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—U.S. Term Limits President Philip Blumel.

U.S. Term Limits Praises Oklahoma Legislature & OFRG for Putting Term Limits Expansion on the Ballot

April 20th, Fairfax, VA—U.S. Term Limits President Philip Blumel today praised the Oklahoma legislature for placing a term limits expansion on the ballot that would prevent most state officials from serving any more than eight years in office.

“The news from Oklahoma is definitely welcome for the term limits movement,” said Blumel. “The Oklahoma legislature should be proud, and this ballot initiative has the full support of U.S. Term Limits.”

[Under the constitutional amendment](#), the governor, lieutenant governor, state auditor and inspector, attorney general, state treasurer, labor commissioner, state schools superintendent and insurance commissioner could serve no more than eight years lifetime.

The measure was fought for by a state organization, Oklahomans for Responsible Government. According to the group’s executive director, Brian Downs, “We begin our advocacy push in 2008. Oklahoma had several state-wide elected officials who were under investigation and the political environment had just changed with the Oklahoma Senate becoming a split body after the 2006 election cycle.”

According to Downs, term limits for statewide elected officials would have been enacted in 2008 already, but the state House and Senate could not agree on language. “We were unsuccessful last year because we had two competing measures that advocated for 8 and 12 year terms,” said Downs.

“This year we started with the same language in both House and Senate measures. It allowed us to stay on message and advance the bill,” Downs added.

Downs believes that enacting term limits will help reform Oklahoma’s institutions of government. “In Oklahoma, the power of the executive branch lies with the state-wide elected officials. The Governor does not appoint these positions. So we believe that, if passed, SJR 12 will bring

fresh, new ideas to state government and eliminate the power of incumbency that Oklahoma has endured since statehood.”

Blumel agrees. “There is no question that once a government moves out of a culture of career politicians and into a culture of citizen officials, that it becomes more representative.”

Term limits were originally enacted in Oklahoma in 1990 with 67 percent voting in favor of it, Oklahoma's term limits law allows for a total of 12 years to be spent between both chambers. SJR 12, if passed by voters in 2010, would expand those limits to more positions in the executive branch.

The measure would also further limit the governor’s term limits. Currently, the governor cannot serve 8 consecutive years, but under the new law would be limited to 8 years lifetime.

Blumel believes that “entrenched politicians will not be able to stop this measure,” describing it as “smooth sailing.”

Downs is “very confident that SJR 12 will be passed.”

“Last year we were challenged by Attorney General Drew Edmondson and by the political consultants of first-term Lieutenant Governor Jari Askins,” Downs said. “This year we have had no opposition to these measures.”

“Looking ahead to the ballot vote, Oklahoma is in a position to have several emotional and highly expensive ballot questions in 2010 so SJR 12 should be one that doesn't receive a lot of attention and is overwhelmingly approved by the voters,” Downs added.

Blumel shares Downs’ enthusiasm. “Oklahoma is one of those states where the people appreciate the necessity and propriety of placing limits upon the powers and terms of elected officials.”

“Oklahomans do not want their politicians to become too powerful,” Blumel concluded.

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