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CRS Report for Congress

Reelection Rates of House Incumbents: 1790-1988

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REELECTION RATE OF HOUSE INCUMBENTS: 1790-1988

SUMMARY

This report provides data on the success rate of House incumbents who have sought reelection beginning with the 1790 election. While most studies in this field begin with the 1946 election, this analysis places the recent over-90 percent incumbent reelection rates into complete historical perspective.

The study focuses on the fate of incumbents *seeking* reelection to the House rather than merely looking at the percentage of the House who were freshmen in each new Congress. This procedure allows existing 19th Century congressional turnover statistics to be refined by separating statistics on incumbent election success from the rate of return of the entire House membership. Throughout history the percentage of incumbents who sought reelection who were returned to the next Congress has rarely fallen below 70 percent (only seven times, 1842, 1854, 1862, 1874, 1890, 1894, 1932) and has often exceeded 80 percent (73 of 100 times). Incumbent return rates exceeding 90 percent were experienced in the early Congresses (every election from 1790-1810) and since 1968 (except in 1974). These data indicate that the substantial turnover percentages for the entire House membership in the 19th Century are attributable more to deaths, resignations, and retirements, than to the electoral defeat of incumbents. What does appear to have changed over time is the percentage of incumbents seeking reelection. For most of the 19th century, this percentage was in the 60-70 percent range. With the trend towards careerism that emerged in the late 19th century and accelerated in the 20th century, this percentage rose to the 85-95 percent range.

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The author wishes to thank Royce Crocker for his assistance in writing the computer program for this report, and Fred Pauls for his conceptual and research help.

REELECTION RATES OF HOUSE INCUMBENTS: 1790-1988

Introduction

The 98 percent rate of return for House incumbents seeking reelection in 1988, brings renewed interest in the topic of incumbent reelection success. David Broder, in the *Washington Post*, wrote soon after the 1988 election that "the Constitution envisaged the House as the most sensitive barometer of changes in political mood, but the 'incumbent lock' makes it no barometer at all." He attributed high incumbent return rates to non-competitive districts, the campaign finance system, and congressional rules and procedures that favor the majority party.¹ Julie Rovner observed in *Congressional Quarterly* after the 1988 election that the increasing success rate of incumbents could be explained in part by Members' great success in helping their constituents. Rovner quoted William A. Galston, a University of Maryland political scientist, who said there is an increasingly "perfect technology of constituent service" which, Rovner said, "has enabled incumbents to get themselves reelected by helping constituents navigate through an ever-more-complicated federal bureaucracy."² Stuart Rothenberg, noted in an article summarizing the 1988 election in *Public Opinion*, that "Members of the House are now less vulnerable politically than members of the Soviet Politburo."³

There have been numerous scholarly articles written to explain why incumbents are so successful in their reelection endeavors.⁴ This report does not add to the literature seeking to explain why incumbents are so often reelected. Instead, it presents new data on incumbent reelection rates for the years prior to 1946, and supplements existing data sources for the post-1946 period. What emerges from this examination of data from the pre-1946 period

¹ Broder, David S. Three keys to "Incumbent Lock." *Washington Post*. December 7, 1988, A21.

² Rovner, Julie. Turnover in Congress Hits an All-Time Low. *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, v. 46. Washington, D.C. November 19, 1988. p. 3363.

³ Rothenberg, Stuart. The House and the Senate. *Public Opinion*, v. 11. January/February 1989. p. 11.

⁴ For a review of the literature in this area see: Beth, Richard S. "Incumbency Advantage" and Incumbency Resources: Recent Articles. *Congress and the Presidency*, v. 9, Winter 1981-82. p. 119-136; and, Beth, Recent Research on "Incumbency Advantage" in House Elections: Part II. *Congress and the Presidency*, v. 11, Autumn 1984. p. 211-224.

is a refinement of our understanding of congressional turnover. Incumbents who have sought reelection apparently have always been relatively successful. More specifically, the proportion of incumbents running for reelection who were returned to office has rarely dropped below 70 percent (only seven times, 1842, 1854, 1862, 1874, 1890, 1894, 1932) and often has exceeded 80 percent (73 of 100). Incumbent return rates exceeding 90 percent were experienced in the early Congresses (every election from 1790-1810) and since 1968 (except for the post-Watergate 1974 election). Resignations, deaths, and retirements apparently account for much of the difference in return rates for the entire House between the 19th and 20th centuries.

What does appear to have changed over time is the percentage of incumbents seeking reelection. For most of the 19th century, this percentage was in the 60-70 percent range. With the trend towards careerism that emerged in the late 19th century and accelerated in the 20th century, this percentage rose to the 85-95 percent range.

Most sources of data on incumbent reelection rates base their figures on information from *Congressional Quarterly* and *National Journal* and do not report information prior to 1946. In this report, all the 1946-1984 data, except for the information pertaining to open seats, are from a table in *Vital Statistics on Congress, 1987-1988*.⁵ The source for all data prior to 1946 is a computer file from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research entitled the *Roster of United States Congressional Office-holders and Biographical Characteristics of the United States Congress, 1789-1984 Merged Data* (hereafter referred to as the Roster file).⁶ The Roster file was used for this report because it is a "machine readable" biographical source for data on all Members of Congress. There are other published sources of summary

⁵ Ornstein, Norman J., Thomas E. Mann, and Michael J. Malbin. *Vital Statistics on Congress, 1987-1988*. Washington. Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1987. p. 56.

⁶ McKibbin, Carroll and The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). *Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1984 Merged Data*. ICPSR. (ICPSR study number 7803) Ann Arbor, Michigan. This file was produced in large part by merging two existing file: ICPSR's *Roster of U.S. Congressional Officeholders, 1789-1979* (ICPSR study number 7557) and Carroll McKibbin's *Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1980*. McKibbin's data were primarily coded from the *Biographical Directory of the American Congress* (BDAC), 4th and 5th editions. Information for the period 1980-84 was added to the file by ICPSR staff.

statistics on House incumbency on a Congress-by-Congress basis,⁷ but the Roster file has the potential for producing detailed data that other sources cannot. Data for 1986 and 1988 were derived from Congressional Quarterly.⁸

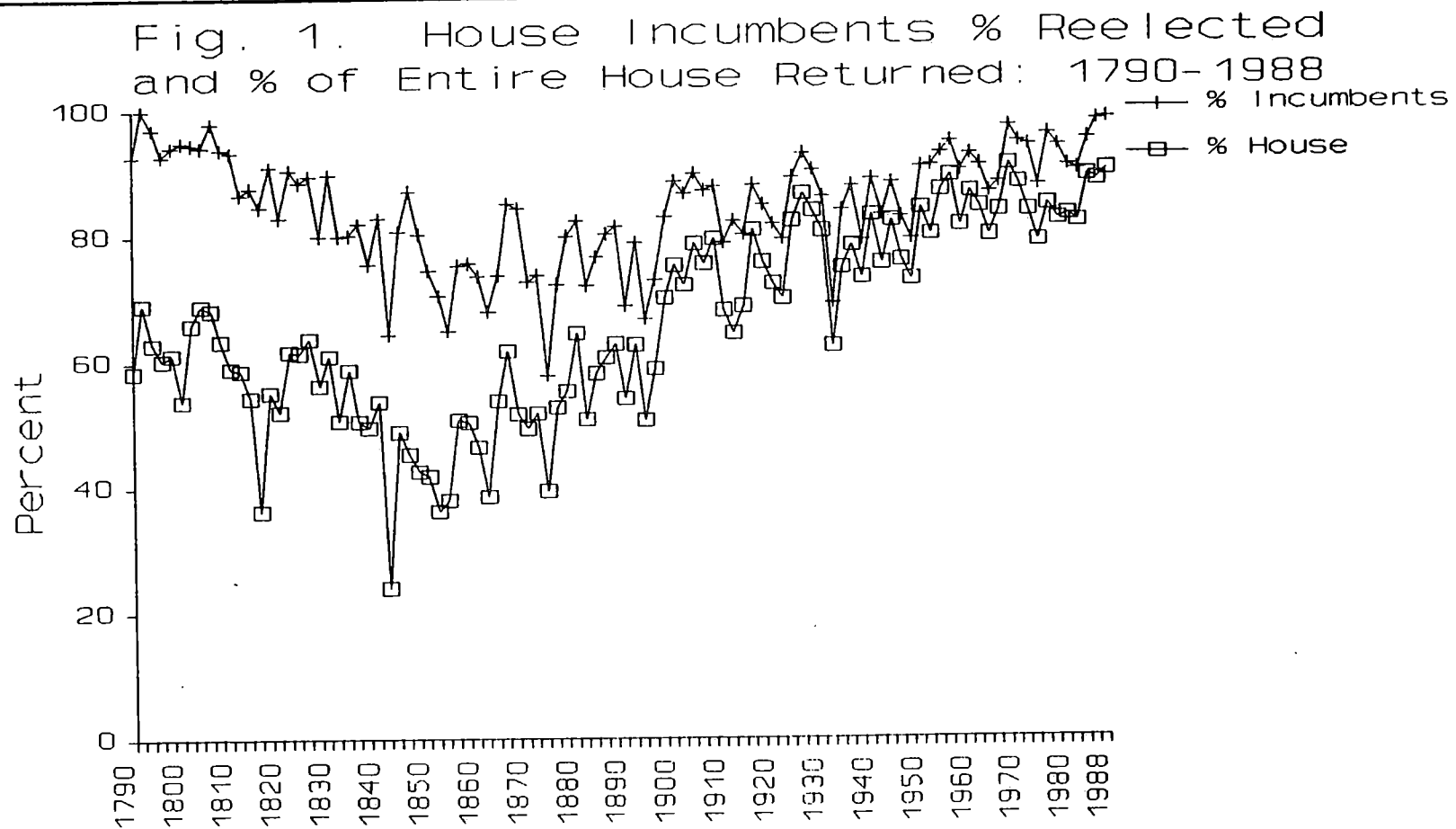
Figure 1 serves as a summary of the data contained in the table that follows. It shows the percent of the incumbents who ran for reelection who were returned to Congress, and the percent of the entire membership of the House who were reelected. The data show that in the early Congresses reelection rates of incumbents *who sought reelection* were nearly as high as those of recent Congresses. The proportion of the entire House which was returned to office, however, was significantly lower in the period prior to the 1950s than has been experienced in recent times. The "gap" in figure 1 between the proportion of the incumbents running for reelection who were reelected and the proportion of the entire House which was returned, represents deaths, resignations and "retirements."

Table 1 presents incumbency data in a form similar to that reported in *Vital Statistics on Congress: 1987-1988*. The data, with some exceptions, are similar to data which can be derived from earlier Congress-by-Congress studies such as those of Morris Fiorina.⁹ Following the table is an analysis of the adequacy of using the Roster file for producing data on incumbency which explains some of the differences between the results using the Roster file and other sources.

⁷ For Congress-by-Congress data on the percentage of House Members in their first term, see: Fiorina, Morris P., David W. Rohde, and Peter Wissel. *Historical Change in House Turnover*. In: Ornstein, Norman J. (ed.). *Congress in Change: Evolution and Reform*. New York. Praeger Publishers, 1975. p. 29-31. For more general information see: Struble Jr., Robert, *House Turnover and the Principle of Rotation*. *Political Science Quarterly*. vol. 94 Winter 1979-80. p. 649-667.

⁸ Congressional Quarterly *Weekly Report*, v. 49, November 12, 1988. p. 3270.

⁹ Fiorina, *Historical Change in House Turnover*. The authors presented several sets of data derived from Polsby, Nelson W. *The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives*. *American Political Science Review*, vol. 68, March 1968. p. 146. Polsby's source for data from 1790-1924 is: Rice, Stuart A. *Quantitative Methods in Politics*. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Boston. 1928. p. 296-297. Rice describes in detail the method used to compile his table (p. 294-302). It involved reading 12,000 biographies of Members in order to properly code them in each Congress, and then comparing the coding sheets Congress-by-Congress to determine the proportion of first term Members.



Inc % based on those running--See Tab. 1.

Table 1. House Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1988

Election year ¹	Open seats ²	Total (percent) who ran for reelection ³	Not re- nominated	Defeated in general election	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁴	Percent of House reelected ⁴
1790	24	41 (63.1)	0	3	38	92.7	58.5
1792	60	45 (69.2)	0	0	45	100.0	69.2
1794	37	68 (64.8)	0	2	66	97.1	62.9
1796	37	69 (65.1)	1	4	64	92.8	60.4
1798	37	69 (65.1)	0	4	65	94.2	61.3
1800	46	60 (56.6)	0	3	57	95.0	53.8
1802	68	74 (69.8)	0	4	70	94.6	66.0
1804	38	104 (73.2)	1	5	98	94.2	69.0
1806	43	99 (69.7)	0	2	97	98.0	68.3
1808	46	96 (67.6)	0	6	90	93.8	63.4
1810	52	90 (63.4)	0	6	84	93.8	59.1
1812	46	97 (67.8)	0	13	84	86.6	58.7

See footnotes and sources at end of table.

Table 1. House Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1988

Election year ¹	Open seats ²	Total (percent) who ran for reelection ³	Not re-nominated	Defeated in general election	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁴	Percent of House reelected ⁴
1814	69	113 (62.1)	0	15	99	87.6	54.4
1816	104	78 (42.7)	1	11	66	84.6	36.3
1818	72	111 (60.7)	3	7	101	91.0	55.2
1820	69	117 (62.9)	4	16	97	82.9	52.1
1822	86	127 (68.3)	0	12	115	90.5	61.8
1824	65	148 (69.5)	0	17	131	88.5	61.5
1826	61	152 (71.4)	0	16	136	89.5	63.8
1828	63	150 (70.4)	2	28	120	80.0	56.3
1830	68	145 (68.1)	0	15	130	89.7	61.0
1832	105	135 (63.4)	2	25	108	80.0	50.7
1834	64	176 (73.3)	1	33	141	80.1	58.8
1836	92	149 (61.8)	1	26	122	81.9	50.6

See footnotes and sources at end of table.

Table 1. House Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1988

Election year ¹	Open seats ²	Total (percent) who ran for reelection ³	Not re- nominated	Defeated in general election	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁴	Percent of House reelected ⁴
1838	83	159 (65.7)	1	38	120	75.5	49.6
1840	85	157 (64.9)	2	25	130	82.8	53.7
1842	133	90 (37.2)	1	31	58	64.4	24.0
1844	88	135 (60.5)	3	23	109	80.7	48.9
1846	107	116 (52.0)	0	15	101	87.1	45.3
1848	108	122 (53.0)	3	21	98	80.3	42.6
1850	102	130 (56.0)	4	29	97	74.6	41.8
1852	115	119 (51.3)	5	30	84	70.6	36.2
1854	97	137 (58.5)	2	47	89	65.0	38.0
1856	76	158 (67.5)	2	37	119	75.3	50.8
1858	78	156 (66.7)	4	34	118	75.6	50.4
1860	64	110 (63.2)	5	22	81	73.6	46.5

See footnotes and sources at end of table.

Table 1. House Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1988

Election year ¹	Open seats ²	Total (percent) who ran for reelection ³	Not re- nominated	Defeated in general election	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁴	Percent of House reelected ⁴
1862	79	103 (56.6)	4	29	70	68.0	38.5
1864	49	133 (73.1)	3	32	98	73.7	53.8
1866	50	133 (72.7)	8	12	113	85.0	61.8
1868	92	146 (61.3)	4	19	123	84.3	51.7
1870	78	165 (67.9)	9	36	120	72.7	49.4
1872	121	171 (70.4)	8	37	126	73.7	51.8
1874	93	199 (68.1)	12	71	115	57.8	39.4
1876	79	213 (72.9)	12	47	154	72.3	52.7
1878	90	203 (69.3)	9	32	162	79.8	55.3
1880	63	230 (78.5)	11	30	189	82.2	64.5
1882	118	207 (70.6)	15	43	149	72.0	50.8
1884	78	247 (76.0)	12	46	189	76.5	58.1

See footnotes and sources at end of table.

Table 1. House Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1988

Election year ¹	Open seats ²	Total (percent) who ran for reelection ³	Not re-nominated	Defeated in general election	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁴	Percent of House reelected ⁴
1886	79	246 (75.7)	21	28	197	80.1	60.6
1888	74	251 (77.2)	10	37	204	81.3	62.8
1890	71	260 (78.5)	18	63	179	68.8	54.1
1892	68	264 (79.5)	14	42	208	78.8	62.6
1894	86	270 (75.8)	20	71	180	66.7	50.6
1896	69	288 (80.7)	17	61	210	72.9	58.8
1898	55	302 (84.6)	14	38	250	82.8	70.0
1900	54	303 (84.9)	15	20	268	88.4	75.1
1902	89	297 (83.2)	12	28	257	86.5	72.0
1904	48	338 (87.6)	9	26	303	89.6	78.5
1906	51	335 (86.8)	13	31	291	86.9	75.4
1908	37	354 (90.5)	11	33	310	87.6	79.3

See footnotes and sources at end of table.

Table 1. House Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1988

Election year ¹	Open seats ²	Total (percent) who ran for reelection ³	Not re-nominated	Defeated in general election	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁴	Percent of House reelected ⁴
1910	53	338 (86.4)	20	52	266	78.7	68.0
1912	94	341 (78.4)	12	49	280	82.1	64.4
1914	61	374 (86.0)	8	67	299	79.9	68.7
1916	35	400 (91.9)	12	37	351	87.8	80.7
1918	46	389 (89.4)	13	47	329	84.6	75.6
1920	50	385 (88.5)	18	53	314	81.6	72.2
1922	51	384 (88.3)	12	68	304	79.2	69.9
1924	34	401 (92.2)	11	33	357	89.0	82.1
1926	30	405 (93.1)	13	16	376	92.8	86.4
1928	31	404 (92.9)	9	31	364	90.1	83.7
1930	28	407 (93.6)	14	43	350	86.0	80.5
1932	43	392 (90.1)	42	79	271	69.1	62.3

See footnotes and sources at end of table.

Table 1. House Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1988

Election year ¹	Open seats ²	Total (percent) who ran for reelection ³	Not re-nominated	Defeated in general election	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁴	Percent of House reelected ⁴
1934	47	388 (89.2)	23	40	325	83.8	74.7
1936	47	388 (89.2)	17	31	340	87.6	78.2
1938	33	402 (92.4)	15	69	318	79.1	73.1
1940	28	407 (93.6)	8	38	361	88.7	83.0
1942	40	395 (90.8)	20	47	328	83.0	75.4
1944	30	405 (93.1)	13	35	357	88.1	82.1
1946	35	398 (91.5)	18	52	328	82.4	75.4
1948	35	400 (91.9)	15	68	317	79.3	72.9
1950	35	400 (91.9)	6	32	362	90.5	84.2
1952	46	389 (88.0)	9	26	354	91.0	84.4
1954	28	407 (93.6)	6	22	379	93.1	87.1
1956	24	411 (94.3)	6	16	389	94.6	89.4

See footnotes and sources at end of table.

Table 1. House Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1988

Election year ¹	Open seats ²	Total (percent) who ran for reelection ³	Not re-nominated	Defeated in general election	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁴	Percent of House reelected ⁴
1958	39	396 (91.0)	3	37	356	89.9	81.8
1960	32	405 (92.7)	5	25	375	92.6	86.2
1962	33	402 (92.9)	12	22	368	91.5	84.6
1964	38	397 (91.3)	8	45	344	86.6	79.1
1966	24	411 (94.5)	8	41	362	88.1	83.2
1968	26	409 (94.0)	4	9	396	96.8	91.0
1970	34	401 (92.2)	10	12	379	94.5	87.1
1972	45	390 (89.7)	12	13	365	93.6	83.9
1974	44	391 (89.9)	8	40	343	87.7	78.9
1976	51	384 (88.3)	3	13	368	95.8	84.6
1978	53	382 (87.6)	5	19	358	93.7	82.3
1980	37	398 (91.5)	6	31	361	90.7	83.0

See footnotes and sources at end of table.

