

Opinion

Our View

Vote Tuesday

It is another election year and, if custom prevails, just a small percentage of American voters will make the trek to the polls.

Ninety-eight percent of those eligible to vote cast their ballots in the last election in Poland. Traditionally, in South and Central American countries, voter turnout is over 95 percent, sometimes 100 percent. Yet, in the most progressive country in the world, the United States of America, almost seven out of every ten eligible voters stay home on election day.

Are you dissatisfied with your elected officials? Are you satisfied? You have the option of telling him or her by exercising your franchise.

This country is going to be faced with many critical and diverse issues in the coming years: the deficit, environmental considerations, foreign aid, crime prevention and a host of social programs that will have a direct effect on the lives of every citizen. It is incumbent on each of us to have a say in who is to run the country and administer those programs that are so important, not only to us, but to our children and their children for the foreseeable future. We can do that by voting.

Today the United States is sitting on the brink of war in the Persian Gulf because of one power-crazed individual. Ironically, the citizens of Iraq, even if they wanted to do so, could not depose Saddam Hussein by a public vote. There's no such avenue for the Iraqi people. Given a choice, an Iraqi electorate could settle the entire Persian Gulf issue.

The ability to vote is a precious right established by our forefathers. Many Americans have given their lives to preserve that right. Why do so few of us use it?

Yes, it is true there are times when it seems as though all candidates speak with the same voice. It would be much easier if there was a clear-cut difference. But there are other questions to be decided at the polls. North Carolina, for example, must build more prisons if criminals are to be kept off the streets. The voter, in the coming election, will make that decision. Many bond issues for roads and streets appear on the ballots all over the state. Historically, bond issues excite very few voters, but if you don't make your voice heard, it's the same as allowing someone else to spend your money.

Take a look at the 101st Congress that just concluded the country's business. They spent billions of dollars for federal housing, water projects and military construction. Most of those bills sailed through on voice votes. Those dollars come out of the pockets of the taxpayer.

The point here is that, by staying home on election day, we, as citizens, provide our government with a blank check.

Incumbency is fed by voter apathy. "Why should I bother?" you might say, "one vote, more or less doesn't amount to much." That's true, in a sense, but how many people are singing the same tune? During the Presidential election of 1960, if one more vote per precinct in Chicago had gone to Nixon, JFK would not have been elected. Every vote is important.

So, go to the polls on November 6 and do your part. The founding fathers provided us with the opportunity to determine our own destiny, secure in the knowledge we would accept our responsibility. Let's do everything we can to make sure that faith wasn't misplaced.

News Deadlines

The Kings Mountain Herald welcomes your news items for publication in each Thursday's paper. We ask that you follow these deadlines when submitting material.

The deadline for social news including weddings, anniversaries, reunions, engagements, birthdays, club news, church news, etc., is Friday at 5 p.m.

The deadline for A section news, including community and school activities, sports news, etc., is Tuesday at 5 p.m. News of Tuesday night meetings and other activities will be accepted until 10 a.m. on Wednesdays.

Call your items of interest into the Herald at 739-7496 or bring them by our office on East King Street at Canterbury Road.

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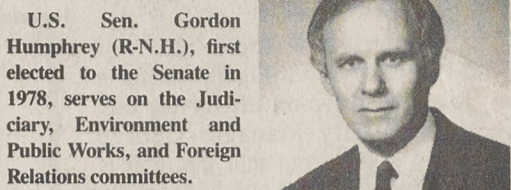
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AT ISSUE

Limit Congressional Terms?



U.S. Sen. Gordon Humphrey (R-N.H.), first elected to the Senate in 1978, serves on the Judiciary, Environment and Public Works, and Foreign Relations committees.

YES

Should there be a constitutional amendment limiting terms in Congress?

Yes. A recent Gallup poll shows 70 percent of the public supports term limits. Senate Joint Resolution 235, which Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.) and I introduced, would limit members to 12 years in each house of Congress. For many, serving in Congress is a career. Often, the interests of re-election have a higher priority than the interests of the nation. Often, congressmen become part of the "Washington establishment." And incumbents use the powers of office to fend off challengers. In 1988, over 98 percent of House incumbents won re-election. This entrenchment stifles new ideas and destroys idealism. No single reform would do more good than term limits, telling newly elected members they cannot make a career of Congress, no matter what they send home, no matter how they pander to special interest groups or how they exploit the office's advantages.

How would this affect Congress?

The careerists run Congress. They are the chairmen and vice chairmen of committees and subcommittees. The average seniority of House committee chairmen is 26 years, 20 years in the Senate. The chairman of the House Appropriations Committee is in his 49th year. There is something to be said for experience, but on balance is that experience being put to good use? A national debt of \$3 trillion and still growing, and an avalanche of wasteful spending suggest the answer is no. Imposition of term limits would result in a fundamental change of attitude. It would replace empire building with public service. And it would foster the kind of intellectual honesty and political courage so often lacking today.

