# Common Sense

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## Beautiful Canary

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New hope for Venezuela: A direct constitutional challenge against the horrific reign of socialist strongman Nicolás Maduro enjoys massive popular support and has quickly gained international recognition.

If 35-year-old National Assembly President Juan Guaidó, who launched the campaign, succeeds in restoring a democratic government, he should also restore term limits on the president, the National Assembly and other offices.

Those limits were repealed through a 2009 constitutional referendum that paved the way for then-President Hugo Chavez to continue in power. With government domination of the media and

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a slanted ballot question, it was less than a fair election. Still, 54 percent voted to end the limits.

Today, I'm certain the majority would vote differently.

Venezuela makes me think of Nicaragua, likewise being looted and brutalized by a socialist thug. Hundreds have been killed in protests demanding that Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega step down. I have friends with relatives in harm's way.

Nicaragua is similar to Venezuela in another respect: The care and maintenance of dangerous concentrations of power ran smack into an established constitutional restraint known as term limits.

In a widely condemned 2011 decision, the country's supreme court "declar ed the constitution unconstitutional," as the leader of the Nicaraguan Center for Defense of Human Rights put it. This permitted Ortega to run again. Three years later, the National Assembly jettisoned the limits from the constitution — without any vote of the people.

Term limits are needed everywhere, every city, state and nation across the globe. Even when a powerful despot breaks the limit, the violation at least serves as the coal miners' dead canary, demonstrating that the political air has become too dirty for liberty to breathe.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.