Table 1. House Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1988

Election year ¹	Open seats ²	Total (percent) who ran for reelection ³	Not re-nominated	Defeated in general election	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁴	Percent of House reelected ⁴
1982	42	393 (90.3)	10	29	354	90.1	81.4
1984	26	409 (94.0)	3	16	390	95.4	90.1
1986	42	393 (90.3)	3	6	385	98.0	88.5
1988	26	409 (94.0)	1	6	402	98.3	92.4

¹ Prior to 1900 several States held elections in odd years as well as even years. Odd year elections were combined with the next highest even year election in this report. (For example, elections held in 1885 were combined with those held in 1886 in this report.)

² The open seat category was derived by subtracting the number of Members who ran for reelection from the House size.

³ The total running for reelection category includes those Members who sought renomination, but who were not renominated.

⁴ For information about the denominators used in these calculations see the methodology section.

Sources:

Prior to 1946, all the data were obtained from the *Roster of United States Congressional Office-holders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1984 Merged Data*. ("The Roster file"). The data were originally collected by Carroll McKibbin and the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. The Roster file is a machine readable computer data tape. The table was compiled from variables 44 and 83 of the Roster file.

For the period from 1946 to 1986, all data except the information pertaining to open seats were obtained from: Ornstein, Norman J., Thomas E. Mann, and Michael J. Malbin, *Vital Statistics on Congress, 1987-1988*. Table 2-7 House Incumbents Reelected, Defeated or Retired 1946-1986. Washington, Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1987. p. 56. Data for 1988 were obtained from *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, v. 46, Nov. 12, 1988, p. 3270.

ADEQUACY OF THE DATA

The main risk in using the Roster file as a source for information on the fate of incumbents seeking reelection is that the biographical information upon which the file is based may be incomplete or written in such a way as to make involuntary retirements appear to be voluntary. Thus the data on retirements and on those persons who were not renominated are possibly flawed by systematic errors based on incomplete sources of information about why Members left Congress. If the retirement figures are inflated because a Member's biography indicates that a Member retired when he or she failed to be renominated, the proportion of incumbents who successfully sought reelection will also be inflated.

Another factor that will inflate the proportion of incumbents who successfully sought reelection is the coding for the categories "ran for reelection" and "defeated in general election." These categories are inflated in those Congresses when Members were unseated, lost a contested election, or had their elections declared void, because Members who were defeated in a general election were coded together with these groups. Although in most cases this will not alter totals and percentages very much, certain periods such as the Reconstruction Era following the Civil War are likely to be affected because of the uncertain nature of elections held in Southern States at that time.

Vacancies are not accounted for in the divisors used in the calculations to produce the percentages in table 1. When vacancies occur, the percentages reported in the categories "percent who ran for reelection" and "percent of House reelected" will be slightly lower than actually is the case.

The "open seat" category is derived by subtracting the number of Members running for reelection from the number of seats in the House at the time of the election. This calculation may understate the number of open seats in elections following reapportionment because incumbents may be running against one another.

A review of the literature containing data on House incumbency shows that authors who derived data independently from other earlier efforts usually produced data that differed from the other sources. For example, in five pre-1946 elections, H. Douglas Price compiled data on the number of Members who ran for reelection and the number who were reelected. These data are reproduced in table 2 and are compared to the information obtained from the Roster file.

Table 2. Comparison of Data From Roster File With Information
Compiled By H. Douglas Price In *Congress in Change* ¹⁰

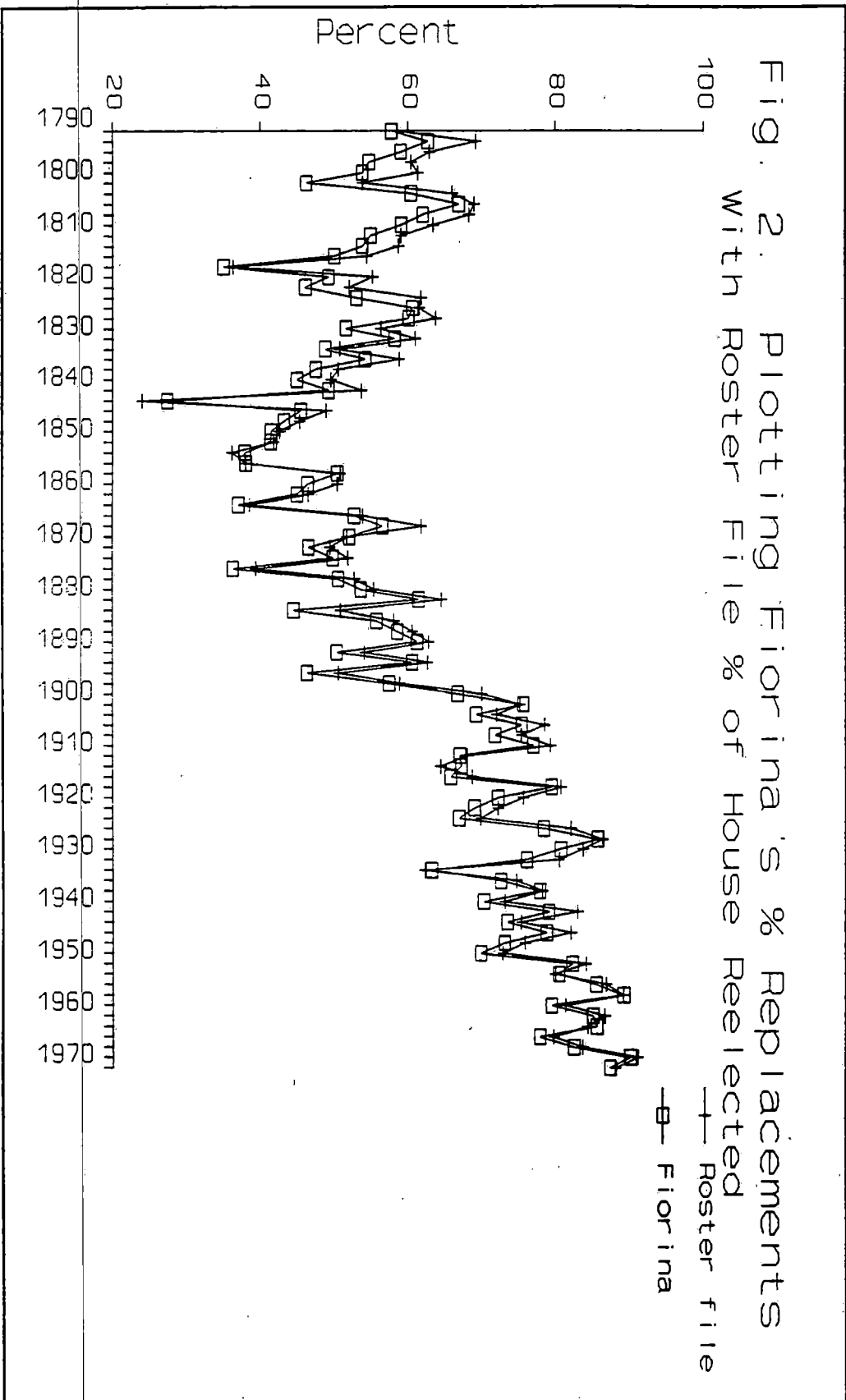
Election year	Roster ran for re- election	Price ran for re- election	Roster won re- election	Price won re- election	Roster percent reelected	Price percent reelected	Percent difference
1792	45	43	45	43	100.0	100.0	0.0
1812	97	92	84	80	86.6	86.9	.3
1836	149	137	122	114	81.9	76.5	5.4
1886	246	242	197	193	80.1	79.7	.4
1906	335	321	291	279	86.6	86.9	.3
Total	872	835	739	709	84.7	84.9	.2

In these five elections, the Roster file shows more Members running for reelection and being reelected than Price's data, but the proportion of Members seeking reelection who were reelected in both Price's and the Roster file data are very similar--the percent difference between the numbers ranging from 0 through 5.4 percent with the average of all five years differing by .2 percent. These differences may have come about because Price used different sources than the Roster file, but this cannot be determined because he does not describe how he derived his data.

Another explanation for differences between studies other than authors using different base documents ¹¹ centers on how special situations are categorized. For example, how should a person be counted who wins a special election to fill a vacancy and who is defeated in a party primary for the next full term held on the same day? In the 1986 election there were two such cases. Should these persons be counted as incumbents seeking renomination

¹⁰ Price, H. Douglas. Congress and the Evolution of Legislation 'Professionalism.' In: Ornstein. *Congress in Change* p. 11.

¹¹ Sources for these data include: *Congressional Directories*; the *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*, and its predecessors (which differ significantly depending on which edition is used); and *Congressional Quarterly's Guide to U.S. Elections* or the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research computer tapes upon which the CQ publication is based.



who failed to win the primary? Or should they be left out of any calculations of the percent of incumbents seeking reelection who were reelected? The data from *Vital Statistics on Congress* appears to include these Members as defeated incumbents, but a strong argument can be made that they should not be used in calculations about incumbent success rates. There are numerous decisions such as these which will alter the totals produced from competing sources. Additionally, there have been nearly 10,000 persons elected to the House since the first Congress. Thus, counting errors are another likely source of the difference among various sources.

Counting and categorizing errors will occur in any study involving many individual cases. Figure 2 (p. 16) plots the proportion of House Members who were reelected to the next Congress from 1790 to 1970 from the Roster file, and the percent of the House who were freshmen from Fiorina's study of House turnover. For this study a modified version of the figures contained in Fiorina's study has been used.¹²

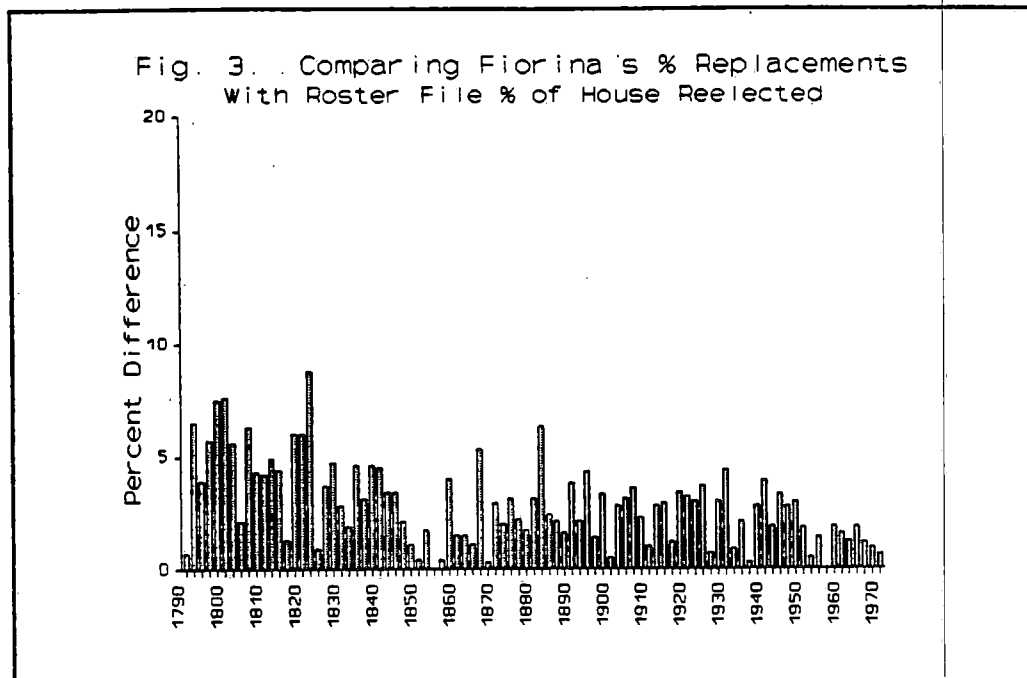
With few exceptions, figure 2 shows the data from the Roster file paralleling the similar data from Fiorina's study. There are differences, however. Figure 3 (p. 18) graphs the percent difference (regardless of the direction) between the two data sets. For the most part, the differences are small (less than 5 percent), but in three cases the differences are between 7.5 and 8.8 percent.

The 8.8 percent difference in 1822, between the Roster file and Fiorina's study may be explainable in part by the reapportionment in the House resulting in an increase in size from 186 to 213 following the 1820 census. But this discrepancy, and the 7.5 percent difference in 1798, and 7.6 percent difference in 1800, as well as all the smaller differences between the data sets are more likely to be a result of errors in one or the other (or both) data sets.

Although this comparison between data sets serves as a means to partially validate using either data source to derive a measure of the

¹² Fiorina in *Historical Change in House Turnover*, p. 29. Fiorina, Rohde and Wissel present four series of first term percentage figures. For this paper, the "percentage replacements" series has been chosen because these numbers take into account the addition and redistribution of seats after each reapportionment and count a person as a freshman if he or she is new to the Congress, regardless of any prior service. This series of data comes closest to the number derived by using the Roster file to identify the proportion of House Members from the previous Congress who become Members of the next Congress.

The reciprocal of Fiorina's "percentage replacements" (100 percent minus "percentage replacements") is plotted because the proportion of House Members who are replacements and the proportion of persons who were Members of the previous Congress should be mirror images.



The scale has been set to emphasize the differences between the data sets.

proportion of the House Members who were returned to Congress, it cannot be used to validate the reelection percentages of incumbents who sought reelection because there is no other automated data source for these data.

The Price data in table 2, although limited to five elections, shows that the Roster file data on the percentage of Members seeking reelection who are returned to office are very similar to this independent source. If a similar comparison is made between the post-1944 Roster file data and the information from *Vital Statistics on Congress* the maximum difference between the percentages is .7 percent with most years ranging between 0 and .3 percent. Although these three different comparisons cannot prove the Roster file data to be error free, they do provide an indication that the data in the Roster file can be relied upon.

CONCLUSION

More than 39,000 Member records in the Roster file were searched in order to compile the data in table 1. As discussed previously, data for the number of incumbents who actually sought reelection is probably incomplete because this information was extracted from the sometimes ambiguous Member biographical entries in the *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*. Still, examination of the data from the Roster file provides some assurance that the percentages and totals derived are sufficiently reliable to permit meaningful comparison of incumbent reelection rates in the 1946-1988 period to those calculated for the 1790-1944 period.

METHODOLOGY

Table 1 was prepared on the Library of Congress mainframe computer using SAS, the Statistical Analysis System. As previously described, the Roster file (*Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1984 Merged Data*) was used for the raw data for all the pre-1946 information.

Table 1 was created using Roster file variables number 44 (Termination of Service) and 83 (Why left this Congress.) The category "Member served in the next Congress in the same chamber" in variable 44 was used as a "filter" for the category "won reelection or served in next Congress" in variable 83. This was necessary because experimentation with the data set revealed that using variable 83 alone overstated the number of Members who won reelection or served in the next Congress because of apparent miscoding. Variable 83, the primary source of data for this report, included the following categories:

00. Won reelection or served in next Congress
01. Either defeated in general election, unseated, lost contested election, or election declared void
02. Defeated in primary
03. Died in office
04. Did not seek reelection, retired, or was not a candidate for renomination
05. Sought or accepted other office
06. Accepted Federal office
07. Went to Senate
08. Resigned, withdrew, or expelled
09. Inappropriate, still serving in Congress
10. Unknown

The categories in the table were created as follows:

Open seats=size of House minus total ran for reelection

Ran for reelection=values 0, 1, or 2.

Percent ran for reelection=(total ran for reelection/House size as of election day) times 100. (The House size is not necessarily the size of the new House for which the election is being held.)

Not renominated=value 2.

Defeated in general election=value 1.

Won reelection=value 0.

Percent winning reelection=(total reelected/ran for reelection) times 100.

Percent House reelected=(number of incumbents returned/House size as of election day) times 100. (The House size is not necessarily the size of the new House for which the election is being held.)

Set out below is the program that created the table. This program has been reproduced so that readers, but especially future authors, of this report will have full documentation of how the report was produced. As noted earlier, all the 1946-1986 data except for the information pertaining to deaths and resignations are from a table in *Vital Statistics on Congress, 1987-1988*. The data on deaths and resignations after 1946 (except for 1986 and 1988) are from the Roster file, and the Roster file is the source for all the pre-1946 data. The Graphics were produced using SuperCalc 4.

A special note is needed about some of terms used in the report and especially the divisors used to compute the various percentages used in the tables and graphs. First, the "election year" is the year the Members of the House are eligible to run for reelection, not the year in which a given Congress was first elected. The "percent winning election" data are computed by dividing the number of Members who were reelected in a given Congress by the total who ran for reelection. The "percent of House reelected" category uses a divisor based on the number of seats there were in the House at the beginning of the Congress in which the election is held, plus the addition of new seats when new States were admitted. Thus, in reapportionment years, the divisor will not be the size of the new House. For example, in 1792, 65 is used as the divisor rather than 105 (the enlarged House size based on the 1790 census) because dividing by 105 would understate the percent of the House reelected. The "open seat" category is created by subtraction. In this case the actual House size as of the election is used as the number from which the total number of Members who ran for reelection is subtracted.

SAS PROGRAM

The author wishes to thank Royce Crocker of the Government Division for his assistance in writing the SAS program for this report.

```
OPTIONS LS=120;
OPTIONS NODATE;
DATA;
```

```
  INFILE RSTR;
  INPUT CONGNUMB 6-7 CHAMBER 8 STATCODE 9-10
        DISTRICT 11-12 PRYCODE 13-16 NAME $ 19-43
        V44 90 V83 173-174 YSRSRVD
```

This section selects the needed variables from the Roster file.

```
DATA;
  SET;
  IF CHAMBER=3 AND 01<=CONGNUMB<=98;
  LENGTH ELCTYEAR 3;
```

```
  IF CONGNUMB=01 THEN ELCTYEAR=1790;
  IF CONGNUMB=02 THEN ELCTYEAR=1792;
  IF CONGNUMB=03 THEN ELCTYEAR=1794;
  IF CONGNUMB=04 THEN ELCTYEAR=1796;
  IF CONGNUMB=05 THEN ELCTYEAR=1798;
  IF CONGNUMB=06 THEN ELCTYEAR=1800;
  IF CONGNUMB=07 THEN ELCTYEAR=1802;
  IF CONGNUMB=08 THEN ELCTYEAR=1804;
```

This section creates a new variable for each Congress. The election year (elctyear) is the year the Members of the House are eligible to to run for reelection.

