



How the COS Project Can

CURB POLITICAL CORRUPTION

Most Americans are legitimately suspicious of lobbyists and big-money political donors -- so much so, that the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision sparked its own Article V movement.

But an Article V Convention of States to limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government and establish spending controls and term limits upon its officials gives the states the power to propose amendments that can reduce the influence of big money in politics in a variety of ways.

Big-money donors are not usually ideologically motivated, but they do expect favorable treatment for themselves or their business interests once their candidate is sworn in as a legislator. The most effective solution is to take away the favors that politicians can dispense. This strategy will dry

up this money and restore a level playing field far more effectively than continued attempts at a regulatory solution (for which someone always finds a workaround, anyway).

One of the most common means for politicians to reward their supporters is through regulatory exemptions. An amendment that prohibits members of Congress from exempting themselves and their friends from the laws they make for the rest of us not only enjoys the unanimous support of voters we've surveyed, but also removes a powerful incentive for business owners to attempt to "buy" candidates. A companion amendment removing de facto lawmaking authority from unelected bureaucrats will help prevent members of Congress from hiding these activities from voters. Such amendments will also help locally-owned businesses

compete more effectively with large corporations who can afford lobbyists and attorneys to keep them in compliance with ever-more burdensome and complex federal regulations. Americans agree that a business should succeed, because it offers a superior product or service to its customers -- not because it has friends in Washington.

Another vehicle for cronyism resides in the power of politicians to use taxpayer money to invest in and award grants, loans, and loan guarantees to for-profit businesses. Why should the politically-connected get to shake down the American taxpayer when they couldn't convince local banks and investors to fund their projects? American taxpayers have lost multiple billions of dollars on companies owned by big political donors who received federal funding



and then went bankrupt. Moreover, when the federal government invests in businesses, even as it regulates them and the financial markets in which they function, it acts as both referee and player. This creates an additional dimension of conflict-of-interest that everyday Americans find unacceptable. The only way this practice will be stopped is for the states to propose and ratify an amendment prohibiting it, there is too much power and money involved to expect Congress to reform itself.

Finally, term limits can serve to disrupt the ability of lobbyists and big donors to groom and maintain politicians. The longer a politician serves in Washington, the more they become beholden to the special interests that donate to their campaigns. They form relationships with these lobbyists, who promise to help them win reelection in exchange for pork barrel spending in the next omnibus bill.

Term limits can keep these long-term relationships from forming, and they can provide our members of

Congress with a much-needed reality check. They aren't in Washington to build a career. They're in Washington to serve their constituents for a short period of time. Once that time is over, they should be forced to go back to the real world.

Plus, term limits are wildly popular among voters. Surveys consistently find that over 80 percent of Americans want term limits -- no matter their political leanings. This is exactly the kind of amendment the Founders envisioned being proposed by a Convention of States. A term limits amendment enjoys broad support from coast to coast, and its benefits are clear and effective.

Otto von Bismarck once compared laws to sausage. He said it's probably best if people don't watch them being made. Here at the Convention of States Project, we're working to put the kitchen in plain view of the diners.

An amendment that prohibits members of Congress from exempting themselves and their friends from the laws they make for the rest of us not only enjoys the unanimous support of voters we've surveyed, but also removes a powerful incentive for business owners to attempt to "buy" candidates.

Support the only solution that is as big as the problem.

Sign the petition at ConventionofStates.com.

ConventionofStates.com • info@conventionofstates.com • 540-441-7227

