

# Term Limits for US Congress Petitioning Guide

## Successful petitioning is important for many reasons:

- We must have an adequate number of signatures to bring before each state for the convention to be called.
- Not only are we collecting signatures, we are also educating the public as to why Term Limits are needed and that the Article 5 option even exists. Many people do not know about this.
- We are making people aware of our movement.
- Your time is extremely valuable. We want you to use your time as effectively as possible.
- Even if someone does not sign, we have put a bug in his or her ear, and we have made him or her think. They are now aware of our movement and they may go home to read more about us.

Petitioning can be done by alone, with a buddy, or as part of a group. If you've never petitioned before, you may feel more comfortable pairing up with another person, either a friend, family member, colleague, neighbor or someone else in your community who cares about this issue.

## How to Approach People:

You need a "hook" to introduce the petition, spark an interest, and convince people to want to sign. It should be no more than a sentence.

- "Hi! Can you sign our petition to put an end to the career politicians in our US Congress?"
- "Hi! Would you sign our petition to impose Term Limits for our US Congress?"

Many people will want to sign before you finish your sentence. Others may have a question or two and this is where understanding the FAQs and bringing a copy with you is important. Some people will not want to sign and tell you they don't care about politics or they hate politics or they aren't interested. Tell them thank you and move to the next person. The same goes with people who don't want term limits (there aren't too many of these people). You don't want to waste your time.

## Tabling at an event:

- You might have a table filled with clipboards and petitions and a great banner or

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signage, but most people will not come up to your table to ask about what you are doing on their own.

- It is important to stand at the front corner of the table to be able to talk to people as they walk by.
- You want to slow them down a little and lure them towards the table.
- The hook line can be the same as when you are without a table approaching people. But you need that hook line to get their interest and make them want to come over and sign.
- Tabling works best with two or more people. One to draw people to the table, and another behind the table answering questions and making sure the signers fill out the petition correctly.

### Where to petition?

Large festivals, craft fairs, flea markets, and other events with big crowds are the best places to petition and set up a table. Be on the look out for events in your community and contact the owners and staff.

### Other places to petition:

- Candidate town hall meetings, demonstrations, local group meetings, public sidewalks, parks, parades, or at the polls on Primary Day, libraries, college campuses, while riding public transit, or where people are waiting for public transit.
- If going door-to-door, 6-9 pm is the best time.
- Petitioning outside of a business requires permission from the management. We have yet to come across a large business or grocery store chain that has allowed us to do this. Most do not want to have anything to do with any topic regarding politics. Some petitioners have been successful getting an okay from small mom and pop type shops or stores where they personally know the manager.

### Tips on collecting signatures:

- Get the easiest signatures first: your family, your friends, your co-workers, your neighbors, and yourself!
- Have a couple of clipboards on hand and extra pens – just in case. Have more petitions on hand than you think you might need.
- Carry the FAQ's with you at all times. It is a lot of information and you might need to refer to it if someone asks you a question.
- Be confident in what you are saying. Practice your spiel on a friend, spouse, or to yourself. If a possible signer does not sense confidence in what you are saying they probably will not sign.
- Always remember you are not bothering anyone, you are giving him or her an



opportunity to help and you are educating him or her.

- Approach all people, you cannot tell who will or will not sign by their appearance.
- Thank everyone whether they signed or not. If they signed thank them for making a difference. After they have signed let them know we are on Facebook and ask them to let their friends and family know about our movement.
- We have small printable “cards” that you can have available to hand to people with our Facebook and website addresses.
- Check their signature and make sure they have both signed and printed their name. Make sure they have completely filled in the blanks. Sometimes they will get off a line. If that happens have them simply start over on the next line below. And that page will be one signature short. Another page with only one signature can be stapled onto that page to make up for the missing signature.
- If circulating in a crowd, approach groups of two or more people, so several people hear your explanation about the petition at once.
- Know your talking points ahead of time. The most common complaints you will hear are:
  - o “How about get rid of their lifetime pay and huge retirements.”
  - o ”12 years? That's too long, how about 4 years?”
  - o (This is where it is helpful to understand the FAQ's {included in this document} and carry them with you.)
- Bring a friend and have fun. See who can get the most signatures.
- Enjoy the great people you will meet. You will come across some awesome people, and many will thank you for what you are doing! If you come across someone who is very excited about our movement ask them if they want to volunteer with you or collect signatures from their friends, family, neighbors, coworkers on their own. Have a volunteer sign up list under the petition pages where you can write down their name, email address, and phone number- or whatever info they want to give you.



## FAQs for Petitioners

When you are on the street doing petitioning, there are certain questions that you will be hit with all the time. If you know the answers to the common questions, most people will sign.

Here is a listing of what you can expect to hear and the answers that will have you ready.

