

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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REPRESENTATIVE WES KELLER DISTRICT 10

Sponsor Statement HJR 29

Article V Call for Constitutional Convention to Set Term Limits

HJR 29 begins a process under Article V of the U.S. Constitution for application to Congress to call a Convention of States to debate an amendment for term limits for members of Congress.

Nearly 80% of Americans, as of February 2016 78% of Alaskans have expressed bi-partisan support to limiting the number of terms a person can serve in the U.S. Congress.

HJR 29 is about respecting the will of the people and fixing a broken system. In 1994 and 1996 the people of Alaska voted to express their strong support in imposing term limits. The 1994 voter initiative passed with nearly 63% of the Alaska electorate, or 126,960 Alaskans, expressing the desire to limit terms of congressional office holders. Twenty-two other states also voted to limit congressional terms. The next year, in *USTL v. Thorton*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional for states to pass individual state laws placing limits on the number of terms a congressman could serve. The Court instead ruled that a constitutional amendment would be necessary. Article V of the U.S. Constitution provides a means other than Congress adopting an amendment for the states to propose such an amendment.

Implementing term limits empowers the people by allowing for people with new ideas and energy to compete for office. Washington D.C. is broken and bound by endless gridlock literally unable to respond to the voters' wishes. One only needs to look at the skyrocketing debt -- some \$19 trillion -- and inefficient programs to know that Congress is unable to control spending and fix the country's problems. Contrary to the Framers' intent to have a citizen legislature that rotates regularly many of those in Washington have grown apart from the very constituents that sent them there.

HJR 29 will help end "business as usual" in Washington D.C. and helps to put the people back in charge of their government. Incumbents are heavily favored in elections creating an uneven playing field for those with fresh ideas to represent and serve.