

Corruption, Arkansas-Style

October 22, 2018

On Friday, the Arkansas Supreme Court struck Issue 3, a citizen-initiated measure to restore legislative term limits, from Arkansas' November ballot. The Court declared, 4-3, that there weren't enough "valid" signatures.

This, despite opponents never disputing that more than enough Arkansas voters had signed the petition.

In recent years, legislators have enacted a slew of convoluted laws, purposely designed to wreck the initiative and referendum process.* The regulations give insiders and partisans a myriad of hyper-technical "gotchas" that can be used to disqualify whole sheets of bonafide voter signatures.

Now, sadly, after 2014's fraudulent ballot measure and two 4-3 state supreme court decisions neutering the entire ballot initiative process, political corruption can continue unabated in the Natural State.

"The legislature," explained former Governor Mike Huckabee recently, "sucker-punched the people of Arkansas and expanded their terms. They did it, I think, very dishonestly — by calling it an ethics bill



. . . that had nothing to do with ethics. It was all about giving themselves longer terms."

Since getting away with that 2014 ballot con job, giving themselves a whopping 16 years in office, seven Arkansas state legislators have been indicted or convicted of corruption. The author of that tricky ballot measure, former Sen. Jon Woods, just began serving an 18-year federal prison sentence for corruption.

Other corruption, that is.

"It's one reason I think term limits are a very important part of our political system today," said Huckabee. It is, he argued, "easier to get involved in things that are corrupt the longer you stay."

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This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

** The state supreme court has ignored the clear language in the state constitution regarding such petitions: "No legislation shall be enacted to restrict, hamper or impair the exercise of the rights herein reserved to the people."*

N.B. For relevant links, check yesterday's splash page for this weekend's Townhall column.