



**PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

**Term Limits for Members of Congress  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

**SURVEY FIELDDED BY:** Nielsen Scarborough  
**SAMPLE SIZE:** 2,700 Respondents

**FIELD DATES:** February 1 - 14, 2023  
**MARGIN OF ERROR:** +/- 1.9%

Q1 through Q22 withheld for future release.

On another topic, as you may know there is some discussion in Congress today about the possibility of having limits on the number of terms that a Senator or House Member can serve.<sup>1</sup> This would require an amendment to the US Constitution. Here is an argument in favor:

Q23. When a Member of Congress remains in office for a few terms, they accumulate advantages over any challenger--they have more name recognition and are able to raise much more money. In fact, incumbents win re-election races more than 90 percent of the time. There may be much better candidates out there who never get a chance.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
<b>National</b>	48.0%	35.3%	<b>83.3%</b>	12.3%	3.7%	<b>16.0%</b>	0.6%
Republicans	54.1%	30.7%	<b>84.8%</b>	10.9%	4.2%	<b>15.1%</b>	0.2%
Democrats	42.1%	40.2%	<b>82.3%</b>	14.2%	2.7%	<b>16.9%</b>	0.9%
Independents	47.8%	34.9%	<b>82.7%</b>	11.5%	5.0%	<b>16.5%</b>	0.9%
<b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b>							
Very red	53.8%	31.8%	<b>85.6%</b>	10.5%	3.6%	<b>14.1%</b>	0.4%
Somewhat red	51.1%	35.0%	<b>86.1%</b>	10.7%	2.7%	<b>13.4%</b>	0.6%
Lean red	47.8%	35.4%	<b>83.2%</b>	13.4%	3.0%	<b>16.4%</b>	0.5%
Lean blue	47.0%	33.5%	<b>80.5%</b>	13.2%	5.5%	<b>18.7%</b>	0.9%
Somewhat blue	47.3%	36.7%	<b>84.0%</b>	11.0%	4.4%	<b>15.4%</b>	0.6%
Very blue	41.5%	39.5%	<b>81.0%</b>	14.8%	3.4%	<b>18.2%</b>	0.8%

Here is an argument against:

Q24. Having term limits is undemocratic because it takes away people's freedom to elect the representative they think is best. If people have a well-qualified and effective Member of Congress, they should be able to re-elect them. We should not tamper with the Constitution in this way.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
<b>National</b>	10.8%	27.5%	<b>38.3%</b>	26.9%	34.7%	<b>61.6%</b>	0.2%
Republicans	12.4%	24.5%	<b>36.9%</b>	27.0%	36.2%	<b>63.2%</b>	0.0%
Democrats	9.7%	31.0%	<b>40.7%</b>	27.2%	31.8%	<b>59.0%</b>	0.2%
Independents	9.4%	26.3%	<b>35.7%</b>	25.9%	37.7%	<b>63.6%</b>	0.7%
<b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b>							
Very red	8.4%	28.7%	<b>37.1%</b>	26.2%	36.5%	<b>62.7%</b>	0.2%
Somewhat red	10.5%	24.4%	<b>34.9%</b>	29.1%	35.9%	<b>65.0%</b>	0.0%
Lean red	8.6%	24.5%	<b>33.1%</b>	30.0%	36.4%	<b>66.4%</b>	0.6%
Lean blue	10.9%	30.2%	<b>41.1%</b>	24.5%	34.4%	<b>58.9%</b>	0.0%
Somewhat blue	13.9%	27.7%	<b>41.6%</b>	22.8%	35.4%	<b>58.2%</b>	0.2%
Very blue	12.5%	30.4%	<b>42.9%</b>	28.6%	28.4%	<b>57.0%</b>	0.0%

<sup>1</sup> [H.J. Res 3](#) by Rep. Fallon (R), [H.J. Res 5](#) by Rep. Fitzpatrick (R), [H.J. Res 11](#) by Rep. Norman (R), [H.J. Res 20](#) by Rep. Van Orden (R), [H.J. Res 32](#) by Rep. Tenney (R), [S.J. Res 2](#) by Sen. Cruz (R) in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Here is another argument in favor:

Q25. Because incumbents are so secure, they don't need to be attentive to their constituents and increasingly lose touch with the people back home. If we were to have term limits, we would have more open-seat races in which both candidates would really have to earn the votes of the people, including by paying attention to their views.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
<b>National</b>	52.9%	34.2%	<b>87.1%</b>	9.4%	3.0%	<b>12.4%</b>	0.6%
Republicans	58.7%	31.5%	<b>90.2%</b>	6.4%	2.8%	<b>9.2%</b>	0.6%
Democrats	47.7%	35.8%	<b>83.5%</b>	12.8%	3.3%	<b>16.1%</b>	0.5%
Independents	51.8%	36.3%	<b>88.1%</b>	8.5%	2.7%	<b>11.2%</b>	0.7%
<b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b>							
Very red	58.4%	30.6%	<b>89.0%</b>	9.0%	1.6%	<b>10.6%</b>	0.3%
Somewhat red	58.2%	32.9%	<b>91.1%</b>	6.4%	2.1%	<b>8.5%</b>	0.4%
Lean red	50.7%	38.2%	<b>88.9%</b>	7.5%	3.4%	<b>10.9%</b>	0.3%
Lean blue	53.0%	31.6%	<b>84.6%</b>	9.5%	4.3%	<b>13.8%</b>	1.5%
Somewhat blue	54.4%	33.6%	<b>88.0%</b>	9.0%	2.8%	<b>11.8%</b>	0.2%
Very blue	43.9%	36.0%	<b>79.9%</b>	16.4%	3.0%	<b>19.4%</b>	0.7%

