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Public Sector Reports

Michigan **COMMENTARY**

Term Limits and New Political Realities

by Craig Ruff, President, and William Rustem, Senior Vice President

Last November Michigan voters stamped their approval on Proposal B, to constitutionally limit many politicians' terms of office. This early retirement plan is changing state capitol dynamics. This paper comments on some of the changes wrought by term limitation and attempts to forecast its long-term ramifications. Although other officeholders are affected by the constitutional amendment, our focus here is on the Michigan Legislature.

WHO IS COVERED BY TERM LIMITS?

Amended by voters last November, Michigan's constitution now limits

- the governor, secretary of state, and attorney general to two four-year terms;
- state senators to two four-year terms;
- state representatives to three two-year terms;
- Michigan members of the U.S. House of Representatives to three two-year terms; and
- Michigan members of the U.S. Senate to two six-year terms.

With the amendment taking effect last December, the current governor, secretary of state, attorney general, and state senators may seek reelection in 1994 and 1998 and thereby serve in those positions until 2002. Sitting state representatives may seek reelection in 1994 and 1996, but they cannot serve beyond December 31, 1998; incumbent congressmen are bound by the same limits. United States Sen. Donald Riegle may seek reelection in 1994 and 2000; U.S. Sen. Carl Levin may seek reelection in 1996 and 2002.

Most constitutional lawyers believe that term limitation on state government officeholders will withstand challenge, although many believe that individual states cannot impose limits on the terms of U.S. senators and members of Congress.

WHAT VOTERS THOUGHT THEY WERE DOING

Fifty-nine percent of voters said *yes* to Proposal B. A post-election, statewide survey by Public Sector Consultants, underwritten by the Michigan Hospital Association, found that Democrats split about evenly on the issue; Republicans supported the idea by a better than two-to-one margin, joined by about 60 percent of ticket splitters. Almost two-thirds of Bush supporters, 60 percent of Perot backers, and 52 percent of Clinton voters said that they voted *yes* on B. The older one is, the more apt s/he was to support limits; close to 70 percent of people aged 65 and older supported the proposal. Support crossed the ideological spectrum: Self-described conservatives, moderates, and liberals all backed the idea. Support also crossed racial lines: Black voters showed no less enthusiasm than whites. There was little geographical variation: Detroiters, suburbanites, and outstaters were about equally supportive. Neither was there a gender gap.

There was no clear-cut and overriding reason why voters supported or opposed Proposal B. *Yes* voters reasoned that limits would

- bring new ideas and people to state government;
- cause politicians to do what is right rather than what is popular;
- control interest group influence;

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- keep politicians more in touch with the citizenry; and/or
- shake up the system.

No voters reasoned that term limits were a bad idea because they would

- undermine the voters' ultimate right to keep or oust an official;
- disrupt an electoral system that was working fine; or
- cause a loss of clout (i.e., the ability to bring home the bacon) in Washington, D.C., or Lansing.

Interpreting the mood of the time, one senses that the proposal passed on visceral grounds: Many voters wanted politicians to stop treating politics as a lucrative career.

TERM LIMITS AND CAREERISM

In trying to recast politics by ending political careerism, few voters likely differentiate the holding of an elective office from politics. An elective office may be a career; we have a few legislators, an attorney general, and a secretary of state who have held the same office for a generation or longer. Many others, however, move from one public office to another; for them, politics (not a single elective post) is their profession.

Term limitation does not short-circuit the career of a professional politician, but it may foster more movement among offices during that career. Term limits will not dull the drive of men and women who receive gratification and a livelihood from public service; who believe that they have talent for listening to people, negotiating disparate views, and translating public opinion into public policy; who enjoy the tasks, rewards, and game of politics.

Motivation to seek elective office varies widely. Some people see themselves as citizen-politicians (for example, former American Motors Corporation CEO and governor, George Romney). The 18th century ideal of the gentleman-farmer who agrees to serve in elective office as his contribution to the commonwealth still inspires a good number of office seekers. However, the sacrificing citizen-politician who voluntarily interrupts a private-sector career or retirement for a brief stint in public service is in a distinct minority. Today politicians view themselves as professionals in public service.