IF CONGNUMB=09 THEN ELCTYEAR=1806;
IF CONGNUMB=10 THEN ELCTYEAR=1808;
IF CONGNUMB=11 THEN ELCTYEAR=1810;
IF CONGNUMB=12 THEN ELCTYEAR=1812;
IF CONGNUMB=13 THEN ELCTYEAR=1814;
IF CONGNUMB=14 THEN ELCTYEAR=1816;
IF CONGNUMB=15 THEN ELCTYEAR=1818;
IF CONGNUMB=16 THEN ELCTYEAR=1820;
IF CONGNUMB=17 THEN ELCTYEAR=1822;
IF CONGNUMB=18 THEN ELCTYEAR=1824;
IF CONGNUMB=19 THEN ELCTYEAR=1826;
IF CONGNUMB=20 THEN ELCTYEAR=1828;
IF CONGNUMB=21 THEN ELCTYEAR=1830;
IF CONGNUMB=22 THEN ELCTYEAR=1832;
IF CONGNUMB=23 THEN ELCTYEAR=1834;
IF CONGNUMB=24 THEN ELCTYEAR=1836;
IF CONGNUMB=25 THEN ELCTYEAR=1838;
IF CONGNUMB=26 THEN ELCTYEAR=1840;
IF CONGNUMB=27 THEN ELCTYEAR=1842;
IF CONGNUMB=28 THEN ELCTYEAR=1844;
IF CONGNUMB=29 THEN ELCTYEAR=1846;
IF CONGNUMB=30 THEN ELCTYEAR=1848;
IF CONGNUMB=31 THEN ELCTYEAR=1850;
IF CONGNUMB=32 THEN ELCTYEAR=1852;
IF CONGNUMB=33 THEN ELCTYEAR=1854;
IF CONGNUMB=34 THEN ELCTYEAR=1856;
IF CONGNUMB=35 THEN ELCTYEAR=1858;
IF CONGNUMB=36 THEN ELCTYEAR=1860;
IF CONGNUMB=37 THEN ELCTYEAR=1862;
IF CONGNUMB=38 THEN ELCTYEAR=1864;
IF CONGNUMB=39 THEN ELCTYEAR=1866;
IF CONGNUMB=40 THEN ELCTYEAR=1868;
IF CONGNUMB=41 THEN ELCTYEAR=1870;
IF CONGNUMB=42 THEN ELCTYEAR=1872;
IF CONGNUMB=43 THEN ELCTYEAR=1874;
IF CONGNUMB=44 THEN ELCTYEAR=1876;
IF CONGNUMB=45 THEN ELCTYEAR=1878;
IF CONGNUMB=46 THEN ELCTYEAR=1880;
IF CONGNUMB=47 THEN ELCTYEAR=1882;
IF CONGNUMB=48 THEN ELCTYEAR=1884;
IF CONGNUMB=49 THEN ELCTYEAR=1886;
IF CONGNUMB=50 THEN ELCTYEAR=1888;
IF CONGNUMB=51 THEN ELCTYEAR=1890;
IF CONGNUMB=52 THEN ELCTYEAR=1892;
IF CONGNUMB=53 THEN ELCTYEAR=1894;
IF CONGNUMB=54 THEN ELCTYEAR=1896;
IF CONGNUMB=55 THEN ELCTYEAR=1898;
IF CONGNUMB=56 THEN ELCTYEAR=1900;
IF CONGNUMB=57 THEN ELCTYEAR=1902;
IF CONGNUMB=58 THEN ELCTYEAR=1904;
IF CONGNUMB=59 THEN ELCTYEAR=1906;
IF CONGNUMB=60 THEN ELCTYEAR=1908;
IF CONGNUMB=61 THEN ELCTYEAR=1910;
IF CONGNUMB=62 THEN ELCTYEAR=1912;
IF CONGNUMB=63 THEN ELCTYEAR=1914;
IF CONGNUMB=64 THEN ELCTYEAR=1916;
IF CONGNUMB=65 THEN ELCTYEAR=1918;
IF CONGNUMB=66 THEN ELCTYEAR=1920;
IF CONGNUMB=67 THEN ELCTYEAR=1922;
IF CONGNUMB=68 THEN ELCTYEAR=1924;

```

IF CONGNUMB=69 THEN ELCTYEAR=1926;
IF CONGNUMB=70 THEN ELCTYEAR=1928;
IF CONGNUMB=71 THEN ELCTYEAR=1930;
IF CONGNUMB=72 THEN ELCTYEAR=1932;
IF CONGNUMB=73 THEN ELCTYEAR=1934;
IF CONGNUMB=74 THEN ELCTYEAR=1936;
IF CONGNUMB=75 THEN ELCTYEAR=1938;
IF CONGNUMB=76 THEN ELCTYEAR=1940;
IF CONGNUMB=77 THEN ELCTYEAR=1942;
IF CONGNUMB=78 THEN ELCTYEAR=1944;
IF CONGNUMB=79 THEN ELCTYEAR=1946;
IF CONGNUMB=80 THEN ELCTYEAR=1948;
IF CONGNUMB=81 THEN ELCTYEAR=1950;
IF CONGNUMB=82 THEN ELCTYEAR=1952;
IF CONGNUMB=83 THEN ELCTYEAR=1954;
IF CONGNUMB=84 THEN ELCTYEAR=1956;
IF CONGNUMB=85 THEN ELCTYEAR=1958;
IF CONGNUMB=86 THEN ELCTYEAR=1960;
IF CONGNUMB=87 THEN ELCTYEAR=1962;
IF CONGNUMB=88 THEN ELCTYEAR=1964;
IF CONGNUMB=89 THEN ELCTYEAR=1966;
IF CONGNUMB=90 THEN ELCTYEAR=1968;
IF CONGNUMB=91 THEN ELCTYEAR=1970;
IF CONGNUMB=92 THEN ELCTYEAR=1972;
IF CONGNUMB=93 THEN ELCTYEAR=1974;
IF CONGNUMB=94 THEN ELCTYEAR=1976;
IF CONGNUMB=95 THEN ELCTYEAR=1978;
IF CONGNUMB=96 THEN ELCTYEAR=1980;
IF CONGNUMB=97 THEN ELCTYEAR=1982;
IF CONGNUMB=98 THEN ELCTYEAR=1984;
  LABEL ELCTYEAR='ELECTION*YEAR';

```

DATA; SET;

```

IF 0<=V83<=2 THEN RAN=1; ELSE RAN=0;
IF V44=1 AND V83=0 THEN RAN=0;
IF V83=2 THEN PRIMDEF=1; ELSE PRIMDEF=0;
IF V83=1 THEN GENDEF=1; ELSE GENDEF=0;
IF V44=0 THEN REELCT=1; ELSE REELCT=0;

```

PROC SORT; BY ELCTYEAR;

This section creates several new variables to enable totals to be computed in each category, by election year.

DATA; SET;

BY ELCTYEAR;

```

IF FIRST.ELCTYEAR THEN DO;
  TOTRAN=0;
  TOTPRIM=0;
  TOTGEN=0;
  TOTRLCT=0;

```

END;

```

  TOTRAN+RAN;
  TOTPRIM+PRIMDEF;
  TOTGEN+GENDEF;
  TOTRLCT+REELCT;

```

IF LAST.ELCTYEAR THEN DO;

```

  PCTRLCT=(TOTRLCT/TOTRAN)*100;
  PCTRLCT=ROUND(PCTRLCT,.01);

```

This section counts how many Members fall into each category using the variables created in the previous step.

This is the calculation that produces the percent of the Members running who are reelected.

```

IF 1790<=ELCTYEAR<=1792 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/65)*100;
IF 1794=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/105)*100;

```

```

IF 1796<=ELCTYEAR<=1802 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/106)*100;
IF 1804<=ELCTYEAR<=1810 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/142)*100;
IF 1812=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/143)*100;
IF 1814<=ELCTYEAR<=1816 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/182)*100;
IF 1818=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/183)*100;
IF 1820<=ELCTYEAR<=1822 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/186)*100;
IF 1824<=ELCTYEAR<=1832 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/213)*100;
IF 1834=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/240)*100;
IF 1836=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/241)*100;
IF 1838<=ELCTYEAR<=1842 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/242)*100;
IF 1844<=ELCTYEAR<=1846 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/223)*100;
IF 1848=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/230)*100;
IF 1850<=ELCTYEAR<=1852 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/232)*100;
IF 1854<=ELCTYEAR<=1858 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/234)*100;
IF 1860=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/174)*100;
IF 1862=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/182)*100;
IF 1864=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/182)*100;
IF 1866=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/183)*100;
IF 1868=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/238)*100;
IF 1870<=ELCTYEAR<=1872 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/243)*100;
IF 1874<=ELCTYEAR<=1876 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/292)*100;
IF 1878<=ELCTYEAR<=1882 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/293)*100;
IF 1884<=ELCTYEAR<=1888 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/325)*100;
IF 1890=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/331)*100;
IF 1892=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/332)*100;
IF 1894=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/356)*100;
IF 1896<=ELCTYEAR<=1902 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/357)*100;
IF 1904<=ELCTYEAR<=1906 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/386)*100;
IF 1908<=ELCTYEAR<=1910 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/391)*100;
IF 1912<=ELCTYEAR<=1958 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/435)*100;
IF ELCTYEAR=1960 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/435)*100;
IF ELCTYEAR>=1962 THEN PCTHOUSE=(TOTRLCT/435)*100;

```

This section computes the percent of all House Members who are reelected. The (pcthouse) divisor may not be the House size as of the election. Since we are computing the percent of incumbents who are reelected, the House size applicable to the incumbents in office is used. Thus, in 1792, 65 is used rather than 105 because dividing by 105 would understate the percent of the House reelected.

```

IF ELCTYEAR=1790 THEN HOUSE=65;
IF 1792<=ELCTYEAR<=1794 THEN HOUSE=105;
IF 1796<=ELCTYEAR<=1800 THEN HOUSE=106;
IF 1802<=ELCTYEAR<=1810 THEN HOUSE=142;
IF 1812=ELCTYEAR THEN HOUSE=143;
IF 1814<=ELCTYEAR<=1816 THEN HOUSE=182;
IF 1818=ELCTYEAR THEN HOUSE=183;
IF ELCTYEAR=1820 THEN HOUSE=186;
IF 1822<=ELCTYEAR<=1830 THEN HOUSE=213;
IF 1832<=ELCTYEAR<=1834 THEN HOUSE=240;
IF 1836=ELCTYEAR THEN HOUSE=241;
IF 1838<=ELCTYEAR<=1840 THEN HOUSE=242;
IF 1842<=ELCTYEAR<=1846 THEN HOUSE=223;
IF 1848=ELCTYEAR THEN HOUSE=230;
IF ELCTYEAR=1850 THEN HOUSE=232;
IF 1852<=ELCTYEAR<=1858 THEN HOUSE=234;
IF 1860=ELCTYEAR THEN HOUSE=174;
IF 1862=ELCTYEAR THEN HOUSE=182;
IF 1864=ELCTYEAR THEN HOUSE=182;
IF 1866=ELCTYEAR THEN HOUSE=183;
IF 1868=ELCTYEAR THEN HOUSE=238;
IF ELCTYEAR=1870 THEN HOUSE=243;
IF 1872<=ELCTYEAR<=1876 THEN HOUSE=292;
IF 1878<=ELCTYEAR<=1880 THEN HOUSE=293;
IF 1882<=ELCTYEAR<=1888 THEN HOUSE=325;
IF 1890=ELCTYEAR THEN HOUSE=331;
IF 1892=ELCTYEAR THEN HOUSE=332;

```

This section creates a new variable (house) in order to compute the open seat category. This new variable is the actual House size at the time of the election.

```

IF 1894=ELCTYEAR THEN HOUSE=356;
IF 1896<=ELCTYEAR<=1900 THEN HOUSE=357;
IF 1902<=ELCTYEAR<=1906 THEN HOUSE=386;
IF 1908<=ELCTYEAR<=1910 THEN HOUSE=391;
IF 1912<=ELCTYEAR<=1958 THEN HOUSE=435;
IF ELCTYEAR=1960 THEN HOUSE=437;
IF ELCTYEAR>=1962 THEN HOUSE=435;

```

```

IF 1790<=ELCTYEAR<=1792 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/65)*100;
IF 1794=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/105)*100;
IF 1796<=ELCTYEAR<=1802 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/106)*100;
IF 1804<=ELCTYEAR<=1810 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/142)*100;
IF 1812=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/143)*100;
IF 1814<=ELCTYEAR<=1816 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/182)*100;
IF 1818=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/183)*100;
IF 1820<=ELCTYEAR<=1822 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/186)*100;
IF 1824<=ELCTYEAR<=1832 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/213)*100;
IF 1834=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/240)*100;
IF 1836=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/241)*100;
IF 1838<=ELCTYEAR<=1842 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/242)*100;
IF 1844<=ELCTYEAR<=1846 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/223)*100;
IF 1848=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/230)*100;
IF 1850<=ELCTYEAR<=1852 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/232)*100;
IF 1854<=ELCTYEAR<=1858 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/234)*100;
IF 1860=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/174)*100;
IF 1862=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/182)*100;
IF 1864=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/182)*100;
IF 1866=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/183)*100;
IF 1868=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/238)*100;
IF 1870<=ELCTYEAR<=1872 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/243)*100;
IF 1874<=ELCTYEAR<=1876 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/292)*100;
IF 1878<=ELCTYEAR<=1882 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/293)*100;
IF 1884<=ELCTYEAR<=1888 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/325)*100;
IF 1890=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/331)*100;
IF 1892=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/332)*100;
IF 1894=ELCTYEAR THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/356)*100;
IF 1896<=ELCTYEAR<=1902 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/357)*100;
IF 1904<=ELCTYEAR<=1906 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/386)*100;
IF 1908<=ELCTYEAR<=1910 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/391)*100;
IF 1912<=ELCTYEAR<=1958 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/435)*100;
IF ELCTYEAR=1960 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/435)*100;
IF ELCTYEAR>=1962 THEN PCTOFELG=(TOTRAN/435)*100;

```

This section creates a new variable (pctofelg) which is the proportion of the Members who were eligible to run for reelection who did so.

```

PCTHOUSE=ROUND(PCTHOUSE,.01);
PCTOFELG=ROUND(PCTOFELG,.01);
OPEN=HOUSE-TOTRAN;
OUTPUT;

```

END;

```

KEEP ELCTYEAR OPEN TOTRAN PCTOFELG TOTPRIM TOTGEN
TOTRLCT PCTRLCT PCTHOUSE;

```

This step saves computer memory.

```

PROC PRINT SPLIT="*";
VAR OPEN TOTRAN PCTOFELG TOTPRIM TOTGEN TOTRLCT PCTRLCT PCTHOUSE;
BY ELCTYEAR;
ID ELCTYEAR;
LABEL OPEN="OPEN*SEATS";
LABEL TOTRAN="RAN FOR*REELECTION";
LABEL PCTOFELG="PERCENT OF*ELIGIBLE*RUNNING";
LABEL TOTPRIM="NOT RE-*NOMINATED";
LABEL TOTGEN="DEFEATED IN*GENERAL";

```

This is the printing step.

CRS-25

LABEL TOTRLCT="WON RE-ELECTION";
LABEL PCTRLCT="PERCENT WINNING REELECTION";
LABEL PCTHOUSE="PERCENT OF HOUSE RE-ELECTED";
FORMAT PCTRLCT 6.1;
FORMAT PCTHOUSE 6.1;
FORMAT PCTOFELG 6.1;
TITLE 'HOUSE INCUMBENTS, WINS AND LOSSES: 1790-1986';

CRS Report for Congress

Re-election Rates of Senate Incumbents: 1790-1988

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May 15, 1990



REELECTION RATES OF SENATE INCUMBENTS: 1790-1988

SUMMARY

This report provides data on the success rate of Senate incumbents who have sought reelection, beginning with the 1790 election. While most studies in this field begin with the 1946 election, this analysis covers the entire Senate electoral history.

The study focuses on the fate of incumbents *seeking* reelection to the Senate rather than merely looking at the percentage of the Senate who were freshmen in each new Congress. Throughout history, the percentage of incumbents who sought reelection who were returned to the next Congress has rarely fallen below 60 percent (only 12 of 100 times: 1846, 1866, 1870, 1880, 1910, 1912, 1916, 1922, 1930, 1932, 1946, 1980) and has often exceeded 70 percent (60 of 100 times).

Most Senate elections (76 of 100) had reelection rates of incumbents seeking another term falling between 60 to 90 percentage points. In the pre-1914 period, 76 percent of the elections (47 of 62) fell within this range, while the same 76 percent (29 of 38) have been within this range since direct election was adopted.

Overall, for the Senate, 73 percent of 1,929 incumbents seeking reelection since 1790 were reelected. For the period before direct election, 75 percent of the 805 incumbents seeking reelection were reelected. Since 1914, 72 percent of the 1,124 incumbents seeking reelection were elected. Comparable figures for the House are 85 percent for the entire period since 1790, 81 percent for the pre-1914 period, and 89 percent since direct election of Senators began.

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REELECTION RATES OF SENATE INCUMBENTS: 1790-1988

INTRODUCTION

The high reelection success of congressional incumbents has prompted much commentary in recent years.¹ Most of the analysis has been focussed on the recent more than 90 percent success rate of House incumbents seeking reelection. A somewhat lower Senate incumbent reelection success rate has attracted less attention than the House. This report (which is a companion to a CRS study that contains House data²) provides incumbent reelection success data from 1790-1988 for the Senate.

In many ways, computing incumbent reelection success rates for the Senate is more difficult than for the House. Although the Senate has always been significantly smaller than the House, and while only approximately one-third of the seats are contested at one time, many thousands of comparisons must be made from year-to-year to calculate incumbent reelection success rates.³ The inevitable errors in any task of this size are likely to be more significant for the Senate than for the House, because mistakes have a much greater impact on percentage calculations when the total number of races is one-third of the Senate, rather than the entire House of Representatives.

Further complicating analysis is the fact that, in 1914, the *manner* of electing Senators changed from election by State legislatures to direct election by the people. Thus, the pre- and post- direct-election periods are not strictly comparable; yet the reelection rates (with the exceptions of nine elections prior to 1914 where all candidates seeking reelection were elected) are similar for both periods. Most Senate elections (76 of 100) had reelection rates of incumbents seeking another term falling between 60 to 90 percentage points. Both in the pre- and post-1914 period, 76 percent of the elections (47 of 62) and (29 of 38), respectively, have fallen within this range. Figure 1. summarizes the incumbent return rate for incumbents seeking reelection for both the Senate *and* the House since 1790.

Overall, for the Senate, 73 percent of 1,929 incumbents seeking reelection since 1790 were reelected. For the period before direct election, 75 percent of

¹ See, for example, Broder, David S. Three keys to "Incumbent Lock." *Washington Post*. December 7, 1988, A21, and Rovner, Julie. Turnover in Congress Hits an All-Time Low. *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, v. 46. Washington, D.C. November 19, 1988, p. 3363.

² U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. *Reelection Rates of House Incumbents: 1790-1988*. Report No. 89-173 GOV, by David C. Huckabee. Washington, 1989.

³ The Senate membership has ranged from 26 to 100. House membership has ranged from 65 to 437.

the 805 incumbents seeking reelection were reelected. Since 1914, 72 percent of the 1,124 incumbents seeking reelection were elected. Comparable figures for the House are 85 percent for the entire period since 1790, 81 percent for the pre-1914 period, and 89 percent since direct election.