Here is another argument against:

Q26. Term limits would greatly reduce the number of Members of Congress who have deep experience and knowledge of the issues. They also have well-developed relationships that make it more possible to negotiate deals. Research has shown that, with term limits, representatives are not more responsive to constituents.<sup>2</sup> It is great to have fresh blood, but seasoned Members have a lot to offer as well.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
<b>National</b>	11.5%	38.9%	<b>50.4%</b>	26.4%	22.9%	<b>49.3%</b>	0.3%
Republicans	9.3%	35.9%	<b>45.2%</b>	28.2%	26.3%	<b>54.5%</b>	0.3%
Democrats	13.5%	44.0%	<b>57.5%</b>	24.3%	18.0%	<b>42.3%</b>	0.2%
Independents	12.2%	34.5%	<b>46.7%</b>	26.7%	26.2%	<b>52.9%</b>	0.5%
<b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b>							
Very red	10.3%	38.9%	<b>49.2%</b>	24.7%	25.8%	<b>50.5%</b>	0.3%
Somewhat red	9.1%	38.8%	<b>47.9%</b>	30.4%	21.1%	<b>51.5%</b>	0.6%
Lean red	9.2%	38.1%	<b>47.3%</b>	27.3%	25.3%	<b>52.6%</b>	0.0%
Lean blue	11.4%	37.9%	<b>49.3%</b>	24.7%	25.8%	<b>50.5%</b>	0.2%
Somewhat blue	14.3%	36.9%	<b>51.2%</b>	24.9%	23.7%	<b>48.6%</b>	0.3%
Very blue	16.4%	43.3%	<b>59.7%</b>	25.4%	14.7%	<b>40.1%</b>	0.1%

Q27. How acceptable would it be to you to have an amendment to the US Constitution to limit how many terms a Senator or House Member can serve? Please answer on the scale below.

	(0-4)	5	(6-10)	Ref./DK
<b>National</b>	19.8%	10.1%	69.7%	0.3%
Republicans	18.6%	7.9%	73.3%	0.3%
Democrats	21.6%	10.8%	67.2%	0.4%
Independents	18.7%	13.5%	67.4%	0.3%
<b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b>				
Very red	17.9%	10.2%	71.7%	0.2%
Somewhat red	18.7%	9.0%	71.6%	0.7%
Lean red	18.9%	8.0%	72.5%	0.5%
Lean blue	20.6%	8.1%	71.2%	0.1%
Somewhat blue	21.1%	12.1%	66.7%	0.1%
Very blue	22.3%	13.5%	64.0%	0.2%

<sup>2</sup> Congressional Testimony of Lynda Powell. (2019) [Keeping Congress Accountable: Term Limits in the United States](#); Pol Sci Res Methods. (2020) [Do Elections Improve Constituency Responsiveness? Evidence from US Cities](#)

Q28. So, in conclusion, do you favor or oppose an amendment to the US Constitution to limit the number of terms that a Senator or House Member can serve?

	Favor	Oppose	Ref/DK
<b>National</b>	83.0%	16.6%	0.5%
Republicans	85.9%	13.7%	0.4%
Democrats	79.7%	19.8%	0.5%
Independents	83.6%	15.9%	0.5%
<b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b>			
Very red	86.4%	13.3%	0.2%
Somewhat red	85.8%	14.0%	0.3%
Lean red	83.2%	16.7%	0.1%
Lean blue	81.4%	18.1%	0.5%
Somewhat blue	82.9%	16.1%	1.0%
Very blue	78.2%	21.1%	0.7%

**[If Favor (Q28=1), ask the following]**

Please enter how many terms each of the following should be limited to:

Q29a. House Members should be limited to \_\_\_\_ two-year terms.

	Median	Up to 4 terms	5 terms	6 or more terms	Oppose term limits	Ref/DK
<b>National</b>	4	59.5%	10.3%	12.5%	16.6%	1.1%
Republicans	3	64.3%	9.4%	11.7%	13.7%	0.9%
Democrats	4	53.7%	11.6%	14.0%	19.8%	1.0%
Independents	4	61.7%	9.4%	11.0%	15.9%	2.0%
<b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b>						
Very red	4	63.4%	9.7%	13.1%	13.3%	0.4%
Somewhat red	4	64.9%	10.5%	10.0%	14.0%	0.6%
Lean red	4	59.0%	9.3%	13.8%	16.7%	1.2%
Lean blue	4	56.3%	10.8%	13.5%	18.1%	1.4%
Somewhat blue	4	60.0%	10.2%	11.7%	16.1%	1.9%
Very blue	4	53.1%	11.6%	13.3%	21.1%	0.9%

Q29b. Senators should be limited to \_\_\_\_ six-year terms.

	Median	Up to 2 terms	3 terms	4 or more terms	Oppose term limits	Ref/DK
<b>National</b>	2	63.0%	11.0%	7.7%	16.7%	1.6%
Republicans	2	69.0%	9.2%	6.7%	13.7%	1.5%
Democrats	2	55.9%	13.8%	8.9%	20.0%	1.3%
Independents	2	65.4%	8.7%	7.4%	15.9%	2.6%
<b>Cook's PVI (D-R)</b>						
Very red	2	65.7%	11.3%	8.3%	13.3%	1.5%
Somewhat red	2	68.1%	11.0%	6.0%	14.0%	0.9%
Lean red	2	61.4%	12.2%	7.4%	17.0%	2.0%
Lean blue	2	64.0%	8.5%	7.6%	18.1%	1.9%
Somewhat blue	2	61.5%	12.2%	7.8%	16.2%	2.3%
Very blue	2	56.6%	11.2%	10.1%	21.1%	0.9%

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