Cynics perceive that politics is an aphrodisiac for its players, bestowing on them power and glory, fat paychecks, and cushy perks. Seldom considered are the burdens of politicians: an endless number of dinners and public events, long workdays and weeks, phone calls at home at all hours from constituents, media scrutiny and second guessing, life in a fishbowl for the whole family, scraping for campaign monies, and other unappetizing features of the game. Few among us would trade our jobs for the risks, hard and erratic hours, and drudgery that comprise a large part of political life. Since unlike other professionals in our lives—accountants, lawyers, or consultants, for example—we vote for politicians, and many people view them as servants and objects (typically of scorn).

Professional politicians are entrepreneurs (a highly recommended book on this topic is Alan Ehrenhalt's *United States of Ambition*). Like dry cleaners, restauranteurs, and consultants, politicians plot their life's dream, map strategies and tactics, raise capital (collect campaign funds and recruit volunteers), open their businesses (engage in campaigning), wholesale their offerings (advertise), retail their services to customers (pump hands, exude confidence, and open and close sales), evaluate how they are doing, keep an eye on and out-hustle the competition, and strive to stay in business.

We do not set limits on how long a dry cleaner stays at his/her location, but if we did, the odds are that the dry cleaner wouldn't leave the business, s/he just would move to a different site. Entrepreneurs who are good at and enjoy their work will stay with it no matter what society does to discourage them. Politicians are no different. They enjoy what they are doing and will circumnavigate nuisances like term limits.

LIFE OF THE PARTIES

Both the Republican and Democratic parties face enormous new challenges in this age of term limits, and the party that meets them head on will profit. This is a particularly difficult time in the life of political parties, however, faced as they are with the challenge from the Perot movement and the growing public distrust of the two-party system. The parties need seriously to develop and carry out a strategy for rebuilding their future.

For a good many years the candidate recruiting and election strategizing for state legislative races has been directed by the leadership of the four legislative caucuses (House Democrats, House Republicans, Senate Democrats, and Senate Republicans). The caucuses have found the candidates, trained them, and provided significant support through the political action committees (PACs) that each operates.

John Engler's rise to the governorship is directly attributable, in large measure, to the skill with which he manipulated the system by selecting candidates for the state Senate, grooming them, and then steering financial support to their campaigns. The assistance and direction he gave those people when they were candidates (and later, when they were newly elected state senators) engendered the loyalty he needed to become senate majority leader, take virtual control of the state Republican Party, and then become the only nominee in the Republican primary for governor.

Building such statewide loyalty and recognition from a leadership position in the Senate or the House, however, takes a significant length of time. With a limit of six years for representatives and eight years for senators, there may never again be a John Engler, who toiled in total for 20 years in legislative chambers, building the support and control he needed to make his run for the state's highest office.

One result of term limits will be an absence of long-time elected leadership, and this will engender a struggle between the legislative staff (grown more powerful, as discussed below) and the two political parties for control of candidate selection and nurturing.

Theoretically, the political parties have the advantage because they can build a "farm system" of candidates working their way up the ladder of elected officialdom. To exercise their advantage, however, the parties will have to concentrate on finding good people to run for *local* offices—county commissioner, drain commissioner, township supervisor, clerk, and city council—in order to build a stable of field-tested candidates positioned to move up the political ladder to the legislature. This will necessitate the parties increasing their concentration on county, city, and township races, and revitalizing local party organizations, many of which have become moribund in the past two decades.

Under an electoral system governed by term limits, the parties also will have to get involved more in primary races and do it in much the same way that John Engler influenced primary races when he controlled state Senate Republican PAC spending. Among the parties' other tasks will be to try to assure that zealots and one-issue candidates do not end up being the party's standard bearers in the general election—such people tend to be truer to their issue than to the party, and this undermines the party discipline and team play necessary for the system to work.