These overall figures do not show the volatility of incumbent return rates, however, nearly as well as figure 2 which plots the rate of return for incumbents choosing to run for the House and Senate from 1790-1986. The

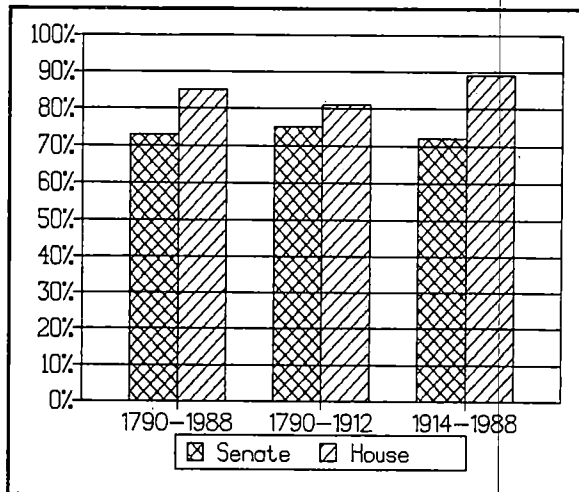


Figure 1. Selected Average Incumbent Reelection Rates For Members Choosing To Run: 1790-1988

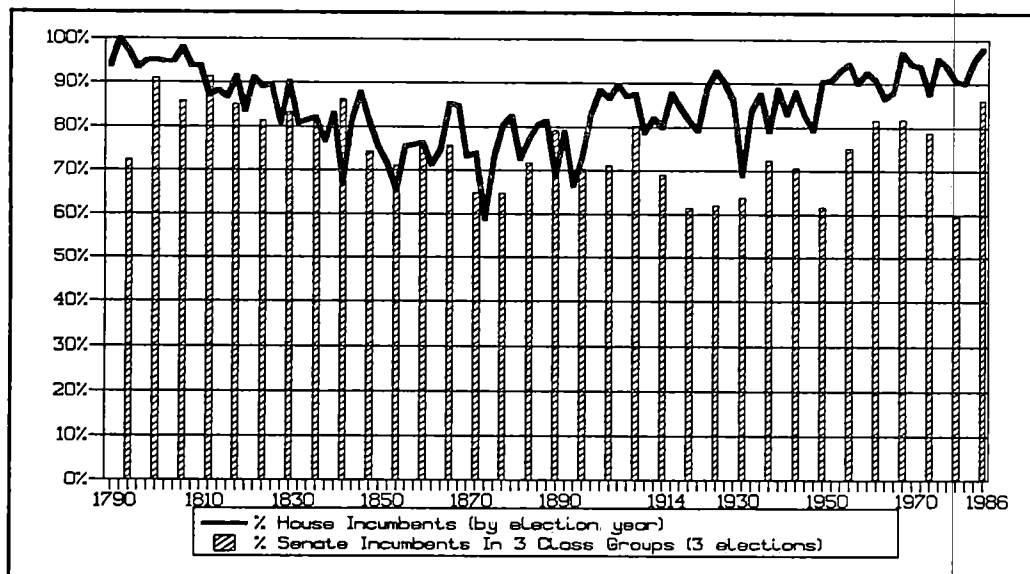
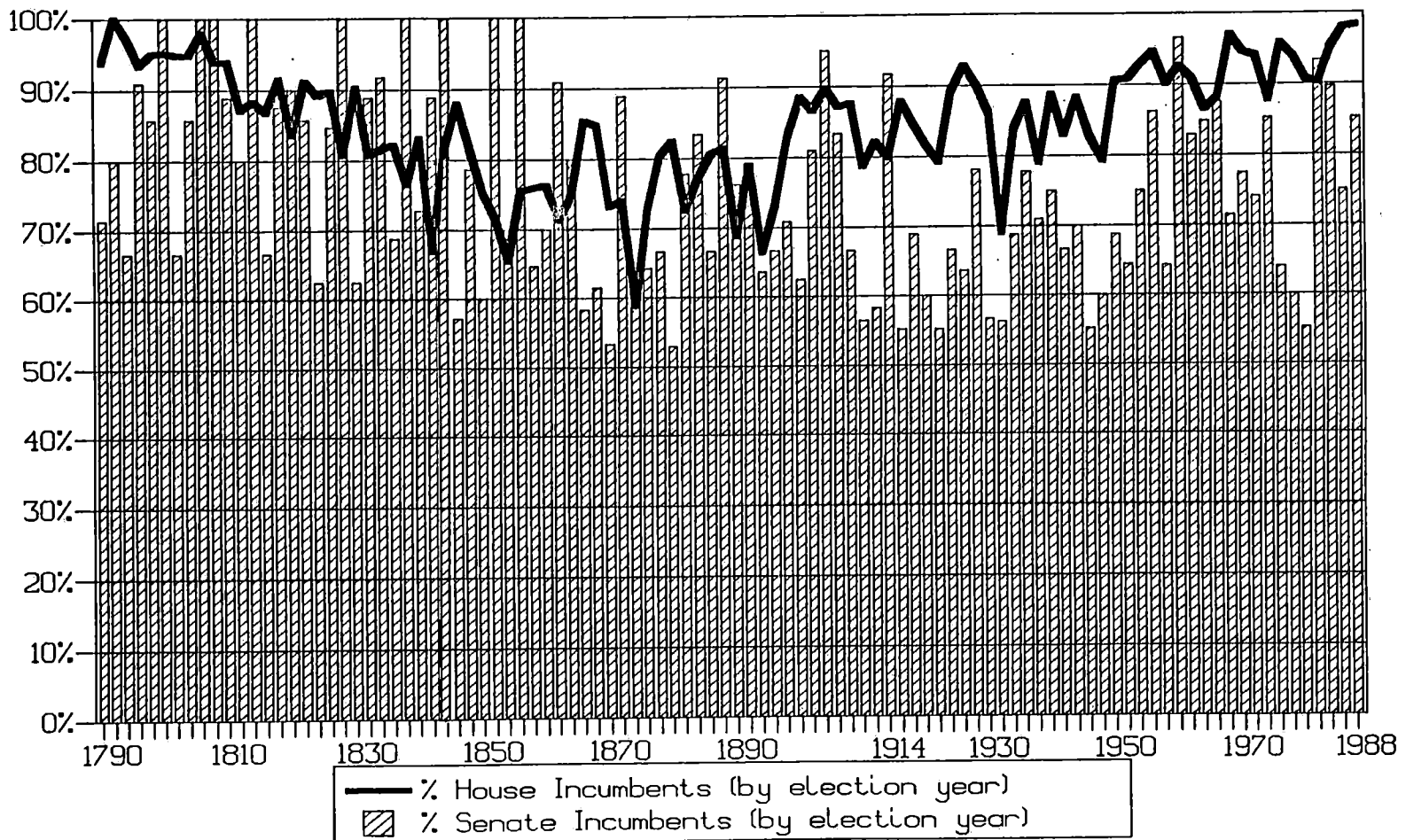


Figure 2. Senate Incumbents Percent Reelected Compared To House Incumbents: 1790-1986 (Senate Data in Three-Class Groups)

1988 election has been omitted because the Senate data groups all three classes together (covering three elections) because only one-third of the Senate is up for election in general elections for any one election. Figure 3 reports the same data for the House, but provides greater detail for the Senate by graphing each election including 1988. This graph emphasizes the instability

Figure 3. Senate Incumbents Percent Reelected Compared to House Incumbents: 1790-1988.



of the Senate return rates which may be attributable as much to the small sizes of the groups of Senators running for reelection as the actual number who were returned to the Senate. For example, according to the Roster file, in 1792, five Senators ran for reelection, and four were elected. A change of one Senator would make a 20-percentage-point difference in the reelection rate of incumbents seeking to return to the Senate.

CAVEATS

The Senate data summarized in figures 1-3 are from tables 1 and 2 which follow this section. The data in the tables were derived from several different sources: Pre-1914 data are from a computer file from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, entitled the *Roster of United States Congressional Office-holders and Biographical Characteristics of the United States Congress, 1789-1988 Merged Data* (hereafter referred to as the Roster file).⁴ Data for the direct election period (1914-1988) were obtained from several CRS sources⁵, and the *Vital Statistics on Congress, 1989-1990 Edition*.⁶ The House data are from the CRS report on House incumbent reelection rates.⁷

⁴ McKibbin, Carroll and the Inter-university Consortium of Political and Social Research (ICPSR). *Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1988 Merged Data*. ICPSR (ICPSR study number 7803). Ann Arbor, Michigan. This file was produced in large part by merging two existing files: ICPSR's *Roster of U.S. Congressional Officeholders, 1789-1979* (ICPSR study number 7557) and Carroll McKibbin's *Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1980*. McKibbin's data were primarily coded from the *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*, 4th and 5th editions. Information for the period 1980-88 was added to the file by ICPSR staff.

⁵ Memorandums prepared upon request by: James Sayler. *Members of the House and Senate Who Lost Their Seats for Reasons Other Than Death (1952-1962)*. February 16, 1962. David C. Huckabee. *Requested Data On Incumbency in Congress 1956-1972*. April 2, 1973; Joseph E. Cantor. *Incidence of Renomination and Reelection of Incumbent U.S. Senators: 1914-1952*. March 17, 1975. Frederick J. Augustyn, Jr. *United States Senate Elections, 1950-1984--Statistics on the Re-election of Incumbents*. November 13, 1984.

⁶ Ornstein, Norman J., Thomas E. Mann, and Michael J. Malbin. *Vital Statistics on Congress, 1989-1990*. Washington. Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1990, p. 57.

⁷ *Reelection Rates of House Incumbents*, pp. 5-13.

Less confidence about accuracy of data should be placed in the Roster file information than the other sources. There are several different sources of data from the direct election period which can be cross-checked, but the only source of data for the pre-1914 period in this report is the Roster file.

The main risk in using the Roster file as a source for information on the fate of incumbents seeking reelection is that the biographical information upon which the file is based may be incomplete or written in such a way as to make involuntary retirements appear to be voluntary. Thus, the data on retirements and on those persons who were not renominated are possibly flawed by errors based on incomplete sources of information about why Members left Congress.

This is particularly true in the Senate in the period when the State legislatures elected Senators. Prior to 1914, only three percent (24) of the Senators classified as seeking reelection were listed as not renominated in the Roster file. This contrasts with nine percent (97) of the total seeking reelection failing to be renominated in the direct election period. This relatively low renomination rate prior to 1914, may be a result of "retirement figures" being inflated in Members' biographies because Senators may have declared that they had retired when they failed to be renominated. If this is true, the proportion of incumbents who successfully sought reelection will also be inflated.

Figure 4 graphs the differences (regardless of direction) between using the Roster file as the source for incumbent success rate information, and the other sources used in this report, for the period 1914 to 1988. In two cases (1926 and 1930), the differences are as much as ten percentage points. Although the other differences are generally less than six percentage points, this graph illustrates that coding errors and different definitions may affect the results. For example, Warren Kostroski, in his work on Senate incumbency, does not include Senators who were appointed and subsequently ran for reelection as incumbents in his statistics. He also only includes general election figures in his numbers, leaving out information about renomination success.⁸ The reelection percentages in this report include renomination success as part of the equation. Moreover, this report classifies anyone holding the office of Senator at the time of an election as an incumbent, regardless of the means of obtaining the office. Kostroski reports that 320 incumbent Senators sought reelection from 1946 to 1970. Of that total 269 (84 percent) won. The figures in table 1 (subtracting the renomination data) sum to 367 incumbent Senators running, and 287 winning (81 percent) in this period. Although the percentages are similar, the absolute numbers are different. The differences are probably accounted for by

⁸ Kostroski, Warren L., Party and Incumbency in Postwar Senate Elections: Trends, Patterns, and Models. *American Political Science Review*. v. 67. 1973. p. 1215.

Kostroski's excluding appointed Senators from his definition of incumbents.⁹ This example too, serves to illustrate what is illustrated in figure 4, namely, that different sources are bound to disagree. Furthermore in the case of the 19th century, errors in the incumbent return rate data from earlier in the century will be magnified because so few Senators were eligible to run in any given election year.

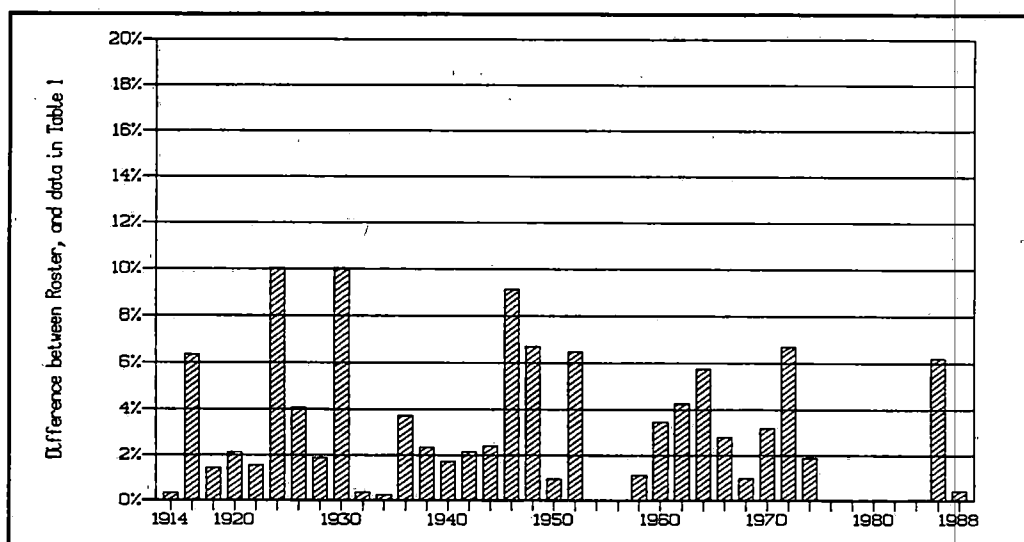


Figure 4. Difference Between Roster File Incumbent Reelection Rates and Data in Table 1: 1914-1988. (Scale set to emphasize differences in data sets)

Another factor that will inflate the proportion of incumbents who successfully sought reelection is the coding for the categories "ran for reelection" and "defeated in general election." These categories are inflated in those Congresses when Senators were unseated, lost a contested election, or had their elections declared void, because Senators who were defeated in a general election were coded together with these groups. Although, in most cases, this will not alter totals and percentages very much, certain periods such as the Reconstruction Era following the Civil War are likely to be affected because of the uncertain nature of elections held in Southern States at that time.

Table 1 presents incumbency data in a form similar to that reported in *Vital Statistics on Congress: 1989-1990*. Table 2 presents the same data for the period 1790-1986 by three Senate class groups. Following the table is an explanation about how the Roster file was used to compute the pre-1914 data.

⁹ According to data in the ICPSR Elections File, there were 52 special Senate elections from 1946-1970. *Candidate and Constituency Statistics of Elections in the United States 1788-1987*. ICPSR. (ICPSR Study Number 7757) Ann Arbor, Michigan. Third ICPSR Edition. Fall 1988.

TABLE 1. Senate Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1988

Election year/class ¹	Class size ²	Total who ran for reelection ³	Not re- nominated	Defeated in general election ⁴	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁵
1790 1	9	7	0	2	5	71.4%
1792 2	10	5	0	1	4	80.0%
1794 3	10	6	0	2	4	66.7%
1796 1	11	11	0	1	10	90.9%
1798 2	11	7	1	0	6	85.7%
1800 3	10	4	0	0	4	100.0%
1802 1	11	6	0	2	4	66.7%
1804 2	11	7	0	1	6	85.7%
1806 3	11	8	0	0	8	100.0%
1808 1	12	9	0	0	9	100.0%
1810 2	11	9	0	1	8	88.9%
1812 3	13	5	0	1	4	80.0%
1814 1	12	6	0	0	6	100.0%
1816 2	12	6	0	2	4	66.7%
1818 3	14	8	0	1	7	87.5%
1820 1	15	10	0	1	9	90.0%
1822 2	16	14	0	2	12	85.7%
1824 3	16	8	0	3	5	62.5%
1826 1	16	13	0	2	11	84.6%
1828 2	16	9	0	0	9	100.0%

See footnotes and sources at end of table.

TABLE 1. Senate Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1988
(Continued)

Election year/class ¹	Class size ²	Total who ran for reelection ³	Not re- nominated	Defeated in general election ⁴	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁵
1830 3	16	8	0	3	5	62.5%
1832 1	16	9	0	1	8	88.9%
1834 2	16	12	0	1	11	91.7%
1836 3	17	16	0	5	11	68.8%
1838 1	17	9	0	0	9	100.0%
1840 2	18	11	0	3	8	72.7%
1842 3	17	9	0	1	8	88.9%
1844 1	17	7	0	0	7	100.0%
1846 2	20	14	0	6	8	57.1%
1848 3	20	14	2	1	11	78.6%
1850 1	21	15	0	6	9	60.0%
1852 2	20	6	0	0	6	100.0%
1854 3	21	10	0	3	7	70.0%
1856 1	21	10	0	0	10	100.0%
1858 2	21	17	1	5	11	64.7%
1860 3	21	10	0	3	7	70.0%
1862 1	17	11	0	1	10	90.9%
1864 2	14	10	0	2	8	80.0%
1866 3	17	12	0	5	7	58.3%

See footnotes and sources at end of table.

TABLE 1. Senate Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1988
(Continued)

Election year/class ¹	Class size ²	Total who ran for reelection ³	Not re- nominated	Defeated in general election ⁴	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁵
1868 1	22	13	1	4	8	61.5%
1870 2	25	15	0	7	8	53.3%
1872 3	24	9	0	1	8	88.9%
1874 1	25	8	0	3	5	62.5%
1876 2	26	14	0	5	9	64.3%
1878 3	25	12	0	4	8	66.7%
1880 1	25	17	0	8	9	52.9%
1882 2	26	18	0	4	14	77.8%
1884 3	25	18	1	2	15	83.3%
1886 1	25	18	2	4	12	66.7%
1888 2	26	23	1	1	21	91.3%
1890 3	29	21	0	5	16	76.2%
1892 1	29	24	1	4	19	79.2%
1894 2	30	22	0	8	14	63.6%
1896 3	30	18	0	6	12	66.7%
1898 1	30	24	2	5	17	70.8%
1900 2	30	24	2	7	15	62.5%
1902 3	30	21	1	3	17	81.0%
1904 1	30	20	0	1	19	95.0%
1906 2	30	24	0	4	20	83.3%

See footnotes and sources at end of table.

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TABLE 1. Senate Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1988
(Continued)

Election year/class ¹	Class size ²	Total who ran for reelection ³	Not re- nominated	Defeated in general election ⁴	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁵
1908 3	31	27	3	6	18	66.7%
1910 1	30	23	2	8	13	56.5%
1912 2	32	24	4	6	14	58.3%
1914 3	32	24	2	0	22	91.7%
1916 1	32	29	4	9	16	55.2%
1918 2	32	29	4	5	20	68.9%
1920 3	32	30	4	8	18	60.0%
1922 1	32	29	3	10	16	55.2%
1924 2	32	30	5	5	20	66.7%
1926 3	32	33	4	8	21	63.6%
1928 1	32	32	2	5	25	78.1%
1930 2	32	30	5	8	17	56.7%
1932 3	32	32	5	9	18	56.2%
1934 1	32	32	2	8	22	68.8%
1936 2	32	27	1	5	21	77.8%
1938 3	32	31	4	5	22	71.0%
1940 1	32	32	5	3	24	75.0%
1942 2	32	33	4	7	22	66.7%
1944 3	32	30	5	4	21	70.0%

See footnotes and sources at end of table.

TABLE 1. Senate Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1988
(Continued)

Election year/class ¹	Class size ²	Total who ran for reelection ³	Not re- nominated	Defeated in general election ⁴	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁵
1946 1	32	29	6	7	16	55.2%
1948 2	32	25	2	8	15	60.0%
1950 3	32	32	5	5	22	68.8%
1952 1	32	31	2	9	20	64.5%
1954 2	32	32	2	6	24	75.0%
1956 3	32	29	0	4	25	86.2%
1958 1	32	28	0	10	18	64.3%
1960 2	33	29	0	1	28	96.6%
1962 3	34	35	1	5	29	82.9%
1964 1	33	33	1	4	28	84.8%
1966 2	33	32	3	1	28	87.5%
1968 3	34	28	4	4	20	71.4%
1970 1	33	31	1	6	24	77.4%
1972 2	33	27	2	5	20	74.1%
1974 3	34	27	2	2	23	85.2%
1976 1	33	25	0	9	16	64.0%
1978 2	33	25	3	7	15	60.0%
1980 3	34	29	4	9	16	55.2%
1982 1	33	30	0	2	28	93.3%
1984 2	33	29	0	3	26	89.7%

See footnotes and sources at end of table.

TABLE 1. Senate Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1988
(Continued)

Election year/class ¹	Class size ²	Total who ran for reelection ³	Not re- nominated	Defeated in general election ⁴	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁵
1986 3	34	28	0	7	21	75.0%
1988 1	33	27	0	4	23	85.2%
TOTAL		1,929	121	395	1,417	73.5%

¹ Prior to 1914 Senators were elected by State legislatures. Many legislatures met infrequently, some biennially and a few less often than every two years. Thus, many States held elections in odd years as well as even years. Odd-year elections were combined with the next highest even-year election in this report. (For example, elections held in 1885 were combined with those held in 1886 in this report.)

² The class size is the number of Senate seats that are normally up for election in an election year (approximately one-third of the Senate).

³ The total running-for-reelection category includes those Members who sought renomination, but who were not renominated. There may be more Members running than there are in the class size because of special elections.