How would this affect representation of constituents?

More men and women of talent would be willing to serve in Congress, if they knew it wouldn't take decades to reach positions of influence. And because they would not be careerists, they would be more likely to make tough policy choices and say no to special interest groups. Representation would improve.



U.S. Rep. Tom Petri (R-Wis.) is serving his sixth term in the House. He is a member of the House Education and Labor Committee.

NO

Should there be a constitutional amendment limiting terms in Congress?

No. Voters should be allowed to elect whom-ever they want for as long as they want. As with many institutions, skill and experience are valuable commodities in legislative bodies. It's important to remember, for instance, that if the British had had a 12-year limitation on service in Parliament, Winston Churchill would have been out in 1912. It's a myth that the make-up of Congress is static. In fact, two-thirds of House members elected in 1988 had served for less than 12 years. If there is a problem with re-election of incumbents, I believe it has less to do with tenure than with electoral advantages enjoyed by incumbents. Reformers should direct more attention to separating legitimate congressional activities from those which are mainly used for "incumbency protection." For instance, the permissible number of district-wide newsletters has been halved, but more could be done. Ultimately, if we are to have more competitive elections, we need to find ways to stimulate greater public participation. Limiting the number of terms in office would attack a symptom rather than the disease.

How would this affect Congress?

Mastering the complexity of modern government requires years, even decades, of experience. Limiting terms could turn Congress into an institution of novices. Power would shift away from the elected representatives to the non-elected permanent federal bureaucracy, presidential appointees and senior congressional staff.

How would this affect representation of constituents?

Such an amendment would limit the amount of independent judgment in Congress. Recognizing their inexperience, some representatives would turn to experts, bureaucrats and lobbyists for advice. Others would reflect their constituents' opinions with relatively little discrimination between considered opinions versus those which are ill-informed. Representatives are supposed to reflect the basic beliefs of those they represent, but they also owe them their best judgment. Informed, independent judgment takes time to develop. **ll**

Your Right To Say It

Enjoys reproductions

To the editor: I really enjoy the front page reproductions of old issues of the Herald.

Thanks especially for including the recent one which had my college photo and news of graduation.

Palmer Huffstetler
Cherryville

Thanks for support

To the editor: Nearly 150 walkers from 12 churches in our great town receive my thanks. October 21 was the first CROP walk which Kings Mountain had ever held. It was an event in which each walker contacted sponsors who would pledge and pay so much money per kilometer, if the walker would cover the distance.

Walkers were excited when they compared their sponsor lists, and realized that many people had been contacted: people from work, school, the neighborhood, church, or club.

The Kings Mountain High School pep band provided stirring pre-walk music to further add to the festive atmosphere. Several church groups had provided their workers with colorful T-shirts.

The money raised will be used in the war being waged against world hunger. Seventy-five percent will be used to reach out to efforts touching 70 countries where hunger is daily a life or death matter. Twenty-five percent will be used in the Kings Mountain Crisis Ministry and Food Bank.

The Board of Advisors of the Crisis Ministry is most appreciative of the footsteps, the shin splints, the blisters, the banners and signs, the exuberant walking, and the magnificent attitude that something good was being done by so many people. The board is equally thankful for the hours of planning, arranging, setting up, cleaning up, and taking care of administrative details.

We are thankful to God for the provision of the faith and commitment of the people in this walk against hunger. God enabled individuals to experience that. When each person does something and joins that with others in the name of Christ and in concern for humankind, a significant impact is made. That impact reaches around the world.

Yours truly,
Eric Faust

Vote for Edith, Jack

To the editor: This is an "open letter" to the Notch victims of the 48th District of the House of Representatives of the North Carolina General Assembly.

As the result of the adoption on July 26, 1990, or our Notch House Resolution 2411 by unanimous vote of the House of Representatives of our North Carolina General Assembly, I want to urge your support at the polls on November 6th of Representatives Edith L. Lutz and Jack Hunt, both of whom, as sponsors of House Resolution 2411, played a very positive and decisive role in its adoption and implementation.

Since this House resolution, "memorializing Congress to pass legislation to ensure equitable distribution of Social Security benefits," is a very significant contribution on behalf of the some 300,000 Notch victims of this state, it seems to me that a concrete expression of gratitude to both Mrs. Lutz and Jack Hunt for their efforts on our behalf is due them and can perhaps be best stated by according them a unanimous vote for reelection next Tuesday as we go to the polls. Surely, without exception, you must agree!

Sincerely,
Harold Loveless

Thankful for KM

I just wanted to bring our citizens up to date on what is going on in Kings Mountain.

Commissioner Fred Finger, City Manager George Wood and I have just returned from the annual North Carolina League of Municipalities meeting in Raleigh, and I came away from that meeting very refreshed. The reason I say that is that I am very proud, after hearing other cities' woes and problems, to live in Cleveland County and, in particular, in Kings Mountain.