The smart party will raise money, organize support, and run campaigns, and we well may see a return to the old days, when candidates were recruited and financed by a political party. The legislative caucuses—which were forced to step into the vacuum created by the ailing political parties—may be able to give up their role as campaign recruiter, manager, and financer, and concentrate on writing law.

TERM LIMITS AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

If we think of politicians as people striving to maintain a successful career, we can predict behavioral changes stemming from term limits. We believe these changes will be dramatic.

The Cassius Effect

Recall Shakespeare's Caesar guardedly watching yond' Cassius's lean and hungry look. It gives a clue as to how politicians watch upstarts who may be eyeing their offices. Wariness of the ambitions of others has been present forever in the profession of politics, but term limitation will elevate it to near paranoia; for professional politicians affected by term limits, it is up or out.

For a state representative unable to serve past 1998 (the cutoff for those now in the House), there are several options.

- Find a different career (a disruptive and unappetizing alternative for a professional politician).
- Seek a local elective office, e.g., mayor, county commissioner, or township supervisor.
- Get a federal, state, or local appointment such as a subcabinet post in Washington, D.C., an admin-

istrative job in a state agency, a legislative staff position, or a deputy county clerkship.

- Run for governor, U.S. Senate, or U.S. House of Representatives (the really big prizes, but perhaps not immediately within reach).
- Run for state Senate in 1994 or 1998.

The last is the natural, comfortable choice. Follow the term-limited representative's thinking: "I can't go back to the House, but the issues of local government—zoning and the like—don't interest me much. There's always Washington, but I would be a small fish in a big pond, whereas in Lansing a legislator is a shark in a bathtub. Maybe the state Senate . . . I already know state issues and enjoy the legislative process. Moreover, of the 245,000 people living in the Senate district, 85,000—roughly one-third—already know me, and when I appear on television or radio or in a newspaper in my House district, I also reach most everyone living in the larger Senate district: a good base upon which to build a successful campaign. If I get into the Senate in 1995, I can serve there until 2003; if I enter in 1999, coinciding with my forced retirement from the House, I can stay in the legislature until 2007. Last, but not least, my state pension will be based on total years of state legislative service, regardless of the chamber in which I served."

Although most current senators (23 of 38) have been state representatives, all got there by biding their time until a Senate seat became vacant. Representatives rarely have challenged their counterparts in the Senate. Engler's career skyrocketed when he knocked off his fellow Republican, Sen. Jack Toepp, in a primary, but such feats are uncommon. In the last two Senate election years (involving a total of 152 primary and general election races), only two senators were challenged by a state representative, and both successfully held off the threat. Term limits will destroy such restraint by representatives—they may have no choice but to challenge incumbent senators. Their future may depend on it.

Senators are planning, too: "Should I take a shot at Congress in 1996? (It is the middle of my four-year Senate term and I don't have to give up my seat to make the gamble.) Should I stay in the Senate until 2002? Should I look for statewide office (governor) or county or municipal office?"

The lean and hungry look of state representatives makes their senators nervous, and state senators' aspirations make members of the U.S. House of Representatives anxious. As never before, elected officials will be looking over their shoulders and warily watching aspirants for their office. *Office cruising* enters the political lexicon.

The New Legislator

For many years the Michigan L[illegible] been a relatively comfortable place fo[illegible] The salary, while modest by some standards, could be supplemented by honoraria and/or part-time private sector work in law or insurance, for example; the benefit package and retirement program are exceptionally generous. Those who chose long service in the legislature lived a good life and were rewarded in retirement with considerable security.

Job security—despite the need to face election every two or four years—was better than that in much of the private sector. Since 1961 the chances of an incumbent state senator or representative losing an election was about equal to the chances of dying while in office: one in 50. Since 1967, in [illegible] general and primary elections for the House, only 63 incumbents lost, and in 456 primary or general elections for the Senate during same time period, only 18 incumbents were defeated. Serving in the legislature has been good steady work, where a breadwinner could support a family and plan for a comfortable retirement—a secure and rewarding career for those who chose to stay.

