almanac of American Politics, 1994.

Table 8
1985 Line-Item Veto (S 43)

Actual Senate Vote			Probable Senate Vote under Term Limits		
Party	Yea	Nay	Party	Yea	Nay
Dem.	12	33	Dem.	6	24
Rep.	46	7	Rep.	40	2
Total	58	40	Total	46	26
(60 needed for approval)			(45 needed for approval)		

Sources: Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1985; and The Almanac of American Politics, 1986.

Table 9
1984 Mattingly Line-Item Veto Amendment

Actual Senate Vote			Probable Senate Vote Under Term Limits		
Party	Yea	Nay	Party	Yea	Nay
Dem.	8	31	Dem.	6	19
Rep.	37	15	Rep.	31	8
Total	45	46	Total	37	27
(46 needed for approval)			(33 needed for approval)		

Sources: Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1984; and The Almanac of American Politics, 1984.

Note: This vote was to add a line-item veto to the fiscal 1985 deficit reduction bill.

Table 10
Penny-Kasich Spending Curb (HR 3400)

Actual House Vote			Probable House Vote under Term Limits		
Party	Yea	Nay	Party	Yea	Nay
Dem.	57	200	Dem.	41	76
Rep.	156	18	Rep.	73	7
Ind.	0	1	Ind.	0	1
Total	213	219	Total	114	84
(217 needed for approval)			(100 needed for approval)		

Sources: Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1993; and The Almanac of American Politics, 1994.

Table 11

1994 Crime Bill (HR 3355)					
Senate			House		
Party	Yea	Nay	Party	Yea	Nay
Dem.	55	1	Dem.	201	51
Rep.	6	38	Rep.	30	146
Total	61	39	Total	232	197
(60 needed for approval)			(215 needed for approval)		
Probable Vote under Term Limits					
Dem.	29	1	Dem.	89	25
Rep.	1	19	Rep.	16	65
Total	30	20	Ind.	1	0
(30 needed for approval)			Total	106	90
			(99 needed for approval)		

Source: Congressional Record, August 24, 1994.

Note: The Senate vote was to waive the budget act; the House vote was to recommit.

Table 12 **1989 Government Pay and Ethics Package (HR 3660)**					
Senate			House		
Party	Yea	Nay	Party	Yea	Nay
Actual Vote					
Dem.	31	23	Dem.	168	85
Rep.	25	20	Rep.	84	89
Total	56	43	Total	252	174
(50 needed for approval)			(214 needed for approval)		
Probable Vote under Term Limits					
Dem.	15	19	Dem.	26	37
Rep.	13	16	Rep.	23	35
Total	28	35	Total	49	72
(32 needed for approval)			(81 needed for approval)		

Sources: Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1989; and The Almanac of American Politics, 1990.

Table 13 **Fiscal 1992 Legislative Pay Raise (HR 2506)**					
Actual Senate Vote			Probable Senate Vote under Term Limits		
Party	Yea	Nay	Party	Yea	Nay
Dem.	28	27	Dem.	27	18
Rep.	25	18	Rep.	8	13
Total	53	45	Total	20	31

(50 need for approval)	(26 needed for approval

Sources: Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1991; and The Almanac of American Politics, 1992.

Table 14 Average Fiscal Restraint Scores of Junior and Senior Representatives: 1978 to 1989			
Year	Junior Reps.	Senior Reps	Difference
1978	107	83	24
1979	103	92	11
1980	104	91	13
1981	103	91	12
1982	104	88	16
1983	104	87	17
1984	104	87	17
1985	104	88	16
1986	105	87	18
1987	107	84	23
1988	106	87	19
1989	103	94	9
Average	104.5	88.25	16.25

Source: James L. Payne, The Culture of Spending.

Note: Fiscal restraint scores are computed from National Taxpayers Union ratings (a high- er score means the member voted for less spending). The NTU ratings have been adjusted so that the average rating for all members of the House each year equals 100. Junior members have served six terms or fewer; senior members have served seven terms or more.

Table 15 Average Fiscal Restraint Scores of Junior and Senior Senators: 1978 to 1989			
Year	Junior Sens.	Senior Sens.	Difference
1978	103	93	10
1979	105	89	16
1980	102	94	8
1981	103	92	11
1982	103	92	11
1983	104	90	14
1984	101	97	4
1985	101	98	3
1986	100	100	0
1987	102	95	7
1988	99	101	-2

1989	103	95	8
average	102.2	94.7	7.5

Source: James L. Payne, The Culture of Spending.