⁴ Prior to 1914, the elections were held in the State legislatures.

⁵ For information about the denominators used in these calculations see the methodology section.

Sources:

Prior to 1914, all the data were obtained from the *Roster of United States Congressional Office-holders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1988 Merged Data*. ("The Roster file"). The data were originally collected by Carroll McKibbin and the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. The Roster file is a machine readable computer data tape. The table was compiled from variables 44 and 83 of the Roster file.

For the period from 1914 to 1988, data were obtained from: Memorandums prepared upon request by: James Saylor. *Members of the House and Senate Who Lost Their Seats for Reasons Other Than Death (1952-1962)*. February 16, 1962. David C. Huckabee. *Requested Data On Incumbency in Congress 1956-1972*. April 2, 1973; Joseph E. Cantor. *Incidence of Renomination and Reelection of Incumbent U.S. Senators: 1914-1952*. March 17, 1975. Frederick J. Augustyn, Jr. *United States Senate Elections, 1950-1984—Statistics on the Re-election of Incumbents*. November 13, 1984. Most data after 1952 were obtained from: Ornstein, Norman J., Thomas E. Mann, and Michael J. Malbin. *Vital Statistics on Congress, 1989-1990*. Washington. Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1990, p. 57.

TABLE 2. Senate Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1986
(Data In Three-Class Groups)

Election years ¹	Total who ran for reelection ³	Not re- nominated	Defeated in general election ⁴	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁵
1790-1794	18	0	5	13	72.2%
1796-1800	22	1	1	20	90.9%
1802-1806	21	0	3	18	85.7%
1808-1812	23	0	2	21	91.3%
1814-1818	20	0	3	17	85.0%
1820-1824	32	0	6	26	81.3%
1826-1830	30	0	5	25	83.3%
1832-1836	37	0	7	30	81.1%
1838-1842	29	0	4	25	86.2%
1844-1848	35	2	7	26	74.3%
1850-1854	31	0	9	22	71.0%
1856-1860	37	1	8	28	75.7%
1862-1866	33	0	8	25	75.8%
1868-1872	37	1	12	24	64.9%
1874-1878	34	0	12	22	64.7%
1880-1884	53	1	14	38	71.7%
1886-1890	62	3	10	49	79.0%
1892-1896	64	1	18	45	70.3%
1898-1902	69	5	15	49	71.0%

See footnotes and sources at end of Table 1.

**TABLE 2. Senate Incumbents Reelected, Not Renominated, Or Defeated: 1790-1986
(Data In Three Class Groups)--Continued**

Election years ¹	Total who ran for reelection ³	Not re- nominated	Defeated in general election ⁴	Won reelection	Percent winning reelection ⁵
1904-1908	71	3	11	57	80.3%
1910-1914	71	8	14	49	69.0%
1916-1920	88	12	22	54	61.4%
1922-1926	92	12	23	57	62.0%
1928-1932	94	12	22	60	63.8%
1934-1938	90	7	18	65	72.2%
1940-1944	95	14	14	67	70.5%
1946-1950	86	13	20	53	61.6%
1952-1956	92	4	19	69	75.0%
1958-1962	92	1	16	75	81.5%
1964-1968	93	8	9	76	81.7%
1970-1974	85	5	13	67	78.8%
1976-1980	79	7	25	47	59.5%
1982-1986	87	0	12	75	86.2%

See footnotes and sources at end of Table 1.

METHODOLOGY

The pre-1914 portion of tables 1 and 2 were prepared on the Library of Congress mainframe computer using SAS, the Statistical Analysis System. As previously described, the Roster file (*Roster of United States Congressional Officeholders and Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1988 Merged Data*) was used for this portion of the table. For the period after 1914 to 1952 CRS sources were used. After 1952, when sources disagreed with the information in the *Vital Statistics on Congress, 1989-1990 Edition*, a consensus of source information was used, except when it appeared that one source or another had captured data that the others had missed.

The pre-1914 information was created using Roster file variables number 44 (Termination of Service) and 83 (Why left this Congress.) The category "Member served in the next Congress in the same chamber" in variable 44 was used as a "filter" for the category "won reelection or served in next Congress" in variable 83. This was necessary because experimentation with the data set revealed that using variable 83 alone overstated the number of Members who won reelection or served in the next Congress because of apparent miscoding. Variable 83, the primary source of data for this report, included the following categories:

00. Won reelection or served in next Congress
01. Either defeated in general election, unseated, lost contested election, or election declared void
02. Defeated in primary
03. Died in office
04. Did not seek reelection, retired, or was not a candidate for renomination
05. Sought or accepted other office
06. Accepted Federal office
07. Went to Senate
08. Resigned, withdrew, or expelled
09. Inappropriate, still serving in Congress
10. Unknown

The categories in the table were created as follows:

Total who ran for reelection=values 0, 1, or 2.
 Not renominated=value 2.
 Defeated in general election=value 1.
 Won reelection=value 0.
 Percent winning reelection=(total reelected/ran for reelection)
 times 100.

The program that created the pre-1914 data in Tables 1 and 2 is a modified version of the SAS program reproduced in *Reelection Rates of House*

Incumbents 1790-1988, CRS report number 89-173 Gov. Readers who wish to examine this program should consult the House report. The graphics in this report were produced using SuperCalc 5.

A special note is needed about some of the terms used in the report and especially the divisors used to compute the various percentages used in the tables and graphs. The "percent winning election" data are computed by dividing the number of incumbent Members who were reelected in a given Congress by the total who ran for reelection. In the pre-1914 period before direct election, Senators were elected during State legislative sessions. Since State legislatures did not necessarily meet at the same times, and since some States were without one or more Senators for many months (or even years) because the legislatures could not agree on choosing a candidate, it was not possible to compute a proportion of the class reelected in this report (similar to the proportion of the House that was reelected in the House version of this report). For further information about the pre-1914 period the reader may wish to consult Senator Robert Byrd's *The Senate 1789-1989*, Chapter 21 "The Direct Election of Senators, 1913." ¹⁰

¹⁰ Byrd, Robert C. *The Senate 1799-1989: Addresses on the History of the United States Senate. Volume One*. Washington. U.S. Govt. Print. Off. 1988. For a detailed history of the 19th century Senate electoral history consult, Haynes, George H. *The Election of Senators*. New York. Henry Holt and Company. 1906.



Congressional Research Service • The Library of Congress • Washington, D.C. 20540

Congressional Tenure: Proposals to Limit Congressional Terms IP 439C

For over 200 years the question of whether there should be a limit on the tenure of Members of Congress has been debated. Interest in this issue has recently resurfaced, and opponents and proponents alike are weighing the value of experience and the right of the people to determine who serves, against the merit of new ideas and curtailment of incumbents' perceived electoral advantages. This Info Pack contains background information on this issue.

Members of Congress who want further information on this topic may contact CRS at 7-5700. Additional CRS Reports may be identified by looking in the current *Guide to CRS Products* (for congressional use only) under "Congress--Members" and in the latest *Update* under "Government and Politics."

Constituents may find additional information on this topic in a local library through the use of *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*, Public Affairs Information Service *Bulletin* (PAIS), and various newspaper indexes.

We hope this information will be helpful.

Congressional Reference
Division

CONGRESS

Limiting Terms on Capitol Hill

Efforts inch ahead to cut interests by capping service; one senator says he'll retire voluntarily

By John Dillin

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON

A BRAHAM LINCOLN served two years in Congress, and then went home to resume his law practice in Illinois. But modern-day lawmakers look at Congress as a job-for-life. They build large staffs, accumulate campaign war chests, and cultivate influential supporters.

Reformers contend that it is time to shake up this cozy system on Capitol Hill, where House districts have become personal fiefdoms, and where Senate seats stay in one politician's control for 20, 30, or even 40 years.

A newly formed group, Americans to Limit Congressional Terms (ALCT), is calling for a constitutional amendment that would cap House and Senate service at a total of 12 years.

Demands for rotation-in-office on Capitol Hill are growing. A poll by the Gallup Organization found last month that 70 percent of Americans would support limits on the time anyone could serve in Congress.

"I firmly believe that no single reform would do more good than to limit the terms," says Sen. Gordon Humphrey (R) of New Hampshire.

To back up his words, Senator Humphrey is resigning next January after serving 12 years. An aide says: "He made that promise when he first ran for office. He believes in citizen-legislators."

Another reformer, Rep. Craig James (R) of Florida, complains that "career politicians" have taken over Capitol Hill in place of the citizen-legislators like Mr. Lincoln in the 19th Century.

Congressman James wants to limit House members to just eight years, while allowing senators 12 years in office. Opponents of term limitation say it would badly undercut Washington, where expertise on subjects like defense, social policy, and legal affairs is much needed in Congress.

A term-limiting amendment, for example, would eventually displace Capitol Hill luminaries like Sam Nunn (D) of Georgia,

'The special interests would go broke trying to buy off Congress if terms were limited.'

— David Keating

who has served 18 years in the Senate; Thomas Foley (D) of Washington, who has served in the House for 25 years; and Robert Dole (R) of Kansas, who has been a senator for 21 years.

Yet proponents still favor fresh faces, new ideas, and frequent rotation in office. Leaders like Senator Nunn, Speaker Foley, and Senator Dole can find other places to serve, they contend.

Former Rep. Jim Coyne (R) of Pennsylvania, co-chairman of ALCT, says: "We must not permit the establishment in this country of a separate governing class. Yet

that may be what we are witnessing."

Humphrey observes that lifetime politicians are now common because of campaign rules that make it almost impossible to beat incumbents. In the 1988 elections, 98.5 percent of all House members up for reelection won their races. The senator says members of Congress "have erected a fortress that is all but impossible for challengers to storm." Members use the franking privilege [free mail], special-interest money, and large staffs to shut out opponents.

Congressman James says: "Election to Congress was never designed to be a lifetime appointment. . . . Our tenure was to be relatively brief to allow the best and brightest among us the opportunity to share their ideas and expertise."

James charges that Congress has "lost touch with the people" and become "inhabited by career politicians." They have "legislated our nation deeper and deeper into a bureaucratic black hole, burdened by trillions of dollars of debt, suffocating government regulations, and paralyzing policies."

One supporter of an amendment, David Keating, executive vice president of the National Taxpayers Union, says rapid turnover in Congress would be an effective protection against special-interest money.

"Today the special interests can just buy a few key congressmen and control things. But this amendment would mean throwing the deck into the air more

often," Mr. Keating says. "The special interests would go broke trying to buy off Congress if terms were limited. They couldn't keep pace with all the open seats. That's why they are so upset about this idea. They already bought and paid for this Congress."

ALCT's proposed amendment has drawn its primary support from outside the Washington Beltway. ALCT's advisory board includes 118 state legislators, 34 former members of Congress, but only two current members of Congress. Mr. Coyne says ALCT will urge "passage of resolutions by at least 34 state legislatures, ratification by vote of Congress, and/or the calling of a constitutional convention."

Most of the impetus for change will have to come from the states, members of ALCT concede, for Congress shows little enthusiasm for limits on terms.

Congress was less fixed in its ways in Lincoln's day, however. In Lincoln's Illinois district, so many young politicians wanted to go to Washington that the local Whig Party, to which Lincoln belonged, used a "turn about" system that allowed each man one term in the House.

Lincoln got his turn in 1846. He worked hard in Congress, but so far as local voters were concerned, he made one unforgivable mistake: He opposed the Mexican War. Illinois voters were so incensed with Lincoln that when it was time for the next "turn about," the Whig candidate, Stephen Logan, was whipped by the Democrats.

Drive to Restrict Tenure in Congress to 12 Years Is Pressed in Capital and One-Third of the States

By DAVID SHRIBMAN

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
WASHINGTON—More than two centuries ago, when the early U.S. government lumbered along under the creaky Articles of Confederation, lawmakers labored under rigid term restrictions. So when his three years were up, a young legislator named James Madison left his seat in the Continental Congress and moved back to rural Virginia.

The debate that has flickered throughout U.S. politics since the days when the Articles of Confederation sent Mr. Madison packing is flaring once again. The 1988 Republican Party platform favored congressional term limitations, and today efforts to amend the Constitution to restrict tenure in Congress to 12 years are being pressed here in the capital, with parallel drives under way in at least a third of the states.

"The farther away from Washington, D.C., you get," says Democratic state Rep. Jim Hanson of Idaho, "the more frustrated you get with Congress."

The movement, which over the years has attracted the support of such figures as Abraham Lincoln, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy, is being stoked by worries that the contemporary Congress is in danger of becoming a permanent force in Washington, its members virtually immune to challenge. "The public," argues House GOP Whip Newt Gingrich of Georgia, "will not accept a permanent, self-elected Congress."

Advocates Mostly Republican

Many of the foot soldiers in this army are Republicans, who tend to have a natural suspicion of permanent government and who—not so coincidentally, Democrats charge—would be the principal beneficiaries of a system that wouldn't permit entrenched lawmakers to serve more than six two-year terms in the House and two six-year terms in the Senate.

But the sentiment that drives this movement is shared by some Democrats, too. A third of the Senate co-sponsors of the idea are Democrats, and so are more than a quarter of the members of the board of Americans to Limit Congressional Terms.

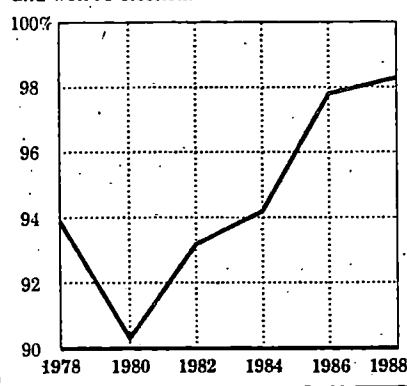
"People are up to the chokepoint with the view that Congress has corrupted itself," says former Democratic Rep. Lud Ashley, who represented his Ohio district for 13 House terms before being defeated in 1980. "There's no real political accountability in Congress. Every advantage goes to the incumbent. This whole movement

bespeaks a frustration that is astounding."

Many of the critics of the effort, including Republican lawmakers, argue that 12-year service limitations would only strengthen lobbyists, who aren't accountable to voters, and increase the power of department and agency officials, who often serve for life. "This would only make the bureaucracy all the more powerful," says Republican Sen. Rudy Boschwitz of Minnesota.

Election Returns

Percentage of House members who sought and won re-election:



These lawmakers argue, moreover, that the complexity of issues involved in a trillion-dollar enterprise like the federal government demands experience and expertise. "I've only been here three years, but as I see the complexity of what Congress is expected to handle, the presence of a mix of experience levels here is very important," says Democratic Sen. Kent Conrad of North Dakota. "People who are new to this just don't have the background and experience to ask the questions that let us play our oversight role."

The leaders of the term-limitation effort, which is fueled by an organization operating out of the office of Republican political consultant Eddie Mahe, want to impose a major change on Congress and to alter the perspectives of lawmakers.

"I believe that if we knew on Day One that we couldn't parlay this into a career, no matter how many carloads of pork we shipped home, there would be a fundamental change in attitudes," says GOP Sen. Gordon Humphrey, who is leaving the Senate after two terms and is contemplating a campaign for state senate in his hometown

of Chichester, N.H. "This whole idea of careerism would dissipate—and no single reform would do more good than that."

Congress in its early years had no such problem. Although efforts to impose term limitations popped up from time to time in the early republic, the custom that lawmakers should only serve four years in the House and six in the Senate generally prevailed until the Civil War era. Abraham Lincoln, for example, served a single term in the House and then moved back to Illinois, not to return to Washington until he was elected president.

What the Public Wanted

Since then, however, the average tenure in Congress has increased, in part because of the mounting role seniority has played in the institution's internal politics. In fact, according to Sula Richardson, a Library of Congress analyst, "public and congressional sentiment leaned toward encouraging rather than discouraging longevity in Congress."

Today House members have served an average of nearly a dozen years, with 14 of them serving at least since January 1959. Rep. Jamie Whitten (D., Miss.), the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, joined the House in November 1941. Sen. Strom Thurmond (R., S.C.) joined the Senate in 1954 and at age 87 is seeking another six-year term this November.

Many skeptics contend limiting lawmakers' terms would undercut the fundamentals of democracy. "How is it democratic to say that someone can't return a lawmaker if they like him and want him there for more than 12 years?" asks Charles Jones, a University of Wisconsin political scientist who has studied the issue. "This whole thing is a guess that some people have about a stalemate or a political situation that they don't like. They don't know this is the cause. This is a solution in search of a problem."

Meanwhile, the debate is taking on a sharper partisan edge. Strategists at the Democratic National Committee are contemplating writing a letter to incumbent senior Republican lawmakers asking them if they endorse this proposal.

"The Republicans can't win in the current set of rules, so they want to change them in the middle of the game," says Michael McCurry, the DNC's spokesman. "There's already a mechanism in place for voters to turn out the politicians they don't want in office. They just vote against them."

Michael Kinsley

In Office Too Long?

Does the public think that incumbent members of Congress get reelected too easily and serve too long? Supporters of a constitutional amendment that would restrict U.S. representatives and senators to 12 years of service point to a recent Gallup poll indicating that 70 percent of Americans favor limits on congressional tenure. Without irony, they also point with alarm to the fact that 98 percent of incumbents got reelected in 1988, often by large margins, including many whose tenures exceeded 12 years. The poll results they acclaim as *vox populi*. The actual election results they deride as illustrating the problem.

The late Ferdinand Marcos once canceled a presidential election in the Philippines on the grounds that an opinion poll indicated that the people didn't want one. At the time I thought that was the ultimate exercise in opinion-poll democracy. But this is even better: citing a poll both as superior to past elections and as a reason to foreclose future ones.

Americans to Limit Congressional Terms is one of those prefab interest groups that can now be put together overnight with stationery, fancy PR folder, "National Advisory Board" of distinguished has-beens and so on. It is run out of a Republican political consultant's office and, despite the support of a few token Democrats, is basically an expression of Republican frustration at the Democratic dominance of Congress over the past few decades. Many people seem to believe that whereas the apparent Republican lock on the White House is a mandate, the apparent Democratic lock on Congress is a scandal.

It wasn't long ago that Republicans were talking a lot about repealing the 22nd Amendment (1951), which limits presidents to two

"The explanation is that the voters are lazy hypocrites."

terms. That one was also a Republican creation—an expression of frustration at the long tenure of FDR. In the glorious afternoon of the Reagan years, Republicans came to regret it. Their argument for repeal—made by Ronald Reagan himself—is the same one made by opponents of congressional term limits: in a democracy, people should be able to vote for whomever they want.

The mere fact that a term limit would make the American political system less democratic is not a definitive argument against it. Our constitutional system is full of hedges against democracy, starting with the notion of representative democracy itself: the will of the people expressing itself through elected representatives, not directly. The cumbersome process for amending the Constitution is another example. As long as the system itself rests on the consent of the governed, which ours does, there is nothing wrong with different aspects of it keeping democracy on a longer or shorter string.

Furthermore, even the basic idea of democracy doesn't necessarily require that people be allowed to send whomever they want to Congress. Members of Congress make decisions affecting the whole country, not just their own districts. If the citizens of Washington really want to reelect Marion Barry as mayor, you

might conclude that that's their business. If the citizens of South Carolina want to send Strom Thurmond back to the Senate for the 150th time, you might be tempted to say, "Wait a minute. That's my business, too."

But the term limitation idea is anti-democratic in more than the mechanistic sense. At bottom, it is based on the idea that elections are inherently corrupting and the less our leaders have to do with them—raising money, campaigning, bending to interest groups—the better. Taking the notion at its most high-minded, rather than as a mere partisan ploy, it is reminiscent of the fad that swept through Washington in the late 1970s, at the time of Jimmy Carter's malaise, for a six-year, nonrenewable presidential term. The concept was the same: we need politicians who don't care about politics.