Term limitation introduces significant risk, changing the thought process of those deciding to seek legislative office. While in the past, legislators worried some about the "next job," that concern now surfaces *before* the run for the legislature begins.

The typical candidate under term limits likely will be very different from those of the past. It is quite probable that the legislature of the future will be composed primarily of two distinct age groups—those in their twenties or thirties beginning their political career who want to make a name for themselves, and those in their fifties, sixties, and seventies who wish to spend a few of the last years of their working lives in public service. Nearly gone will be the fortysomethings—legislators who have to worry about mortgage and car payments and the kids' college education. The clash between the young, brash, and ambitious and the mature, conservative, and tempered will be one of the most interesting dynamics to watch.

Delayed Gratification: A Thing of the Past

For 20 years, state Rep. Dominic Jacobetti toiled in the vineyards of the House before achieving, through seniority, the chairmanship of the Appropriations Committee. His predecessor, William Copeland, served 16 years before assuming that most powerful committee chairmanship. Today's co-chairs, Richard Young and Don Gilmer, have served 28 and 16 years, respectively, and they still would be waiting but for the GOP's gains last fall and "Jake's" giving up the chairmanship because of the House Fiscal Agency scandal.

These men bided a generation, more or less, to assume responsibilities that under the three-term limit on House service will fall to men and women serving four or fewer years. Had term limits been in effect, Representative Jacobetti would have left the state House in 1960, 14 years before he assumed the Appropriations Committee chairmanship!

If the stars align properly (that is, your political party happens to be in the majority at the right time) and you outmaneuver your competitors, you could become chair of a committee with just two years' experience in the House. With but four years' experience, you could be Appropriations Committee chair. Undoubtedly, some members will assume a committee chair days after being sworn into office for the first time. Others will sponsor important bills just weeks into their first term.

A 6-year maximum House stay creates 110 rushes to succeed, just as the 8-year Senate limit inspires 38 rushes to succeed. It will cause whirlwinds of energy, threatening to break down discipline, and it will foster intemperate competition and feistiness. Regardless of a legislator's personal goals (policy change, leadership, or goodies for the district), there will be little reward for patience.

Faster Policy Change

Not only is the leadership track now compressed, but so too will be policy formation. Today, with the ever-expanding number and narrowing focus of interest groups, American politics has imposed gridlock on policy change: It only takes one Titan—a committee chair or party leader—in either legislative chamber to stand the ground against change. Moreover, legislators frequently delegate to outside, competing interest groups the negotiation of policy differences ("Come back and see us when you've ironed out your differences on the bill"). The safest bet today is on inertia.

Under term limits, however, look for faster and more dramatic change in policy and law. More single-issue candidates and policy zealots will be successful, and they will fight vigorously for change. And contrary to the fears voiced by some term limitation opponents, we believe legislators will be less likely to delegate to or even pay attention to the myriad of special interest organizations that have a presence in Lansing. We will see a breakdown of the current system of forming policy consensus through the complicated brokering of all interests. Few legislators will tolerate one or a handful of only slightly more senior members slowing or blocking the will of the majority. With many seats opening up each election year, the odds are good that the legislative chambers' majorities will shift frequently from one party to the other, causing policy change such as we see this year in Lansing.

Following the Leader

Like any organization, the legislature divides labor. Some members develop expertise in education, others in health care or transportation or utility regulation. While members sometimes change committee assignments at the start of a new term, there always is a group of seasoned experts from whom their colleagues seek guidance.

Lansing observers shudder at the thought of the school aid formula being written without the guiding and tutoring hands of a Dan DeGrow in the Senate or a Jim O'Neill in the House or appropriations targets being set without Sen. Harry Gast or representatives Dick Young and Don Gilmer. Term limits will weigh such anchors of policy leadership and expertise. Like any entity, the legislature will adapt to change, finding ways—among them relying on staff and hometown influences—to fill the vacuum created by retiring expert legislators.

