

Nick Tomboulides Committee Testimony

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House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Government

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Each year Gallup does a poll where they ask Americans how much confidence they have in 16 different social institutions. At the very top of the list is small businesses. 70% of Americans have confidence in those. The lowest-rated group is the US Congress. Only 8% of people trust Congress. It's also no shock of course that 83% of Americans support term limits. That includes huge majorities of Democrats, Republicans and independent voters.

So, if 83% of us want term limits, why is it not yet the law of the land? Because the permanent political class thinks the American people are wrong.

I couldn't disagree more. I think the American people can see exactly what is happening here. In the real world, we are surrounded by change, by progress, by evolution. Technology doubles every year. The only thing that never changes, never adapts...is our Congress.

A third of our Senate is 70 years or older, including several members who were born before or during World War 2! And of course, because of the seniority system, the older you are, the more power you have in Congress.

In the real world, when a powerful person is showing obvious mental decline, the people around them do what's best for them. But Washington is not the real world. It's a world where you advance not by speaking the truth, but through supporting leadership unequivocally. If you fall in line and vote with leadership, you get to own your seat for life.

We're always told that members of Congress are hard at work protecting our democracy. Protecting it from presidents, ex-presidents, the Supreme Court and so on. One member of this committee even wrote a book about that. But in reality, there is nothing less democratic than a congressional election. Over the last 20 years, House incumbents have a 94% re-election rate. The Senate numbers aren't much better. Last year, 100 percent of senate incumbents were re-elected.

This doesn't happen because people are thrilled with their congress member. It happens because the system is rigged in favor of incumbents. Congress members can spend public money on campaign-style mailings at taxpayer expense. The deck is stacked.

Where does all the big money go? It flows to incumbents. Through the power of PACs, lobbyists and special interests...incumbents raise roughly 10 times more money than challengers. That's to say nothing of the other advantages they hold, like free media, name recognition, and a staff of 20 people who are basically a government-funded campaign team.

Look what's happening to Google right now. When a private business uses its power to eliminate the competition, it gets called a monopoly. It gets fined and maybe even shut down. But when a member of Congress does the same thing, they get re-elected. It's a huge double standard.

So the game has been rigged. And as a result, only 15% of congressional elections every two years are actually competitive. Our most senior members run with phony opposition, similar to how Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping stay in power. Is it any surprise voter apathy is reaching record highs? And people are increasingly saying, "I don't feel like my vote matters..." "I don't have faith in our elections. We need to fix this.

A constitutional amendment for term limits is the only way forward. It will create open seats and lower the barriers to office, providing us with a citizen legislature as our founders intended.

It has to be a six year limit in the House and a 12-year limit in the Senate, because that is what the American people, your employers, demand. Fortunately, 112 members of the House have signed a pledge to support this specific term limits amendment and nothing longer. If the bill gets amended to a longer limit, voting for it would be breaking that pledge.

This upcoming vote on term limits is a defining moment for our country. The ball is in your court. You get to decide how history will remember you.

Will you be remembered as the modern-day George Washington? When Washington had the opportunity to become a king, he said no. Because he believed in this country and he trusted in its people. He knew there was a time to step aside and let new leaders emerge. For our generation, now is that time.

Thank you. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.