### FAQs

#### **Q- How are you planning to do this?**

A- We are petitioning in all the states using both hard copies and e-petitions. The petitions will then be formally handed off to the State Legislatures. The State Legislatures will apply for an Article 5 Convention for this Amendment. After passing at the Convention, it will be returned to the States for ratification. All of this does NOT require Congress's approval.

#### **Q- How do I become involved?**

A- Keep spreading the word; sign the petition; join your state page; and volunteer to help petition.

#### **Q- Who is heading this up?**

A- The people leading this movement are average Americans like you. There are no sponsors, political or otherwise.

#### **Q- Will the State Governments support this?**

A- Absolutely. First, after Senators became a popular vote, rather than a State assignment, the States lost their voice in Congress and Congress has been usurping authority from the States ever since. Second, many members of the State legislature would love a chance to end up in Congress, but with incumbents pretty much guaranteed re-election for life, they never have a chance. Third, States want equal representation in Congress. Right now the rules of Congress give authority based on seniority. A state that has a Senator that has been there for 40 years has a lot more power than a state that has a new senator.

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**Q- Does how long they are in Congress really make them more corrupt or is that just rhetoric?**

A- It's true. Studies have proven that the longer a person is exposed to temptation, the more likely they are to succumb to it. The amount of temptation in Congress is hard to match anywhere else. Also, people tend to be molded by their environment. In Congress, they are treated as elites by entire industries and lobbyists. Overtime they can't help but develop a disconnect from the average American and a feeling that they know what's best, regardless of what the people want.

**Q- Why Term Limits? Isn't voting all we need?**

A- The voting system is broken and hasn't worked for a longtime. Exit polls have shown that people vote based on name recognition, party lines, and media exposure. An incumbent gets all three. They have a 90% chance of being re-elected no matter what they do in office.

**Q- Won't Term Limits just cause more politicians to receive full pay for life?**

A- That is a myth that has grown through the years. They have a contributory retirement plan like all federal employees are offered. The myth probably developed because most stay in Congress for so many years that by the time they retire they are past the retirement age, so it seems that they're getting retirement for life. With term limits, they won't have more than 12 years to contribute to their retirement and many will not be old enough to draw on their retirement once they are out.

**Q- Congress was intended to be a service, why should we pay salaries and benefits?**

A- If there were no salaries or benefits, the average American like you and I couldn't afford to spend up to 12 years in Congress. The only people in Congress would be the wealthy.

**Q- Shouldn't we fear an Article 5 Convention? I've heard it called a "Con Con" and that they could destroy all of our rights and the Constitution.**

A- There will always be those who scream "The sky is falling!" Some do it because they know no better and others do it because they don't want Americans to recognize that there is a way to rein in Congress. Article 5 specifically states that ONLY Amendments can be presented at the Convention. Any Amendment passed



at the Convention then has to be returned to the States and ratified by at least 38 States. There are currently 27 Republican-controlled states and 21 Democrat-controlled states. Nothing leaning left or right has any chance at all of being passed by 38 states. The only thing that will be passed is something completely non-partisan like Term Limits.

**Q- Why don't we go with a shorter limit? Why 12 years?**

A- A great deal of research and thought went into deciding on 12 years. You have to consider the requirements in Article 1 of the Constitution; why the lengths of individual terms are their current lengths; what the State Governments will be willing to support; and the balance in which we have experience, but not an opportunity for a career. 12 years is equal to 2 6-year Senate terms as currently defined in Article 1. It allows experience, but not a career.

**Q- While we are at it, why don't we include some other changes that need to be made?**

A- The key to success is simplicity. The more details we add, the less likely we will succeed. You can never make everyone happy. Every detail added, there will be some that disagree. Right now we need to focus on this one thing that crosses all the party lines.

**Q- Won't term limits make lobbyists more powerful and influential?**

A- No. Lobbyists hate term limits. It takes years and millions to buy a member of Congress. It's worth it if they know the person will be there for another 20 or 30 years, but with term limits, it's not nearly as effective.

**Q- Why just a single Amendment? If we're going to have a convention, why not more?**

A- You have to consider both the legal and strategic perspective. A single amendment greatly increases our ability to force a convention to be called and overcome hurdles that can otherwise be thrown in our way by the many attorneys in Congress that don't want to see this happen.

**Q- Why don't we join with the Convention of States Project? Isn't one of their issues Term Limits?**

A- Term Limits is one of COS's issues, but it is not their only one. Unfortunately, their strategy is flawed. They have put too many eggs in their basket and have ended up with a partisan package that only one side of the aisle will support. As I



mentioned before, if anything leans left or right, you can't get enough states to call for a convention.

Congratulations! You now know the answers to the majority of questions you will face. These answers are summaries. If you decide you want to learn more, go to the FAQs on the National Term Limits for US Congress page, where the answers go into more detail.

Good luck and thank you all for being part of a movement that will change the course of our nation.

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