Under term limits the legislative staff will gain more influence over policy. The number of staff has grown immensely in the past 30 years, and already many influential policymakers are found not in the swivel chairs on the chamber floor but in the cramped offices housing the staff.

With staff pay and benefits often exceeding legislative salaries, it will not be surprising for the legislator/staffer revolving door to turn with more frequency: Retiring members will take staff positions, and staffers will seek the elected jobs of their former bosses.

Legislative staffers generally fall into two categories: policy "wonks" and political operatives. The policy wonks are specialists in specific areas such as education finance, health care, or transportation. It is to these individuals that a growing body of institutional knowledge, memory, and policy expertise will devolve. Political operatives include people who are liaisons between the legislator and district constituents and statewide interest groups, who build community and political support for the legislator, and/or who manage, raise funds for, and mobilize volunteers for the next election campaign.

About 20 current legislators (roughly the same number who hold a law degree) held political operative staff positions in congressional or state legislative offices prior to election to the state legislature. Staffers learn the ropes of campaigning, gain understanding of public policy issues, and meet influential local leaders. They are natural candidates for vacant legislative seats. A lower salary is accepted as the trade-off for the power to cast votes directly, the pleasure of becoming the boss, the gratification of winning an election under his or her own name (as opposed to being the surrogate parent of the winner), and the possibility of fulfilling a political dream.

Trust but Verify

Invoking an old Russian expression, President Reagan adopted his "trust but verify" policy toward arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union. In politics and policy-making, trust emanates from experience in dealing with advocates and information sources. Although it is expected that information received will reflect the bias of the provider, to be avoided are deceit, deception, or deliberate suppression of pertinent matter. Over time, a lawmaker determines the level of credibility of the various info-dispensers, such as trade and professional associations, multi-client lobbyists, legislative staff, executive branch officials, and labor and industry groups. And as a lawmaker acquires information about an issue, also over time, s/he develops a standard against which the practicality of new information can be measured.

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce directory of trade and professional associations has 400 listings, and it is not comprehensive. While exaggerated because of the low financial reporting thresholds and broad definition in state law, the secretary of state has on file the names of about 3,100 lobbyists and lobbyist agents seeking to influence state government. (If a House member met with each registered lobbyist for one hour and scheduled two such meetings each work day, it would take six full years—the limit on House service—to see every one!) Every state department has scores of experts in various policy fields. It is a daunting task to identify the various sources of information in Lansing, in or out of government, let alone apply the credibility and practicality tests. Under term limitation legislators won't have the span of time they once had to develop and verify sources of information and expertise.

Location, Location, Location

The real estate truism about the importance of location applies to political influence. To many current state legislators (and indeed, the current governor, attorney general, and secretary of state), Lansing now is home. They spend as much or more leisure, family, and professional time in the state capital as in the district. Some legislators have moved their families to Lansing, maintaining an apartment in their district to meet residency requirements of state election law. Although one must be careful not to appear to be out of touch with the district (a very effective arrow in a challenger's quiver)—which necessitates a lot of Friday through Monday travel in the district—the life of many current legislators is centered in Lansing, just as many members of the U.S. Congress, with arduous and expensive travel between place of work and district, make Washington, D.C., their home.

It is human nature to be influenced by one's friends. The longer the Lansing tenure, the more apt is the state politician to settle into Lansing camaraderie with fellow officeholders, lobbyists, and capitol-connected pooh-bahs. This Lansing focus affects the formation of state policy because it tends to harmonize outlook. Rather than casting a vote strictly on the best interest of one's district, through bonding and talk with the Lansing crowd the legislator may come to see a broader picture. It mitigates against myopic, district-bound paternalism.

