

THE TERM ★ LIMITS CONVENTION

The Term Limits Convention

House Joint Resolution 29/Senate Joint Resolution 19

What is it:

An application by the Alaska Legislature under Article V of the U.S. Constitution, calling for a single-issue amendment convention limited to the agenda of congressional term limits.

Background: Nearly 80 percent of Americans, and as of February 2016 nearly 78% of Alaskans support term limits on Congress, and the Supreme Court ruled in *U.S. Term Limits v. Thornton* (1995) that it can only be achieved through constitutional amendment. Despite overwhelming bi-partisan public support, Congress refuses to initiate any amendment to limit its own power. Article V of the Constitution provides an alternate means of proposing a term limits amendment via a convention of states, which does not require congressional approval.

How it works:

1. 34 state legislatures pass bills applying for the convention.
2. Congress is then mandated by law to call the convention.
3. The convention, featuring delegates selected by states, proposes a term limits amendment.
4. 38 states would then need to ratify the term limits amendment to make it part of the Constitution.

Why term limits:

To empower the people by allowing for the debate to fix a broken system. Washington DC is broken and bound by gridlock. It is unable to respond to the voters and does not allow for fresh ideas and energy that would come through more regular rotation in office.

Article V calls passed in 2014:

House Bill 284 and SB 203 were introduced in 2014 “An act relating to an interstate compact on a balanced federal budget.” HB 284 passed the Legislature and was signed into law on April 22, 2014.

HJR 22 and SJR 18 were both introduced in 2014 calling for a convention of the states to address amendments to the U.S. Constitution on limiting the federal government, fiscal restraint, and U.S. term limits. HJR 22 passed the Legislature on April 19, 2014.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will the Term Limits Convention open up the entire U.S. Constitution for revisions?

Absolutely not. The Convention is limited only to proposing an amendment that would impose term limits on members of Congress. The state applications prohibit all parties from proposing or ratifying anything that deviates from the subject at hand.

Article V says Congress “calls” a convention. Does this mean Congress can stifle the states’ demand for term limits?

No. The amendment-by-convention route was added to the Constitution because the framers believed Congress played too powerful a role in the amendment process. So, Congress does not have discretion to stop or modify the convention agenda after 34 states have applied for an amendment on the same subject.