

“Dorky” Doesn’t Define It

July 17, 2018

“Term limits,” said Daniel McCarthy, editor of *The Modern Age*, in a recent podcast conversation with historian Tom Woods, “was one of the dorkiest ideas of the 1994 so-called Newt Gingrich revolution.”

He characterized it as not having really gone anywhere.

Huh?

Granted, Congress is still not term-limited. But Americans in 15 states — including California, Colorado, Florida, Michigan, and Ohio, and representing 37

Term limits remain popular with normal Americans because voters intuitively grasp the reality of such everyday corruption, which is directly tied to Congress having sloughed off so much constitutional responsibility.

percent of the nation’s population — *do* enjoy term-limited state legislatures.*

And it sure wasn’t Newt Gingrich’s idea. Gingrich opposed it.

McCarthy repeats the old chestnut that what term



limitation “winds up doing is actually weakening Congress and congresspeople in particular — relative to their own staff, who stay in Congress and become sort of experts and learn how to manipulate their congressman, and also relative to the executive branch who have people rotate in from time to time.”

Nifty theory — one very popular with politicians, who know that voters fear unelected influences on legislation.

The reality, however, is that Congress, designed by the Constitution’s framers to be both most powerful and closest to the people, is, today, the weakest branch.

And legislators are *not* term limited.

Ditch the “manipulation theory”; adopt a “collaboration theory”: legislators with Methuselah-long careers learn, sans “rotation in office,” to feather their own nests and those of the interest groups that fund their re-elections (and insider trading schemes).

Term limits remain popular with normal Americans because voters intuitively grasp the reality of such everyday corruption, which is directly tied to Congress having sloughed off so much constitutional responsibility.

We need term limits to restore a Congress sold out by professional politicians.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.

* *Nine of the ten largest cities in America likewise have termed-limited their elected officeholders. For more information, see the links to the column from which this*