With the shortened tenure imposed by term limits, the influence of the Lansing locus will diminish. Fewer incoming legislators will move their households to Lansing. Although the new people will make many acquaintances, they will develop few deep friendships in the capital city. The "club" will disband. Friendships among legislators, that wellspring of harmony and consensus, will be harder to develop because of the turnover in both legislative chambers: After each election term limits will force into retirement half of all senators and one-third of the representatives; primary and general election defeats and voluntary retirements will add to the turnover. (The exodus could be far greater in the first election cycle affected by term limits. In 1998, for example, it is likely that 50–75 percent of state representatives will be forced out of office; in 2002 the percentage of state senators leaving office will be in the same range.)

With fewer friendships in the state capital, legislators will tend to rely on back-home influences. Where a legislator today may think to call the Michigan Florist Association office for a perspective on a greenhouse regulation bill, tomorrow s/he will call the local florist. Where a legislator now calls the Michigan Department of Public Health's deputy chief of the Bureau of Environmental Health, tomorrow the call will go to the county health officer.

The future key to policy wins by advocacy groups will be found in political and social relationships back in the communities, no longer in the eight square blocks of downtown Lansing. Advocacy groups will have to engage in old-fashioned, grass-roots organizing: recruiting like-minded candidates, raising local political financing, and mobilizing volunteers to help with campaigns and to keep the pressure on after the election.

COMPETITIVE RACES AND FRESH FACES

Supporters of term limitation argue that it will bring more competition to electoral politics. They contend that in the past, incumbents' name recognition, media attention, and fund-raising advantages doomed challengers to failure (indeed, reelection rates for members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the state Senate and House have averaged 95 percent for the past decade). They believe that forced retirement will guarantee badly needed fresh faces in public service. (However, Rep. Maxine Berman, writing a PSC guest commentary in opposition to term limits, found that despite the success of incumbents, turnover in the state House of Representatives was 42 percent from 1983 to 1992 and in the Senate, 63 percent from 1981 to 1992.)

Competitiveness in legislative races will be changed by term limits, but the degree and quality of competition will vary according to the political complexion and incumbency factor in each district.

One-Party Districts: General Elections

Voters in about 85 House and 26 Senate districts in Michigan are so lopsidedly aligned with one or the other political party that the outcome of their general elections is a foregone conclusion. For example, no Republican has a chance in Detroit's five Senate districts; no Democrat has a chance in Ottawa County's two House districts. Term limits will not change in any way the competitiveness (or lack thereof) in general elections in the two-thirds of legislative districts controlled by one party.

Interestingly, this fact could affect PAC contributions. Historically, PACs have provided their dollars to incumbents, but with fewer incumbents seeking reelection and the large number of incumbent candidates who will be running safely in one-party districts, the need for PAC monies in one-party district races may diminish.

One-Party Districts: Primary Elections

Since winning the primary of the controlling party assures election of the candidate to the legislature in one-party districts, the real battles occur in the partisan nominating primaries. Except in reapportionment years (when redrawn district boundaries can pit incumbents against one another or force an incumbent to campaign in new areas among unfamiliar voters), few incumbents have faced serious primary challenges. Those who have typically have fallen into one of three categories: (1) They have intraparty ideological problems (e.g., a Republican who has cast one or more "liberal" votes on controversial issues such as abortion or taxes and faces a conservative challenger); (2) they have ethical/legal problems that weaken voter confidence in them, or (3) the electorate feels they are out of touch with the district, spending too much time in Lansing and too little in listening to local opinion and helping constituents.

With term limits we still will see few serious challenges to incumbents, even those perceived to have problems. The exception, as mentioned will be when the Cassius Effect comes into play and term-limited legislators challenge incumbents in higher office. In the future a person eying a legislative seat likely just will wait until the incumbent is forced to retire, rather than go up against the incumbent's PAC war chest, political organization, and name recognition, even if weakened by problems. Competitiveness in primaries where incumbents seek reelection actually will decline.

