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Rules for Rulers?

Politicians in Tampa, Florida, have forced citizens there to vote for term limits, and then vote to keep those term limits again and again — against attempts to repeal or weaken the limits. So I keep my eye out for news from the city.

Earlier this month, Mike Deeson, an investigative reporter with WTSP 10 News, Tampa Bay's CBS affiliate, exposed Mayor Bob Buckhorn's open violation of the city charter's requirement that all department heads must be city residents. Buckhorn hired Sonja Little, now the city's highest paid employee, to serve as his Chief Financial officer, and admits on camera that he promised her she would not have to move into the city.

"The question is," the mayor explained, "do you want talent or do you really make the residency — she's only about a mile away from the city border — the issue?" Buckhorn answers his own question, "I would rather have talent" . . . *than follow the law.*

In even slipperier fashion, Mayor Buckhorn has attempted to get around the clear, unequivocal wording in the charter by claiming Ms. Little has served as the "interim" Chief Financial officer *for the last five years!*

Reporter Deeson asks the operative question: "[I]f you're going to ignore the residency requirement, what other parts of the charter should you just ignore?"

Deeson worries about provisions requiring competitive bidding, guarding against conflicts of interest and mandating term limits, which is "particularly problematic for a mayor who is in his second term and has to leave office when it's over."

On social media, Tampa residents are unloading on the mayor with numerous variants of: "This is truly what's wrong with government."

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