Note: Fiscal restraint scores are computed from National Taxpayers Union ratings (a high- er score means the member voted for less spending). The NTU ratings have been adjusted so that the average rating for all members of the House each year equals 100. Junior members have served six terms or fewer; senior members have served seven terms or more.

Table 16
Sponsorship of Spending Bills

Members	No. of Members	Bills to Increase Spending	Bills to Decrease Spending	Ratio
House				
Senior members (more then 3 terms)	255	571	122	4.7 to1
Junior members (3 terms or less)	195	137	100	1.4 to 1
Senate				
Senior Members(more than 2 terms)	52	256	35	7.3 to 1
Junior members (2 terms or less	46	139	45	3.1 to 1

Source: National Taxpayers Union, "Congressional Budget Tracking System," Washington, January 24, 1994.

Note: Members elected or appointed to Congress in odd-numbered years are not included.

Table 17
Votes on Economic Policy

Type of Vote	Competitive Enterprise index(%)	Pork-Barrel & Subsidies
All House Votes(1985-91)	36.3	34.1
House Votes before three terms	40.6	37.9
House votes after three terms	33.9	32.1
All Senate Votes (1985-91)	42.8	37.5
Senate votes before two terms	44.9	38.7
Senate votes after two terms	38.9	35.6

Source: Tom Miller, "Term Limits Meet Market Test," Competitive Enterprise Institute, Washington, 1992.

Note: Higher percentages reflect more fiscal restraint and more support for the free market.

Table 18
Budget Votes

Type of Vote	Budget Spending Subindex (%)	Other Economic Policy(a) (%)
All House votes (1985-91)	34.2	37.7
House votes before three terms	40.0	44.3
House votes after three terms	31.4	34.8
All senate votes(1985-91)	36.6	43.1
Senate votes before to terms	39.2	44.9
Senate votes after two terms	32.0	39.9

Source: Tom Miller, "Term Limits Meet Market Test," Competitive Enterprise Institute, Washington, 1992.

Note: Higher percentages reflect more fiscal restraint and more support for the free market.

(a) Excludes votes on pork-barrel projects and subsidies and on budget spending.

Notes

[1] For a discussion of the constitutionality of term lim its, see The Politics and Law of Term Limits, ed. Edward H. Crane and Roger Pilon (Washington: Cato Institute, 1994).

[2] For a critique of term limits, see Becky Cain, "Term Limits: Not the Answer to What Ails Politics," and Thomas E. Mann, "Congressional Term Limits: A Bad Idea Whose Time Should Never Come," in ibid., pp. 45-56 and 83-95.

[3] See George F. Will, Restoration: Congress, Term Limits and the Recovery of Deliberative Democracy (New York: Free Press, 1991).

[4] See Thomas D. Elias, "Term Limits Bring an Early Face Lift to Politics in California," Washington Times, April 17, 1994, p. A4; Peter A. Brown, "Limits Force Sights Higher," Washington Times, August 21, 1994, p. A4; and John Armor, Why Term Limits? (Ottawa, Ill.: Login, 1994), pp. 79-83.

[5] Quoted in Dan Balz and David S. Broder, "Govs to Con gress: Include Us Out," Washington Post, July 24, 1994, p. E1.

[6] James L. Payne, The Culture of Spending: Why Congress Lives beyond Our Means (San Francisco: ICS Press, 1991).

[7] We are, however, beginning to see the results of term limits for California state legislators, which suggest a more representative legislature as a result of such limits.

[8] The rationale for the balanced-budget amendment is laid out in Stephen Moore, "Balancing Act," National Review,

June 8, 1992, pp. 42-44.

[9] We do not examine two Senate votes, in 1992 and 1993, on enhanced recision authority, which differs from the line- item veto.

[10] Stephen Moore, "Footing the Bill for the Crime Pays Bill," Washington Times, August 1, 1994, p. A28.

[11] See Bill Straub, "Crime Bill Loaded with 'Pork,'" Cincinnati Post, August 5, 1994, p. 1; and Ronald Brown stein, "Federal Crime Bill Swells with a Spending Bonanza," Los Angeles Times, May 1, 1994, pp. A-1, A-22.

[12] National Taxpayers Union, "Congressional Budget Tracking System," Washington, January 24, 1994.