

think it is building every day. I think my colleagues would with that.

Finally, I would just say there are a lot of people who have come before me on this term-limits concept. I have been here for the grand total of about 3 months, and people like the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MCCOLLUM], and the gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. INGLIS], the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. FOWLER], who is not even going to get to vote on her bill tomorrow, have moved this bill way far down the field way before I got here. They deserve an awful lot of credit.

To the extent we have success tomorrow, my hat is off to them.

The final thing I would like to say is this, that no matter if we get 290 or not, tomorrow should be scored as a victory for the Republican Party. We are going to bring this to the floor for the first time for a recorded vote. It has never happened. If you compare our Speaker with the Speaker last year and how our support has been, I think people must say we have taken a great first step and a great first downpayment on this issue of term limits. It will come back, and the people will speak in 1996.

SUPPORT CONGRESSIONAL TERM LIMITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington [Mr. TATE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TATE. Mr. Speaker, it is, indeed, an honor to be able to address the House tonight in regards to this issue, because just look back, in 1990 in the State of Colorado, it caught on like a prairie fire. The whole issue of term limits, it came out of a frustration of the 22 States that have passed term limits. Twenty-one of them came through a State initiative. Just one State legislature, the State of Utah, has approved that.

In my particular State in 1991, for example, we gathered signatures around the State, over 200,000 signatures, to put a term-limits initiative on the ballot, but it was retroactive that year. It was defeated.

Right after that, the citizens picked that up one more time, and were able to put it on the ballot in 1992, and it passed overwhelmingly at the State ballot, and last September, I, with my fellow freshmen and Republicans alike, we stood on the Capitol steps and signed the Contract With America, pledging for the first time in the history of the United States that we were going to have term limits come up for a vote on the House floor.

And why do we need term limits? One does not have to look any further than 40 long years of Democrat rule. We had a House that was less accountable. It seemed that the longer they served, the more removed they became. The House banking scandals, House post office scandals, runaway spending. We needed

true reform, and term limits ends careerism.

The House of Lords, for example, in Britain, you are appointed forever. That is not what the U.S. Congress was designed to be.

Even with the elections in 1992 and 1994, 9 out of 10 Members were re-elected, 90 percent.

In the 103d Congress, for example, the average length of time for a committee chairman who had served was 28 years. I am 29. So when I was 1 year old they were beginning their political career. Things need to change.

Term limits overwhelmingly is supported by the American people. Over 80 percent of the American people support term limits. It has passed by a 2-to-1 margin in every State it has been on the ballot. Other offices are term-limited around the country. The President, for example, two 4-year terms. Thirty-five States limit Governors' terms, even some States, like the State of Virginia, limits Governors to one term.

It also assists in diversity. Seventy-two percent of the women in the House of Representatives were elected to open seats. Eighty-one percent of the minorities were elected to open seats.

It is time we make Congress look more like America.

And what a difference a year and an election makes. Last year the Speaker of the House, of this House of Representatives, from my State of Washington, sued the citizens of Washington State. This year the Speaker of the House limited his own terms to 8 years. We limited the chairmen and the ranking minorities to nothing more than 6 years.

So tomorrow for the first time in the history, let me say that again, in the history of the United States, we are going to pass it or bring it up for a vote, term limits. We are going to have several proposals. We are going to have one proposal very similar to Washington State, which is 6 years in the House and 12 years in the Senate.

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Then we have, as we just heard, the Van Hilleary amendment that puts a cap of a total of 12 years you can serve in either body but allows States to limit, does not preempt State laws. We have a proposal of 12 years and 12 years.

But then we also have a retroactive proposal, which was defeated in Washington State. I do not like the retroactive taxes that were passed in 1993, and I am not going to like a retroactive proposal because it is being pushed by people that do not even support term limits. It is a sham, and it is a bunch of baloney.

They are going to hear many arguments against term limits tomorrow, that it is somehow going to empower lobbyists. Having served in the State legislature, the people most nervous about term limits are the lobbyists because they build their reputations on

getting to know Members of Congress. So there is lots of changes that need to occur, and you are going to hear lots of arguments, but we will deliver our vote as we promised tomorrow for the first time in history.

And 80 percent of the Republicans are going to vote for it, maybe even more. What we need is at least 50 percent of the Democrats to make this happen. It takes 290 votes, as we all know, to pass a constitutional amendment. We only have 230 Republicans. If every single Republican votes for this, we still need 60 Democrats. So if it fails, which I believe it will not, but if it fails, the defeat will be on the hands of the Democrats, and the public will hold us all accountable, especially those that have voted no.

So I urge my colleagues tomorrow to support term limits and return the power back to the people.

CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ZIMMER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to talk a little bit about the Contract With America. I think it is very important that folks understand that the Contract With America was a campaign promise, and it is a promise which, unlike previous campaigns and previous promises, it is a promise that Republican Members of the House are keeping with them. We are looking at it daily. It is the instruction.

You may not agree with Contract With America, but I think what is important is that here is a fundamental contract, a handshake with the American people saying when we say we are going to do something, we are going to do it.

Now, the Senate is going to debate it. They are going to change some things. It is going to come back to the House, and we are going to have some changes. But I think it is very important to remember that the Contract was a campaign pledge and a promise that we are not going to forget, unlike other times in office when many, many members of both parties would make certain campaign warranties or promises and then forget them after they are elected.

This contract is different. One of the key planks of that is that we are going to get these issues on the floor of the House for a vote. It does not necessarily guarantee passage on everything, but getting them to the floor of the House, as the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. HILLEARY] had said just a few minutes ago, is the key element, and that is what we are doing with term limits.

It is going to take 290 votes because it is a constitutional amendment. That is a lot of votes. And we are working with Democrats. We are working with