What we need instead, I think, is citizens who care more about politics. It does seem odd, at first blush, that a majority of Americans reports itself to pollsters as disgusted with Congress and eager to rejigger the Constitution to prevent incumbents from being reelected, then that same majority goes to the polls and votes overwhelmingly to reelect the incumbents. The explanation is that the voters are lazy hypocrites. And on this, as on more important subjects such as federal spending (where everyone is against it in the abstract and for it in the particular), the politicians are pandering to voters' hypocrisy and thereby encourage it.

Despite all the advantages of incumbency, it is still just as easy to vote against the incumbent as to vote for him, if you care enough. The Nicaraguans just gave us an inspiring demonstration. If, as the term-limiters say, congressional seats have become "personal fiefdoms," it is not because voters have been denied the freedom to vote the bastards out, but because they can't be bothered. Americans don't need and don't deserve another crutch for democracy, another way to express disdain for politics. They've got the Congress they voted for, and if they don't like it, they know what they can do about it.

CRS Report for Congress

Congressional Tenure: A Review of Efforts To Limit House and Senate Service

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CONGRESSIONAL TENURE: A REVIEW OF EFFORTS TO LIMIT HOUSE AND SENATE SERVICE

SUMMARY

The Constitution provides for two-year terms for Members of the House of Representatives and six-year terms for Members of the Senate. There is no limit on the number of terms a Member may serve.

The 200-year old debate on whether or not congressional tenure should be limited has resurfaced recently, and it continues to be a subject of divided sentiment. Proponents argue that limitation would curtail incumbents' perceived electoral advantages (e.g., mail privileges, media attention, and travel allowance), safeguard against abuse of power and stagnation that occasionally may occur when Members remain in office too long, and assure greater rotation in office. Opponents rebut that a constitutional amendment limiting congressional tenure would infringe upon the fundamental right of the people to determine who serves, how long he or she serves, and would senselessly force many competent and experienced Members out of office prematurely. Presently, the President is the only national elected official whose term is limited.

The most recent resurgence of interest in term limitation began during the mid-1970s, relative to efforts to increase the effectiveness and accountability of Congress. But the prospect for passage of such a proposal appears slim. Historically, when the average service in Congress has been short (e.g., 1787 to the mid-1860s), opponents have contended that a constitutional amendment to limit terms is unnecessary. When service in Congress has averaged a somewhat longer period (e.g., 1957-71), opponents have argued that an amendment to limit tenure is undesirable, because their constituents continue to return incumbents to office.

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CONGRESSIONAL TENURE: AN OVERVIEW OF EFFORTS TO LIMIT HOUSE AND SENATE SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

The question of whether there should be a limit on the tenure of Members of Congress has been debated since the time of the Continental Congress of 1777. From then to the present, opponents and proponents have weighed the "relative value of seasoned experience" against the "fresh insights from a greater number of new legislators".¹

Historically, the debate on congressional terms has tended to focus more on the House term and its length than on the Senate term or on limiting service in the House and Senate. Hence, Senate terms have not been the subject of as many proposals for change as have House terms. Nor have there been as many proposals to limit tenure (in the House and Senate) as there have been to lengthen the House term. However, in recent years, many of the proposals to lengthen the House term have also placed a limit on the number of terms which House and Senate Members may serve. Moreover, an increasing number of these would simply limit the number of terms (or years), without changing the length of the term in either House. Consequently, in recent years the primary issue has shifted from length of term(s) to length of service.

The Term/Tenure Distinction

Some sources use the terms *congressional term* and *congressional tenure* interchangeably; others draw a technical distinction between the two. This distinction may be described as follows: *House or Senate term* refers to the period of time set forth in the Constitution for the office of Representative in the U.S. House of Representatives (i.e., two years) and for the Office of Senator in the U.S. Senate (i.e., six years). *House or Senate tenure* refers to the length of service of an individual who holds the Federal office of Representative or Senator.

Based upon this distinction, resolutions to alter the House or Senate *term* propose to change (i.e., lengthen or shorten) the two-year term for House Members or the six-year term for Senate Members; resolutions to alter House or Senate *tenure* propose to change the length of time which Members may serve. House or Senate *tenure* could be altered by limiting the number of terms or years that Members are permitted to serve (no such limit on service

¹ Bayh, Birch. Opening Statement, Chairman, Subcommittee on the Constitution. In: U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. Subcommittee on the Constitution. *Congressional Tenure*. Hearings, 95th Cong., 2d Sess. Washington, U.S. Gov. Print. Off., 1978. p. 2.

exists now) or by changing the length of the terms because a longer (or shorter) term would provide the opportunity for longer (or shorter) service. Thus, proposals to alter the terms of office in the House and Senate would also alter House and Senate tenure. But proposals to alter House or Senate tenure may or may not change the terms of office.

Because this distinction is not made in some sources (particularly in earlier years) and because keeping the distinction does not detract from the substance of this report, it is not made here. As a result, resolutions to alter the term and resolutions to alter tenure are discussed and categorized together.

ACTIVITY PRIOR TO THE FOUNDING OF THE REPUBLIC

The Continental and Confederation Congresses

Delegates to the First and Second Continental Congresses (1774-1775) were chosen by extra-legal committees of correspondence; they had no fixed term of office. Thereafter, however, delegates to the Confederation Congresses were elected annually by the State legislatures and, while most were usually reelected, they were limited to serving three years in any six-year period.² This limitation was the result of the adoption of a proposal by John Dickinson that "no person shall be capable of being a delegate for more than three years in any term of six years."³ The annual appointments/elections and limited service were seen as mechanisms to insure against a perpetual "ruling class" of legislators who might thus become unresponsive to their constituents' needs.

Having mandated turnover, the Continental Congress, in 1784, appointed a Committee on Qualifications⁴ "to make an inventory of its [the Congress'] present stock of members to determine . . . whether any members were tarrying beyond their appointed terms".⁵ The Committee found at least one member, Samuel Osgood of Massachusetts, "incapable of being a Delegate in

² Jones, Charles O. *Every Second Year; Congressional Behavior and the Two-Year Term*. Washington, Brookings Institution, 1967. p. 2-3.

³ Ibid.

⁴ When the Committee submitted its report on May 13, 1784, its members were: Roger Sherman, John Beatty, Jeremiah Townley Chase, Hugh Williamson and Elbridge Gerry.

⁵ Burnett, Edmund Cody. *The Continental Congress*. New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 1964. p. 605.

Congress after the first day of March, 1784, he having been a Delegate three years since the ratification of the Articles of Confederation. . . .⁶ Subsequently, Mr. Osgood withdrew from the House.⁷

The Constitutional Convention

In 1787, when the Constitutional Convention met at Philadelphia, debate focused on the length of the House and Senate terms, and not the length of service. However, a form of limit on service was contemplated by some of the delegates. Clauses in the fourth and fifth resolutions of the "Virginia Plan" provided that House and Senate Members would be "incapable of reelection" for a period of time "after the expiration of their terms of service."⁸ The period of ineligibility was unspecified in the plan as introduced (by Edmund Randolph of Virginia on May 29, 1787). But when the 15 resolutions which constituted the Virginia Plan were considered in Committee of the Whole, the clauses limiting service were indefinitely postponed, having been among those characterized "as entering too much into detail for general propositions"⁹. No further action on the limitation issue was taken, and no limit was placed on Members' length of service.

⁶ The Committee's *Report*, in the writing of Roger Sherman, is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 23, Folio 247.

Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789. Edited from the original records in the Library of Congress by Gaillard Hunt. v. 27, Jan. 1-May 10, 1784. Wash, D.C., Govt. Print. Off., 1928. p.377-379.

⁷ The service of at least two additional Members, apparently from Rhode Island, was called into question by the Committee, but it is unclear from sources consulted whether the reason for the Committee's action was that the Members had served more than three years or that they were serving beyond the year for which they had most recently been elected. See: Jones, *Every Second Year*, p. 3 (footnote 3); American Enterprise Institute (AEI). *Limiting Presidential and Congressional Terms*. 1979. p. 5-6; and *Journals of the Continental Congress*, v. 27, p. 377-379. [Note that the AEI report also refers to "two delegates from Delaware" who were "not eligible to serve after February 1." But again, the reason for their ineligibility is unclear.]

⁸ United States. Constitutional Convention (1787). *The Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787, which framed the Constitution of the United States of America*. Reported by James Madison. International ed., Gaillard Hunt and James Brown Scott, editors. Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, Publishers. 1970. p. 24.

⁹ Constitutional Convention, *The Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787*, p. 34.

CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITY

Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

During the First Congress (1789-1791), the limitation issue reappeared as attempts were made to limit service in the House and the Senate. Both proposals were introduced by Rep. Thomas Tucker of South Carolina on August 18, 1789.¹⁰ One measure would have restricted to six the number of years in succession that a Representative could serve during an eight-year period. The other resolution would have reduced the Senator's term to one year and would have restricted him to five consecutive years of service during a six-year period.¹¹ The House did not vote on these proposals.

For nearly the next century and a half, limiting congressional service by constitutional amendment did not appear to be much of an issue, and no such measure came to a vote in Congress.¹² An explanation for the issue's dormancy probably lies in the concept of congressional service as a brief period of civic duty, a philosophy that prevailed through the mid-1860s, when it was customary to serve no more than four years in the House nor six in the Senate, and service in Congress was seen as a temporary duty in route to some other occupation.¹³ As a result, Members may have felt it unnecessary

¹⁰ *Annals of Congress*, v. I, Mar. 3, 1789-Mar. 3, 1791. p. 790.

¹¹ Identification of these measures cannot be made using numbers because during the first few Congresses, bills and resolutions were introduced without numbers to identify them.

¹² There is some discrepancy among secondary sources as to a resolution introduced by Rep. Treloar of Missouri in 1896 and two "similar" resolutions introduced by Rep. Norris of Nebraska in 1904 and 1906. Some sources indicate that the measures proposed an eight-year term for Senators with no eligibility for re-election. The sources do not identify the number of each measure. However, based upon an examination of constitutional amendments introduced in Congress from 1889 to 1926 (arranged, digested and indexed by Charles C. Tansill), the only resolutions providing for eight-year terms for Senators and introduced by Representatives Treloar and Norris in those years were: H.J. Res. 208, H.J. Res. 166 and H.J. Res. 69 respectively. And, an examination of the original documents shows no specific provision in any of these measures which limits the number of terms a Senator may serve.

¹³ Kernell, Samuel. Toward Understanding 19th Century Congressional Careers: Ambition, Competition and Rotation. *American Journal of Political Science*, v. 21, November 1977. p. 669-693.

to limit service with a constitutional amendment, since the idea of limited service was so prevalent.

From the mid-1860s well into the twentieth century, the average length of House service doubled from four to eight years, as a number of interrelated factors made longer congressional service more attractive. A network of standing committees was established; party rules replaced the Speaker's discretion in determining Members' committee advancement, thus augmenting the value of tenure; seniority played an increasing role in the selection of committee chairmen so longevity in office became a primary path to power; expertise, which could arise from longer tenure, became valued and a source of influence; and the Federal Government and, thusly, Members of Congress played increasingly important roles in setting directions for the Nation. These factors helped to transform the philosophy of congressional service from one of a temporary duty to one of a career.¹⁴

As the short service tradition declined, public and congressional sentiment leaned toward encouraging rather than discouraging longevity in Congress; thus dampening interest in and support for constitutional amendments to limit service.

Twentieth Century

Floor Votes

In 1947, during debate on the proposed Twenty-second Amendment which limited the President to two terms, Senator W. Lee O'Daniel (D-Tex.) offered an amendment to limit all elected officials to a single term of six years. But the only vote in favor was cast by the Senator himself, and the proposal was defeated by a vote of 82 to 1.¹⁵ No specific proposal limiting congressional tenure has ever come to vote on the House floor.

Proposed Legislation

1950s—Early 1970s

During the late 1950s and the 1960s, the limitation issue began to gain momentum, and a number of proposals to limit the number of congressional

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 669-693. A review of Members who have served 20 and 30 or more years shows that 93 percent of the former and 95 percent of the latter did so after 1900.

¹⁵ *Congressional Record*, v. 93, March 12, 1947. p. 1963.

terms were introduced. Representative Thomas Curtis (R-Mo.) introduced several constitutional amendments to limit Senators to two terms of six years each and Representatives to six terms of two years each. But the debate on congressional terms continued to focus on length of terms and the vast majority of proposals that were introduced dealt with length and not limitation.

The Mid-1970s: Limitation Idea to the Forefront

The 1970s were a decade of heightened interest in and activity related to increasing the effectiveness and accountability of Congress. Perhaps relatedly, proposals to limit congressional service began to appear in the hopper. During the 94th Congress (1975-1976), there was a significant change in legislation on congressional terms, with a total of 19 resolutions introduced to alter them. While, as in virtually every previous Congress, there were more resolutions introduced to lengthen the term (11) than solely to limit tenure (8), the number of the latter proposals more than doubled from any previous Congress. Moreover, because four of the eleven measures to lengthen the House term included limitation provisions, a majority of proposals to alter the House term (12) called for a limitation of House tenure in one manner or another. In addition, a growing number of statements of Senators, Representatives, State officials, news editors and reporters, and political scientists began to appear in support of (and in opposition to) limiting congressional terms. The issue of duration of congressional service thus appeared to be in transition from concern over length of terms to length of service.

The interest in limiting congressional tenure grew in the 95th Congress (1977-1978), in which a record 29 proposals were introduced to alter congressional terms of office. Of these, six would have lengthened the House term without placing any limit on the number of terms served; eight would have both lengthened and limited the term.

The number of proposals to alter congressional tenure for each Congress beginning with the 94th Congress is provided in the table below. Note that during the 97th Congress (1981-1982), all of the proposals to alter congressional tenure included some sort of limitation provision; there were no proposals introduced solely to lengthen terms. Note also that the current Congress is proving to have interest in tenure, with 14 measures introduced up to the August recess.¹⁶

¹⁶ So far, 10 of the 14 proposals introduced during the current Congress limit tenure. Information on the 10 proposals (including their sponsors and limitation provisions) is summarized in the appendix to this report.

Table 1. Proposals to Alter Congressional Tenure¹

Congress	Number of Proposals			Total
	Lengthen	Limit	Lengthen and Limit	
94th (1975-76)	7	8	4	19
95th (1977-78)	6	12	11	29
96th (1979-80)	4	10	8	22
97th (1981-82)	0	11	5	16
98th (1983-84)	4	10	6	20
99th (1985-86)	3	6	5	14
100th (1987-88)	3	5	2	10
101st (1989-90) ²	4	7	3	14
Total	31	69	44	144

¹ Excludes resolutions which change the commencement of term.

² Data current through August 4, 1989.

Hearings

On March 14 and 16, 1978, the Senate Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution held "the first hearings in either House to focus specifically on proposals advocating legislative term limitations".¹⁷ Several Members of Congress and scholars submitted statements or testified. In general, the Members who testified supported limiting congressional terms by constitutional amendment, while most of the academicians were opposed to this.

About a year later, on July 26, 1979, the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments held hearings on S.J. Res. 34, a proposal to

¹⁷ Opening Statement of the Honorable Dennis DeConcini, Senator from Arizona. In: U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. Subcommittee on the Constitution. *Congressional Tenure*. Hearings, 95th Congress, 2d Session. Hearings held on March 14 and 16, 1978. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1978. p. 4.

extend the House term to four years, without placing any limit on the number of terms served. But the limitation issue surfaced when some of the witnesses discussed it as part of their testimony.¹⁸

EXECUTIVE BRANCH SUPPORT

At least four Presidents (Lincoln, Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy) and one Vice President (Quayle) have, at some point in their careers, proposed or supported limiting congressional tenure, or given some indication of their support for higher turnover in Congress.

Abraham Lincoln, while campaigning to represent the 7th Congressional District of Illinois (in the U.S. House of Representatives) expressed his support of the commonly held view of that time—that membership turnover was desirable. In a letter to N.J. Rockwell, dated January 21, 1846, Lincoln wrote:

You perhaps know that General Hardin and I have a contest for the Whig nomination for Congress for this district. He has had a turn and my argument is "Turn about is fair play." I shall be pleased if this strikes you as a sufficient argument.¹⁹

In 1951, President Harry S. Truman proposed a twelve-year limit on service in each House of Congress. The proposal was viewed by many as an attack on the seniority system, and it stirred much controversy. No congressional action was taken. Of possible related interest, that same year, the Twenty-Second Amendment, which limited the President to two terms, was ratified.

In 1963, former President Dwight D. Eisenhower advocated a limit of twelve years service for Congress stating "What is good for the President might very well be good for Congress."²⁰ (Eisenhower was referring to the Twenty-second Amendment, which limits the President to two terms).

¹⁸ See for example, the statements of Congressmen Elwood H. Hillis and Dan Quayle In: U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. Subcommittee on the Constitution. *Four-Year U.S. House of Representatives Terms*. Hearings, 96th Congress, 1st Sess., Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1979. p. 39-40.

¹⁹ Nicolay, John C. and John Hay, ed. *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*. New York, Francis D. Tandy Company, 1905. v. 1, p. 280-281.

²⁰ Berman, Daniel M. *In Congress Assembled: the Legislative Process in the National Government*. New York, MacMillan, 1964. p. 135.

A few days later, on January 24, 1963, President Kennedy, when asked to comment on Eisenhower's statement, responded, "It's the sort of proposal I may advance in a post-presidential period, but not right now."²¹

Vice President Dan Quayle, while serving in the U.S. House of Representatives, submitted to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Constitution, a statement in which he supported limiting "Congressmen and Senators to 12 years, the President to one six-year term, and Federal judges to 15 years".²²

SUPPORT FROM OUTSIDE CONGRESS

Foundation for the Study of Congressional Terms

In late October 1977, a newly formed Foundation for the Study of Presidential and Congressional Terms was announced. The Foundation was established under the National Heritage Foundation as a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization. The group's Board of Directors included current and former Members of Congress as well as persons in the private sector (e.g., journalists, educators, political scientists, business executives, and foreign affairs experts). The Foundation, which was located in Washington, was set up to examine several issues, including: (1) whether there should be a limit to the number of years a Member of Congress can serve; (2) whether the terms of House Members should be lengthened to three or four years; (3) whether Members of Congress should be required to resign from office when actively seeking other Federal offices; and (4) whether the President should be limited to one extended (e.g., six-year) term in office. The Foundation conducted public forums, college debates, speeches and essay contests on these issues. Although it did not support any of the specific proposals pending in Congress, it generally endorsed the concept of limiting congressional terms and issued a comprehensive report on Presidential and congressional terms.²³ The Foundation continues to study congressional terms and tenure, among other constitutional issues, under the new name of the Jefferson Foundation.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Quayle, Dan. Statement of U.S. Congressman Dan Quayle of Indiana. In: U.S. Congress, *Four-Year U.S. House of Representatives Terms*. Hearings held on July 26, 1979. p. 39.

²³ Foundation for the Study of Presidential and Congressional Terms. *Constitutional Background and Legislative History of Proposals to Limit the Number of Years Served by Members of the House and Members of the Senate*. Typed Report, Catherine W. Trauernicht, Director of Research. 1977. 24p.