Other cities are going through what we have already been through on our water, electric, and sewer problems, and thank God that ours are over with and we can get on with city business.

We are very fortunate to live where we are for several reasons, some of them being our accessibility to railroads, interstate highways, the Charlotte Airport, having our own utilities, and a lot of other things. Other cities and counties don't have those things. We are lower than most cities our size in utility rates. There are just so many things that we have that other people don't, and I am very thankful.

We are well into our bond projects. Our water and sewer projects are well under way and we have started on some of the electricity projects. We are still purchasing supplies for the sub station, so that project will start soon.

We will go to Raleigh in February and sell the remaining portion of the bond package that we didn't sell the first time.

All in all, things are running smoothly and there are a lot of people to thank for that, primarily the City Manager and his staff, and the commissioners for still putting the city first in their thinking and deliberations.

A few weeks ago, I ran an article in the paper stating that mistakes on meter readings had gone down from around 400 to 50. If I in any way hurt anybody's feelings in that article, I apologize. That article was in no way meant to throw off on any person's ability or the way they handled their job. I just wanted to let the public know that we are having fewer mistakes each month on the meter readings. If anybody took it the other way, I apologize.

Kyle Smith,
Mayor

These signs of times aren't worth stealing

Don't election years just drive you up the wall? I have seen enough commercials, read enough signs, trashed enough campaign contribution solicitations and heard enough lies to last me a lifetime.

I've reached a point in my life where campaign signs offend my sensibilities. A good friend asked if he could put a sign in my yard, and, before I could respond, my wife ran him off. Sometimes she gets a little ahead of me. I did see a sign the other day that struck my fancy. I had somehow sprouted up in front of a group of them just down the street from my house. Among all the placards urging you to vote for one candidate or another for one office or another, a professionally painted sign proclaimed "DON'T VOTE FOR ANY OF THESE TURKEYS."

They don't even use stakes worth stealing for tomato plants anymore. They're too short.

I have often wondered why someone would spend ten million dollars for a \$100,000 a year job.

If we could harness all the hot air emanating from Washington, our fuel crisis would be history.

And speaking of Washington, I have a friend there who works for the government. Makes a bundle for doing practically nothing. He admits it.

Anyway, he told me a story he swears is true. Only thing is, I read a similar story in a joke book thirty years ago. For what it's worth, I'll repeat it.

It seems they still have fox hunts out in the Virginia countryside where my friend lives, and one of the hunt clubs was staging their annual event. The members were instructed to bring along male dogs only.

One of the more affluent members had a favorite hound and he brought her anyway.

Tally-ho and all that stuff. Everything went along fine for a half hour or so, then the yelping, staggering line of dogs seemed to vanish and the hunters found themselves up against a brick wall.

One of the fashionably-clad riders spotted a farmer in a nearby field and they all covered on him, asking, "have you seen anything of a pack of hounds and a fox?"

"Yes, I believe I did," said the farmer as he spat a stream of tobacco juice on the ground. "They went that way." And he pointed. "They were running like all get out. There was a she-dog out in front by about ten lengths, and the fox was running sixth."

John, my friend, works for the Social Security Administration, and he tells me some of the correspondence they receive could keep a comedian supplied with material for years. Here are a few comments from actual letters they've received. This, I do believe.

"I cannot get sick pay," wrote one lady. "I have six children; can you tell me why this is?"

This gem came from an obviously exasperated woman: "This is my eight child. What are you going to

JIM HEFFNER
Columnist

do about it?"

Another lady wrote, "I am glad to report that my husband who was reported missing is now dead."

Here is a sampling of others, all from women.

"Sir, I am forwarding my marriage certificate and two children, one of which is a mistake as you will see."

"Unless I get my husband's money I shall be forced to lead an immortal life."

"I am sending my marriage certificate and six children. I had seven and one died, which was baptized on half a sheet of note paper by the Reverend Thomas."

"In answer to your letter and according to your instructions, I have given birth to twins in the enclosed envelope."

"You have changed my little boy into a little girl; will this make a difference?"

"Please send my money at once as I have fallen into errors with my landlord."

"I want my money as quick as you can send it. I have been in bed with a doctor for a week and he isn't doing me any good. I things don't improve, I'll have get another doctor."

"Read your letter regarding dental inquiry, the teeth on the top are all right but ones in my bottom are hurting terribly."

People, being themselves, really are funny, and we surely need a few laughs during any election year.

Letter Policy

The Kings Mountain Herald welcomes your letters to the editor for publication in each week's paper. We ask that you follow these guidelines when submitting letters:

Keep the letters brief and to the point. Type and double space them, if possible, and sign them in ink stating your name, address and telephone number for verification purposes. Unsigned letters will not be accepted.

The Herald reserves the right to edit any letter for spelling, good taste, libel, slander or any other reason, and reserves the right to reject any letter for any reason.