But with many incumbents forced to retire each election year, primaries in one-party, *open* districts (those without an incumbent) can be expected to be crowded and competitive. Given forced retirement rates of 33 percent in the House and 50 percent in the Senate each election year, we can expect about 28 one-party House districts and 14 one-party Senate districts frequently to draw a half dozen or more candidates each. Splinter candidates, those representing narrow ideologies or causes, will find crowded primaries—where the rest of the vote is split—in one-party districts conducive to wins. Over time, it may evolve that statewide groups (e.g., unions, professional associations, and business organizations) will spawn and fuel campaigns of their own members in open primaries. They shrewdly may feel that it is possible, selectively, to get their own special interest directly into legislative chambers, giving them insider clout in addition to having indirect influence through lobbying. The political parties will have to make a concerted effort to line up candidates with interests and concerns sufficiently broad to keep the legislature from becoming a hodgepodge of single-minded individualists.

Marginal Seats: General Elections

The lion's share of party funds and organizational resources go into marginal districts, where an election can be won by either political party. These marginal districts (about 25 in the House and 12 in the Senate) usually determine which party wins majority control of each chamber. General election competition for these seats will become more and more vigorous as the retirement of incumbents opens the door to even closer contests between the parties. It is quite likely that half or more of all PAC, political party, and legislative caucus spending will pour into these open, marginal seats. It can be envisioned—given that the chambers' majorities may be at stake and that the incumbent-free slate evens the odds—that a general election campaign for a marginal House district will cost a combatant $150,000–$250,000; one for the Senate might cost three times that sum. Michigan's first $1 million state legislative campaign may be only a few years off. In such races PAC money will be more important than in others, but since the number of incumbents—PACs' favored beneficiaries under the old system—will diminish, we expect PAC giving to become more partisan.

Marginal Seats: Primary Elections

Last August, the 96th District state House seat in Saginaw and Bay counties was an open seat without an incumbent; it was also a marginal seat, i.e., winnable by either party. Ten Democrats and eight Republicans vied in their respective primaries. A Republican won his party's primary by a margin of *one* vote and went on to win the district in the general election. This foreshadows how intense the competition and diffused the vote will be in primaries for the legislature's marginal seats.

The political parties—and perhaps legislative staffs and caucuses—will try to recruit proven vote getters or prominent, well-regarded citizens to run in primaries in the marginal districts. And so, too, will special interest groups: those tied to a profession, such as union organizer or physician or florist, and those aligned with a cause, such as abortion, gun laws, or environmentalism. The pluralism of Michigan's population will play out in scores of legislative districts. To the extent the pluralists gain power at the expense of political parties, the legislature itself could become less a body of Republicans and Democrats and more a body of single-interest professionals and zealots.

In sum, proponents of term limitation argue that it will increase electoral competition, but we believe this is unlikely to be true across the board. In some cases, such as where there is an incumbent in a one-party district, term limits actually may reduce competition. With anywhere from one-third to all incumbents ineligible for reelection in any election year, it is certain that competition will become more heated in one-party district primaries and in marginal district primary and general elections.

CONCLUSION

Not since Michigan's constitutional rewrite was approved by voters in 1962 has any structural change in government had the consequences of the 1992 adoption of term limits.

Currently in vogue in many disciplines from physics to politics is application of the *chaos theory*: Not every act of nature or man is dependably shaped by the routine and experiences of the past; some natural occurrences and human behavior are out of sync with regular patterns—they distort convention and unhinge predictability.

Term limitation will produce its own chaos within Michigan's political system. The rule has changed and so will elections, government, and behavior by politicians. The old guard's ability to predict the future by experiencing the past will vanish.

Change in itself is amoral. It is the *consequences* of change that are important. By itself, it is neither good nor bad that by 2003 the chair of a legislative appropriations committee will have served in the chamber four or fewer years, that the pace of policy-making will quicken, that many legislative districts will draw larger fields of candidates, or that grass roots political power will displace in large measure the influence of statewide PAC war chests. Change requires adjustments, however, and the political parties and those who advocate causes before government must recognize the change and react, or they will see their influence decline.

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