Recent Public Opinion Polls and Surveys

Public sentiment for limitation seems to have gained momentum within the last two decades and, based upon opinion poll results, was at its highest in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

In 1977, sixty percent of the respondents to a Gallup poll said they would favor a law limiting Senators and Representatives to a maximum of 12 years in office.²⁴

Four years later, in 1981, a Gallup Poll taken on limiting Senators to two terms (or a total of 12 years in office) and Representatives to three terms of four years (or twelve years in office) showed similar results. Sixty-one percent said they would favor such a limit for Senators, 32 percent said they would oppose it, and seven percent had no opinion.²⁵ Similarly, 59 percent said they would favor such a limit for Representatives, 32 percent said they would oppose it, and 9 percent had no opinion.²⁶

More recently, polls on whether or not Members' service should be limited have been nearly evenly split. A CBS News/New York Times Poll taken in 1987 on limiting the number of terms House Members may serve showed 47 opposed to a limit; 47 percent favored a limit of between one to four or more terms (6 percent said there should be a limit of one term; 25 percent said two terms; ten percent said three terms; and six percent said four terms or more); the remaining six percent had no opinion.²⁷

Also in 1987, a CBS Poll on limiting Senate terms showed 47 percent opposing, and 48 percent favoring, a limit of some sort. Among the latter, five percent said it should be one term; 27 percent said it should be two terms; 11 percent said three terms; five percent said four or more terms; the remaining five percent had no opinion.²⁸

²⁴ Gallup Poll. [The results are based on interviews with a sample of 1,503 adults during the period Nov. 4-7, 1977.]

²⁵ Gallup Poll. [The results are based on in-person interviews with a sample of 1,545 adults, 18 years and older, during the period April 3-6, 1981.]

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ CBS News/New York Times Poll. [Results of the survey are based on telephone interviews with sample of 1,254 adults, 18 years and older, contacted during the period May 11-14, 1987.]

²⁸ *Ibid.*

GOP Includes Limitation in Platform

In 1988, "for the first time in memory for either party", a proposal for a constitutional amendment to set some unspecified term limit for House and Senate Members was incorporated into the platform of one of the two major parties. The proposal was introduced by former Representative Tommy Hartnett (R-SC), who served in the House from 1981 to 1987.²⁹ As approved by the delegates to the Republican National Convention, the party stated that it: "favor[ed] a constitutional amendment which would place some restriction on the number of consecutive terms a man or woman may serve in the U.S. House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate".³⁰

²⁹ Mann, Judy. Let's Limit Hill Terms. *Washington Post*, Aug. 12, 1988. p. C3. See also: Broder, David. Moderates Rebuffed on GOP Platform. *Washington Post*, August 11, 1988. p. A14.

³⁰ Republican Party Platform. In: U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. The 1988 Presidential Election: The Platforms Presented by the Democratic Party (Dukakis/Bentsen) and the Republican Party (Bush/Quayle), With Cross-Referenced Index. Report 88-617 GOV, compiled by Kevin Coleman. Washington, September 16, 1988. p. R-12.

PRO/CON ARGUMENTS

A number of arguments can be made for and against limitation. They appear in summary form in Table 2, below.

Table 2. Limiting Congressional Tenure: Pros and Cons

Pro	Con
1. Would assure a consistent and systematic means of renewal and rotation of Members.	1. Would infringe upon the right of the constituency to determine who serves and how many times they wish to return a Member to office.
2. Influx of new Members could bring with them new ideas and innovative plans.	2. It is not an exclusive characteristic of new Members that they alone bring new ideas and innovative plans into the system. In addition, what a new Member thinks is a "new idea" may be recognized by a seasoned Member as an "old idea" recycled.
3. Would enhance competition for office and protect against possibly complacent legislators.	3. Would force many experienced, well informed, and competent Members out of office prematurely.

Table 2. Limiting Congressional Tenure: Pros and Cons--Continued

Pro	Con
4. Would guard against the prolonged effects of the seniority system, which though not so strong as it once was, places considerable power in the hands of Members solely because they have been in Congress so long.	4. It is no longer necessary as a check against the seniority system in light of recent congressional reform. Additional internal reform (e.g., restricting the length of time a Member could serve on one committee or be chairmen of a committee), not a constitutional amendment, is needed.
5. Would allow more citizens the opportunity to serve in Congress.	5. The citizenry already has open opportunity to serve in Congress. Rather, Members would lose the opportunity to participate in government even if their constituents wish them to continue serving.
6. Would follow the example set in the limitation on Presidential tenure of the Twenty-second Amendment.	6. The Twenty-second Amendment has been subject to many criticisms, including the creation of a "lame duck" President, reduced in power and possibly less accountable to the American public.
7. Would terminate built-in incumbency advantages (e.g., franking privileges, travel allowance, experienced staff, media access), which appear to make it extremely difficult to defeat them in elections.	7. When incumbents win re-election, it is likely not only because of office-holder advantages, but because their constituents are pleased with the job they are doing. Thus, it is the incumbent's "good record," as well as any so-called built-in advantages that make him/her difficult to defeat.

CONCLUSION

Although there is a resurgence of the limitation issue, opponents appear to be, as they have been in the past, in the majority in Congress. It is problematic whether supporters will be able to convince their colleagues of the merits of these proposals or marshal political support. Given longevity trends, opponents may well argue that a constitutional amendment to limit tenure is undesirable because constituents are obviously pleased with the job their Members are doing. The attention limiting tenure has recently received is viewed by some, however, as an indication that the issue is a reform idea of probable growth.

APPENDIX

PROPOSALS TO LIMIT CONGRESSIONAL TENURE *
101st CONGRESS (as of August 4, 1989)

Resolution	House Limits	Senate Limits
H. Res. 29** Dornan (R-CA) 1/3/89	6 consecutive two-year terms	-----
H.J.R. 15 Jacobs (D-IN) 1/3/89	10 years during any twelve-year period	12 years during any fourteen-year period
H.J.R. 51 Frenzel (R-MN) 1/3/89	10 full two-year terms	3 full six-year terms
H.J.R. 69 Crane (R-IL) 1/4/89	3 full two-year terms	1 full six-year term
H.J.R. 87 Dornan (R-CA) 1/20/89	6 consecutive two-year terms	2 six-year terms
H.J.R. 125 Coble (R-NC) 2/6/89	3 full four-year terms	2 full six-year terms
H.J.R. 201 McCollum (R-FL), et al. 3/15/89	3 full four-year terms;	2 six-year terms
H.J.R. 202 McCollum (R-FL), et al. 3/15/89	6 two-year terms	2 six-year terms

PROPOSALS TO LIMIT CONGRESSIONAL TENURE
101st CONGRESS (as of August 4, 1989)--Continued

Resolution	House Limits	Senate Limits
H.J.R. 239 James (R-FL) 4/13/89	2 full four-year terms	2 full six-year terms
S.J.R. 17 DeConcini (D-AZ) 1/25/89	7 full two-year terms, limited to 15 total years in House	2 full six-year terms, limited to 14 total years in Senate

*Information on provisions is selected and is summarized. Original resolutions (in full text) should be referenced for further detail. Excludes measures which provide for a change in the commencement of term (e.g., from January to November). Most of the resolutions also include a provision which excludes service or elections prior to the enactment of the resolution in determining a Members' tenure.

** H. Res. 29—Constitutional amendments are customarily introduced as joint resolutions rather than as simple resolutions, concurrent resolutions or bills. As a simple resolution, H. Res. 29 is not a proposal to amend the Constitution. Rather, it would amend the Rules (pertaining to service as a House Member) of the U.S. House of Representatives.

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***  THE LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION FILE FOR THE 101ST CONGRESS  ***
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***  CONGRESSIONAL TENURE LEGISLATION  ***
***  IN THE 101ST CONGRESS  ***
***  AS INTRODUCED THROUGH MAY 9, 1990  ***
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LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: H.Res. 29

DATE INTRODUCED: 01/03/89

SPONSOR: Rep Dornan

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A resolution amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to provide certain qualifications pertaining to service as a Member, and for other purposes.

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:

House Rules

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Amends the Rules of the House of Representatives to limit Members to six consecutive terms of office.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: H.J.Res. 15

DATE INTRODUCED: 01/03/89

SPONSOR: Rep Jacobs

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to limit service by Representatives, Senators, and Federal judges.

COSPONSOR(S): (date of cosponsorship follows name)
Rep Holloway, 03/14/90

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:
House Judiciary

STATUS OF BILL-REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:

Mar 27, 89 Referred to Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights.

Jan 3, 89 Referred to House Committee on The Judiciary.

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Constitutional Amendment - Prohibits any person from serving:
(1) as a Representative for more than ten years in a 12-year period; (2) as a Senator for more than 12 years during any 14-year period; or (3) as a judge of the Supreme Court or an inferior court for more than ten years in a 12-year period.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: H.J.Res. 44

DATE INTRODUCED: 01/03/89

SPONSOR: Rep Emerson

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to provide for four-year terms for Representatives.

COSPONSOR(S): (date of cosponsorship follows name)
Rep Holloway, 06/27/89

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:
House Judiciary

STATUS OF BILL-REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:

Mar 27, 89 Referred to Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights.

Jan 3, 89 Referred to House Committee on The Judiciary.

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Constitutional Amendment - Declares the term of office of a Representative in Congress to be four years. Provides for dividing the House of Representatives into two classes so that each class may be chosen every second year.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: H.J.Res. 51 .

DATE INTRODUCED: 01/03/89

SPONSOR: Rep Frenzel

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to limit the tenure of the office of Senators and Representatives.

COSPONSOR(S): (date of cosponsorship follows name)
Rep Holloway, 03/22/90

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:
House Judiciary

STATUS OF BILL-REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:

Mar 27, 89 Referred to Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights.

Jan 3, 89 Referred to House Committee on The Judiciary.

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Constitutional Amendment - Prohibits a person from being eligible for election or appointment to the office of Senator for more than three full six-year terms. Prohibits a person from being eligible for election to the office of Representative for more than ten full two-year terms.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: H.J.Res. 69

DATE INTRODUCED: 01/04/89

SPONSOR: Rep Crane

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States providing that no person may be elected to the House of Representatives more than three times, and providing that no person may be elected to the Senate more than once.

COSPONSOR(S): (date of cosponsorship follows name)
Rep Holloway, 03/15/90

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:
House Judiciary

STATUS OF BILL-REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:

Mar 27, 89 Referred to Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights.

Jan 4, 89 Referred to House Committee on The Judiciary.

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Constitutional Amendment - Prohibits any person from being elected to the House of Representatives more than three times, or from being elected or appointed to the Senate more than once. Establishes limitations regarding Members holding appointive office.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: H.J.Res. 87

DATE INTRODUCED: 01/20/89

SPONSOR: Rep Dornan

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States limiting the number of consecutive terms members of the United Senate and House of Representatives may serve.

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:

House Judiciary

STATUS OF BILL-REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:

Mar 27, 89 Referred to Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights.

Jan 20, 89 Referred to House Committee on The Judiciary.

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Constitutional Amendment - Limits Members of the House of Representatives to six consecutive terms and Members of the Senate to two consecutive terms.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: H.J.Res. 125

DATE INTRODUCED: 02/06/89

SPONSOR: Rep Coble

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States limiting the terms of offices of Members of Congress and increasing the term of Representatives to four years.

COSPONSOR(S): (date of cosponsorship follows name)

Rep Meyers, 03/08/89, 04/18/89, Rep Bentley, 04/05/89, Rep Bilirakis, 04/05/89, Rep McMillan, 04/05/89, Rep Hefley, 08/04/89, Rep Holloway, 03/13/90

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:

House Judiciary

STATUS OF BILL-REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:

Mar 27, 89 Referred to Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights.

Feb 6, 89 Referred to House Committee on The Judiciary.

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Constitutional Amendment - Declares the term of office of Members of the House of Representatives to be four years. Prohibits persons from being elected to the office of Representative more than three times and to the office of Senator more than twice.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: H.J.Res. 188

DATE INTRODUCED: 03/13/89

SPONSOR: Rep Hansen

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to provide for four-year terms of office for Members of the House of Representatives.

COSPONSOR(S): (date of cosponsorship follows name)

Rep McCollum, 03/16/89, Rep Shumway, 04/18/89, Rep Fazio, 04/18/89, Rep Vucanovich, 05/09/89, Rep Bentley, 06/01/89, Rep Packard, 06/01/89, Rep Holloway, 06/15/89, Rep Mazzoli, 06/27/89, Rep Hefley, 07/20/89

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:

House Judiciary

STATUS OF BILL-REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:

Mar 27, 89 Referred to Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights.

Mar 13, 89 Referred to House Committee on The Judiciary.

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Constitutional Amendment - Provides for a four-year term of office for Members of the House of Representatives.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: H.J.Res. 196

DATE INTRODUCED: 03/14/89

SPONSOR: Rep Owens, W.

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States providing for 4-year terms for Members of the House of Representatives, and for other purposes.

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:

House Judiciary

STATUS OF BILL-REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:

Mar 27, 89 Referred to Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights.

Mar 14, 89 Referred to House Committee on The Judiciary.

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Constitutional Amendment - Provides for a four-year term of office for Members of the House of Representatives.

Requires Representatives who declare candidacy for election to the Senate to vacate their seats in the House at the time of such declaration.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: H.J.Res. 201

DATE INTRODUCED: 03/15/89

SPONSOR: Rep McCollum

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to provide for four-year terms for Representatives and to limit the number of terms Senators and Representatives may serve.

COSPONSOR(S): (date of cosponsorship follows name)

Rep Johnston, 03/15/89, Rep Hansen, 03/15/89, Rep Gunderson, 03/15/89, Rep Smith, D., 03/15/89, Rep Lightfoot, 03/15/89, Rep McMillan, 03/15/89, Rep Shumway, 03/15/89, Rep Bentley, 03/15/89, Rep Bilirakis, 03/15/89, Rep Hancock, 03/15/89, Rep Carper, 03/15/89, Rep Brown, H., 03/15/89, Rep Stearns, 05/24/89

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:

House Judiciary

STATUS OF BILL-REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:

Mar 27, 89 Referred to Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights.

Mar 15, 89 Referred to House Committee on The Judiciary.

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Constitutional Amendment - Provides for staggered four-year terms for Members of the House of Representatives. Prohibits persons from being elected to the House more than four times or more than three times to four-year terms. Prohibits persons from being elected to the Senate more than twice.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: H.J.Res. 202

DATE INTRODUCED: 03/15/89

SPONSOR: Rep McCollum

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States with respect to the number of terms of office of Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

COSPONSOR(S): (date of cosponsorship follows name)

Rep Hansen, 03/15/89, Rep Hiler, 03/15/89, Rep Gunderson, 03/15/89, Rep Smith, D., 03/15/89, Rep Lightfoot, 03/15/89, Rep Bilirakis, 03/15/89, Rep Brown, H., 03/15/89, Rep Lukens, 03/15/89, Rep Crane, 03/15/89, Rep Inhofe, 03/15/89, Rep Stearns, 05/24/89

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:

House Judiciary

STATUS OF BILL-REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:

Mar 29, 89 Referred to Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights.

Mar 15, 89 Referred to House Committee on The Judiciary.

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Constitutional Amendment - Prohibits a person who has been elected to: (1) the Senate two times from being eligible for election or appointment to the Senate; and (2) the House of Representatives six times from being eligible for election to the House.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: H.J.Res. 203

DATE INTRODUCED: 03/15/89

SPONSOR: Rep McMillan

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to provide for a four-year term of office for Representatives in Congress, and to require that any Representative who officially declares his candidacy for election to the Senate immediately vacate his seat.

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:

House Judiciary

STATUS OF BILL-REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:

Mar 29, 89 Referred to Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights.

Mar 15, 89 Referred to House Committee on The Judiciary.

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Constitutional Amendment - Provides for a four-year term of office for Members of the House of Representatives.

Requires Representatives who declare candidacy for election to the Senate to vacate their seats in the House at the time of such declaration.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: H.J.Res. 239

DATE INTRODUCED: 04/13/89

SPONSOR: Rep James

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to provide for a four-year term for Members of the House of Representatives and to provide that a Member of the Senate or the House of Representatives may not serve more than two terms.

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:

House Judiciary

STATUS OF BILL-REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:

Apr 19, 89 Referred to Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights.

Apr 13, 89 Referred to House Committee on The Judiciary.

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Constitutional Amendment - Provides for a four-year term of office for Members of the House of Representatives.

Limits Representatives to two consecutive four-year terms and Senators to two consecutive six-year terms.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: H.J.Res. 300

DATE INTRODUCED: 06/21/89

SPONSOR: Rep Hefley

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to provide for four-year terms for Representatives and to limit the number of consecutive terms Senators and Representatives may serve.

COSPONSOR(S): (date of cosponsorship follows name)

Rep Bates, 07/24/89, Rep Packard, 07/24/89, 04/03/90, Rep Hansen, 07/24/89, Rep Campbell, T., 07/24/89, Rep Coble, 07/31/89

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:

House Judiciary

STATUS OF BILL-REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:

Jun 23, 89 Referred to Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights.

Jun 21, 89 Referred to House Committee on The Judiciary.

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Constitutional Amendment - Provides for a four-year term of office for Members of the House of Representatives.

Limits Representatives to three consecutive four-year terms and Senators to two consecutive six-year terms.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: S.J.Res. 17

DATE INTRODUCED: 01/25/89

SPONSOR: Sen DeConcini

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A joint resolution proposing a Constitutional amendment to limit Congressional terms.

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:

Senate Judiciary

STATUS OF BILL-REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:

Jan 31, 89 Referred to Subcommittee on Constitution.

Jan 25, 89 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Constitutional Amendment - Provides that no person shall be elected to the Senate for more than two full terms and that no person shall be elected to the House for more than seven full terms. Prohibits Senators from serving for more than 14 years and Representatives for more than 15 years.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION 101ST CONGRESS

BILL NUMBER: S.J.Res. 235

DATE INTRODUCED: 01/23/90

SPONSOR: Sen Humphrey

OFFICIAL TITLE AS INTRODUCED:

A joint resolution proposing a constitutional amendment to limit Congressional terms.

COSPONSOR(S): (date of cosponsorship follows name)

Sen DeConcini, 01/23/90, Sen Pressler, 01/30/90, Sen Symms, 01/31/90, Sen Durenberger, 02/05/90, Sen Garn, 02/07/90, Sen Exon, 02/07/90, Sen Kassebaum, 02/08/90, Sen Wallop, 02/08/90, Sen Kohl, 02/22/90, Sen Daschle, 02/27/90, Sen Burns, 03/20/90, Sen Thurmond, 04/26/90

COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERRAL:

Senate Judiciary

STATUS OF BILL-REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:

Feb 12, 90 Referred to Subcommittee on Constitution.

Jan 23, 90 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

DIGEST OF BILL AS INTRODUCED:

Constitutional Amendment - Provides that no person shall be elected to the Senate for more than two full terms and that no person shall be elected to the House for more than six full terms. Prohibits Senators from serving for more than 14 years and Representatives for more than 13 years.

the re-establishment of concentration of public power that is the thing. By doing so you will save your program. All must be your choice; the trouble of making them then don't elect me; winning anything that I it is finished.

Government of New Jersey other officers of the of New Jersey. Every government, every drop of power comes from the people. I find the means of expression of election is futile. Your vote does mean deposited in the ballot.

Don't decide them by irresistible force. Oh, if men would only see. Selfish purpose has not everybody's interest. The same interests with the antagonism of the you have all the in a grand melee and the ve and corrective force fine that accomplishes the commencement to think that only will New Jersey interests of New Jersey made worth while.

Or like this? Are you all of the same purpose, are enterprise? Is this body interests of a particular come together? Why don't you congregate in societies? Why have you fellow citizens; because and in a single commonwealth; because there are scores of things that you are interested to see done, that cannot put a cent in your pockets, but that can improve your health, extend your enterprise and quicken the energy of the whole community.

Now, the most cunning members of every community are the thieves in the community. Now, since the thieves are always naturally cunning and ingenious, why don't they overcome us? Because you know the old adage, that "thieves will always fall out." The only men who can hang together are men of honest purpose, and the only purposes that can keep us together for action are disinterested purposes. That is the reason that the organization that fears scrutiny meets behind closed doors.

The reason, therefore, is that the spirit of hope, of unselfish purpose, is abroad. Men are tired of being governed by interests that are not interests of the people, and are coming to look about like free men, like free citizens, and to ask themselves what the commonwealth desires, what the nation needs; for America has undertaken to hold the lamp of progress up to the nations, not only to guide her own feet with a little lamp of her own kindling, but to guide the feet of all men who seek that which is just. When we think of the long struggle, we may be disheartened, but let no man who knows the destiny of the human race lose heart now.

We have begun a fight that it may be will take many a generation to complete—the fight against special privilege, but you know that men are not put into this world to go the path of ease; they are put into this world to go the path of pain and struggle. No man would wish to sit idly by to whistle a tune and lose the opportunity to take part in such a struggle. All through the centuries there has been this slow, painful struggle forward, forward, up, up, a little at a time, along the long incline, the interminable way, which leads to the perfection of force, to the real seat of justice and of honor. There are men who have fallen by the way, blood without stint has been shed, men have sacrificed everything in this sometimes blind, but always instinctive and constant struggle; and America has undertaken to lead the way. America has undertaken to be the haven of hope, the opportunity of all men.

Don't look forward too much. Don't look at the road ahead of you in dismay. Look at the road behind you. Don't you see how far up the hill we have come? Don't you see what those low and damp myasmatic levels were from which we have slowly led the way? Don't you see the rows of men come, not upon the lower level, but upon the upper like the rays of the rising sun?

Don't you see the light starting, and don't you see the light illumining all nations? Don't you know that you are coming more

NOVEMBER 5, 1910

and more into the beauty of its radiance? Don't you know that the past is forever behind us, that we have passed many kinds of evils that are no longer possible, that we have achieved great ends and have almost seen the fruition of free America. Don't forget the road you have trod, but remembering it and looking back for reassurance, look forward with confidence and charity to your fellow men, one at a time as you pass them along the road, and see those who are willing to lead you, and say: "We do not believe you know the whole road. We know that you are no prophet; we know that you are no seer, but that you can see the end of the road from the beginning, and we believe that you know the direction and are leading us in that direction, though it costs you your life, provided it does not cost you your honor."

And then follow your guide, trusting your guides, imperfect as they are, and some day when we are all dead, men will come and point at the distant upland with a great show of joy and triumph and thank God that there were men who undertook to lead in that struggle.

What difference does it make if we ourselves do not reach the uplands? We have given our lives to the enterprise, and that is richer and the moral is greater.

FPS T transcript (WP, DLC) with corrections and additions from a CS T transcript in NjHi and from the partial text in the *Philadelphia Record*, Nov. 6, 1910.

From Walter Hines Page

Dear Mr. Wilson:

New York, Nov. 5. '10.

I wish you to bear witness to my self-restraint and self-denial. When I might have been insisting on your writing magazine articles, as soon as it became evident that you wd. be nominated, I said: "No, don't add even to his correspondence now—that's unfair. For relief and forbearance now, he will gladly write articles later—after he has got the governor's chair warm."

And so I didn't even send my congratulations. Instead, I went back over into N. J. where I used to live & made speeches for you—a superfluous bit of activity, but a joyful bit for all that.

And now my thanks—we all owe you hearty thanks—for a campaign done with meaning & sincerity & eloquence—the good old times of politics come again. If the truth were told, I suspect that the old times had no match for it. It is refreshing, lifting—even bully!

Very heartily Walter H. Page

ALS (WP, DLC).

From Edgeworth

My dear Doctor W

I hope I am no very earnest hope the wish of the Tru in the University. students, as I do, I instruction; how d how much you suc know how few are And viewing Jurisq liberal culture—I ca not be forced to ad you as President th

TLS (WP, DLC).

¹ Princeton 1890, form tor in Philosophy and In

From Ralph Wal

My dear Dr. Wilson

From the present County will not be of funds to pay ch work already done i if it is not followed to make it effective. in our efforts to ar crats here. I dislike tention, and do so c it. Will you use you the expense incurre poses? Si

TLS (WP, DLC).

¹ Lawyer of Camden Committee.

To An Unknown

Earnest appeal co funds for challenge

P. 528 WW
1910 book

MORRISTOWN, 8 November, 1910.

Fundamental Matter: Men to do things, and to administer the government from day to day against temptation.

What temptations?

1. Private understandings of all sorts. Some 'interest', real or fancied, will be affected by every change in the law.
2. Pressure for office: the practice of party reward and discipline, rather than of personal merit and fitness.
Hence the importance of civil service reform.
The crux, judicial appointments.
3. To let obstacles prevail and follow the lines of amiability and least resistance.

Government personal. Parties intended, not to share and disperse responsibility, but to support men and measures

This the significance of the direct primary.

They put a greater strain than ever on the virtue and initiative of the electorate. The machine may use them with greater success than anyone else. Who is to organize and get out the vote?

Necessary not only to put men in but also to sustain them with great bodies of conviction,—with active, not inactive and spasmodic, opinion.

The universal protection—^{autogratia} The tonic air of public opinion and of publicity.

No better year for this than the year 1910.

What this year may mean.

11/8/10

NOVE

I have faced audience after audience, the faces that I have faced in the arenas of parties, but the probabilities of such policy are a new level of accomplishment to stand for office among things of those whom they have been deceived, ladies and gentlemen. Government cannot imagine anything great body of your fellow with a great enterprise in spokesman and representation audiences this year the issue in pointing out that the platform of rhetorical phrases wish to do for the state, at the attention of the audiences difference between the Republican in the Republican case the match; in the Democratic single position in these speeches stated in the Democratic platform ing more and more as the tendencies and opinions, his conviction on his part that platform. Apparently, there Mr. Lewis has not; but in an embarrassment, for my part that I am precluded from action on the basis of what we indicate. What basis is left, there personal basis, and that is has been in active public life; I have no active public life; I have no questions, and therefore the concept one for commending is not my personal ability, nor if I may so express it—improved in a political organization a political organization. The main theme of what I have mental matter in government in the administration of affairs

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PUBLIC PAPERS OF THE PRESIDENTS
OF THE UNITED STATES

Lyndon B. Johnson

*Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and
Statements of the President*

1966

(IN TWO BOOKS)

BOOK I—JANUARY 1 TO JUNE 30, 1966



UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 1967

I deeply appreciate the support of Congress in this vital matter of streamlining the Government organization to fight pollution effectively.

NOTE: For the President's message to the Congress transmitting Reorganization Plan 2 of 1966, see Item 91.

216 Remarks at the Woodrow Wilson School for Public and International Affairs, Princeton University. May 11, 1966

Governor Hughes, President Goheen, trustees, faculty and students, Secretary Gardner, distinguished guests of Princeton:

THE VITAL FLOW

I am happy that I could come here today to help celebrate Princeton's continued growth. It is good that one of the Nation's oldest universities is still young enough to grow.

This commitment to the increase of higher learning has deep roots in this country. Our forefathers had founded more than 50 colleges before the Republic was half a century old.

With a sure sense that the pursuit of knowledge must be part and parcel of the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness, they set in motion two forces which have helped to shape this land.

The first was that learning must erect no barriers of class or creed. The university was to nourish an elite to which all could aspire. Soon after our first colleges came the first scholarships for worthy students who could not pay their own way.

The second idea was that the university would not stand as a lonely citadel isolated from the rest of the community. Its mission would be to search for truth and to serve mankind. As Woodrow Wilson later said: "It is the object of learning not only to satisfy the curiosity and perfect the spirits of individual men, but also to advance civilization."

We who work in Washington very much know the need for the vital flow of men and ideas between the halls of learning and the places of power. Each time my Cabinet meets, I can call the roll of former professors—Humphrey and Rusk, McNamara and Wirtz, Katzenbach (another distinguished Princetonian), Gardner, and Weaver. The 371 major appointments I have made as President in the 1½ years that I have occupied that Office, collectively hold 758 advanced degrees. Two of my own White House counselors I borrowed from Princeton, and they are here with me today—Dr. Donald Hornig and Dr. Eric Goldman. And so many are the consultants called from behind the ivy that a university friend of mine recently said to me: "At any given moment a third of the faculties of the United States are on a plane going somewhere to advise—even if not always to consent."

While learning has long been the ally of democracy, the intellectual has not always been the partner of government. As recently as the early years of this century the scholar stood outside the pale of policy, with government usually indifferent to him.

That, I am glad to say, has changed.

The intellectual today is very much an inside man. Since the 1930's our Government has put into effect major policies which

men of learning have helped to fashion.

More recently, the 89th Congress passed bill after bill, measure after measure, suggested by scholars from all over the country whom I had placed on task forces that were appointed in 1964.

In almost every field of governmental concern, from economics to national security, the academic community has become a central instrument of public policy in these United States.

THE AFFLUENCE OF POWER

This affluence of power for an intellectual community that once walked on the barren fringes of authority has not been won without some pain. An uneasy conscience is the price any concerned man pays, whether politician or professor, for a share of power in this nuclear age.

More than one scholar, thus, has learned how deeply frustrating it is to try to bring purist approaches to a highly impure problem.

They have come to recognize how imperfect are the realities which must be wrestled with in this most complicated world.

They have learned that criticism is one thing and that diplomacy is another.

They have learned to fear dogmatism in the classroom as well as in the Capital—and to reject the notion that expertise acquired in a lifetime of study in one discipline brings expertise in all other subjects as well.

They have learned, too, that strident emotionalism in the pursuit of truth, no matter how disguised in the language of wisdom, is harmful to public policy—just as harmful as self-righteousness in the application of power. For as Macaulay said: "The proof of virtue"—and, we might add, of wisdom—

"is to possess boundless power without abusing it."

The responsible intellectual who moves between his campus and Washington knows, above all, that his task is, in the language of the current generation, to "cool it"—to bring what my generation called "not heat but light" to public affairs.

The man for whom this school is named always believed that to be the scope of real scholarship. He never doubted the interdependence of the intellectual community and the community of public service. "The school," he said, "must be of the Nation."

A WORTHY CALLING

So today we dedicate this building not only to the man, but to his faith that knowledge must be the underpinning of power—and that the public life is a calling that is worthy of the scholar as well as the politician.

There was once a time when knowledge seemed less essential to the process of government. Andrew Jackson held the opinion that the duties of all public offices were "so plain and simple" that any man of average intelligence could perform them.

We are no longer so optimistic about our public service. The public servant today moves along the paths of adventure where he is helpless without the tools of advanced learning.

He seeks to chart the exploration of space, combining a thousand disciplines in an effort whose slightest miscalculation could have fatal consequences.

He has embarked on this planet on missions that are no less filled with risk and no less dependent on knowledge.

He seeks to rebuild our cities and to reclaim the beauty of our countryside. He seeks to promote justice beyond our court-

rooms, making education and health and opportunity the common birthright for every citizen. And he seeks to build peace based on man's hopes rather than man's fears.

These goals will be the work of many men and of many years. We are still wrestling to provide a world safe for democracy just as Wilson did more than 50 years ago. We are still fighting to gain the freedoms that Roosevelt talked about more than 30 years ago. All of these will call for enormous new drafts of trained manpower that will be available for public service.

Over the next 4 years, the Federal Government will need 30,000 more scientists and engineers and 6,000 more specialists in health, technology, and education.

By 1970, our State governments, Governor Hughes, must grow by more than 600,000 to keep pace with the times. Employment for State and local government will exceed 10 million persons. Each year over the next decade, our Nation will need 200,000 new public school teachers to keep up just with our growing population.

THE CITIZEN-SOLDIERS

The call for public service, therefore, cannot be met by professionals alone. We must revive the ancient ideal of citizen-soldiers who answer their nation's call in time of peril. We need them on battlefronts where no guns are heard but where freedom is no less tested.

Here at the Woodrow Wilson School, you have done much to raise the sights of public service. I urge you to continue to promote its excellence at all levels. We intend to do the same in Washington, sparing no effort to assist those who select this as their life work.

I have asked Chairman John Macy of the Civil Service Commission to head a task force that will survey Federal programs for career advancement. I have asked him to study an expanded program of graduate training which, with the help of the universities, can enlarge our efforts to develop the talents and broaden the horizons of our public service career officers.

I also intend next year to recommend to our Congress a program of expanding opportunities for those exceptionally talented who wish to go into training for the public service. We will assist:

- students that are planning careers in Federal, State, or local governments,
- colleges and universities that are seeking to enrich their own programs in this field, and
- local and state governments that are seeking to develop more effective career services for all of their employees.

Our concept of public service is changing to meet the demands of the hour. A new public servant has emerged. He may be the scholar who leaves his study for the crucible of power in his State or national capital. Or he may be the young man or woman who chooses public service but does not abandon at its doorstep the techniques of scholarship and the search for knowledge.

These men and women will help us to answer the question that Franklin Roosevelt, our great American leader, asked more than 30 years ago: Will it be said that "Democracy was a great dream, but it could not do the job"?

President Roosevelt did not doubt the answer. Even as troubles mounted, he took the starting steps to strengthen a Federal structure capable of carrying this Nation safely through its crisis. With his detractors and his defacers, with his dissenters and his

doubters, just as Wilson had had to carry them a few decades before, he began to organize the modern Office of the President and to bring American Government into the mid-twentieth century.

THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

And now, as we enter the final third of this century, we are engaged again today—yes, once again—with the question of whether democracy can do the job.

Many fears of former years no longer seem so relevant. Neither Congress nor our Supreme Court indicates to me any signs of becoming rubber stamps to the Executive. Moreover the Executive shows no symptoms of callous indifference to the ills that we must cure if we are to preserve our vitality. State and local governments are more alive and more involved than they were 30 years ago. And our Nation's private enterprise has grown many times over in both size and vitality.

Some men, I remember vividly, said it was socialistic to consider enacting the social security measure. Some men said it was high-handed to favor the minimum wage when I first voted for it—25 cents an hour. Some said it was the sign of an overbearing police state when I proposed the voting rights bill only a short time ago. Those who would change the status quo have been called many names, not only by the demagogue on the stump, but on occasions by the intellectual on the platform.

Forgotten now are the charges of socialism that were hurled at social security by the defenders of the status quo. Silent are the voices which cried "high-handed" at the minimum wage. Irrelevant today is the denunciation of the voting rights law as an overbearing act of a central authority, an act of a police state.

The issue for this generation is a different kind. It has to do with the obligations of power in the world for a society that strives, despite its worst flaws, always to be just and fair and human. Like almost every issue we face, this is one in which scholars and public officials alike have a crucial stake.

Abroad we can best measure American involvement, whatever our successes and failures, by one simple proposition: Not one single country where America has helped mount a major effort to resist aggression—from France to Greece to Korea to Vietnam—not one single country where we have helped today has a government servile to outside interests.

There is a reason for this which I believe goes to the very heart of our society: The exercise of power in this century has meant for all of us in the United States not arrogance but agony. We have used our power not willingly and recklessly ever, but always reluctantly and with restraint.

Unlike nations in the past with vast power at their disposal, your United States of America has never sought to crush the autonomy of her neighbors. We have not been driven by blind militarism down courses of devastating aggression. Nor have we followed the ancient and conceited philosophy of the "noble lie" that some men are by nature meant to be slaves to others.

THE RECENT LESSONS

As I look upon America this morning from the platform of one of her greatest universities, I see, instead, a nation whose might is not her master but her servant.

I see a nation conscious of lessons so recently learned:

—that security and aggression, as well as peace and war, must be the concerns of her foreign policy;

THE SCHOLAR'S OBLIGATION

These are all at stake in that conflict. It is the consequences of the cost of their abandonment that men of learning must examine dispassionately. For, I would remind you, to wear the scholar's gown is to assume an obligation to seek truth without prejudice and without cliché, even when the results of the search sometimes are at variance with one's own predilections and own opinions.

That is all we expect of those who are troubled—even as we are—by the obligations of power the United States did not seek but from which the United States cannot escape.

It was twenty-six years ago that Archibald MacLeish asked of all scholars and writers and students of his generation what history would say of those who failed to oppose the forces of disorder then at loose in Europe.

We must ask of this generation the same question concerning Asia.

MacLeish reminded that generation of the answer that was given by Leonardo when Michelangelo indicted him for indifference to the misfortunes of the Florentines. "Indeed," said Leonardo, "indeed, the study of beauty has occupied my whole heart."

Other studies, no matter how important, must not now detract the man of learning from the misfortunes of freedom in Southeast Asia.

While men may talk of the "search for peace" and the "pursuit of peace," we really know that peace is not something to be discovered suddenly—it is not a thing to be caught and contained. Because peace must be built—step by painful, patient step. And the building will take the best work of the world's best men and women.

It will take men whose cause is not the

- that a great power influences the world just as surely when it withdraws its strength, as when it exercises its strength;
- that aggression must be deterred where possible and met early when undertaken;
- that the application of military force, when it becomes necessary, must be for limited purposes and must be tightly controlled.

Surely it is not a paranoid vision of America's place in the world to recognize that freedom is still indivisible—still has adversaries whose challenge must be answered.

THE STERNEST CHALLENGE

Today, of course, as we meet here, that challenge is sternest—at the moment—in Southeast Asia. Yet there, as elsewhere, our great power is also tempered by great restraint. What nation has announced such limited objectives or such willingness to remove its military presence once those objectives are secured and achieved? What nation has spent the lives of its sons and vast sums of its fortune to provide the people of a small, striving country the chance to elect a course that we might not ourselves choose?

The aims for which we struggle are aims which, in the ordinary course of affairs, men of the intellectual world applaud and serve: the principle of choice over coercion, the defense of the weak against the strong and the aggressive, the right of a young and frail nation to develop free from the interference of her neighbors, the ability of a people—however inexperienced, however different, however diverse—to fashion a society consistent with their own traditions and values and aspirations.

cause of one nation but whose cause is the cause of all nations—men whose enemies are not other men but the historic foes of mankind. I hope that many of you will serve in this public service for the world.

Woodrow Wilson knew that learning is essential to the leadership that our world so desperately yearns for and needs today. Before he came to Princeton, he attended a small college in North Carolina and went to classes every day beneath a portal which bore the Latin inscription: "Let learning be cherished where liberty has arisen."

Today, this motto which served a President must also serve all mankind. Where liberty has arisen, learning must be cherished—or liberty itself becomes a very fragile thing.

So we dedicate this building today—not

only to the man; not only to the Nation's service—but to learning in the service of all mankind.

There can be no higher mission.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in Princeton, N.J., at the dedication of Woodrow Wilson Hall at the university's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs where he was awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. In his opening words he referred to Richard J. Hughes, Governor of New Jersey, Robert F. Goheen, President of Princeton, and John W. Gardner, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. Speaking of the academic figures among his Cabinet and advisers, the President named Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Labor W. Willard Wirtz, Attorney General Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Robert C. Weaver, Special Assistant for Science and Technology Dr. Donald F. Hornig, and Special Consultant Dr. Eric F. Goldman.

217 Letter to the U.S. National Chairman for United Nations Day. May 11, 1966

[Released May 11, 1966. Dated April 30, 1966]

Dear Mr. Kaiser:

I appreciate greatly your consenting to serve this year as U.S. National Chairman for United Nations Day.

UN Day should have special significance for Americans. The United States has provided both birthplace and homeplace for the United Nations; the UN has enjoyed warm bipartisan support from five U.S. Presidents, from the Congress and from an overwhelming majority of the American people. Support for the United Nations has been a major element of U.S. foreign policy since 1945.

As UN Day Chairman, I know that you, with the cooperation of the various State Governors, Mayors and other local officials,

will encourage appropriate observances of this commemorative event throughout the country. This year the United Nations is twenty-one years old, and Americans should join other peoples of the world in welcoming it to majority.

I am happy that I can count on your outstanding talents and ability for this important job.

Sincerely,

LYNDON B. JOHNSON

[Mr. Edgar F. Kaiser, 300 Lakeside Drive, Oakland, Calif.]

NOTE: The President on the same day issued Proclamation 3725, "United Nations Day, 1966" (2 Weekly Comp. Pres. Docs., p. 633; 31 F.R. 7107; 3 CFR 1966 Comp., p. 53).

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