

egalitarian propensities, have had "to square their own and their followers' anti-authority principles with the exercise of executive authority." Jefferson used the "hidden-hand" style of leadership later employed by Dwight Eisenhower. Jackson solved the dilemma by justifying presidential activism "in the name of limiting the activities of hierarchical institutions," such as the "monster" National Bank of the United States.

Although Ellis and Wildavsky give the modern presidents no formal grades, they do note that the performances by chief executives in recent decades have provided grounds for praise as well as criticism. "Reports of failed presidencies have risen along with egalitarian movements (civil rights, feminism, environmentalism, children's rights, and the like) because dedication to reducing differences among people leads to rejection of leadership."

Limitation's Limits

"The Uncharted Realm of Term Limitation" by Jeffrey L. Katz, in *Governing* (Jan. 1991), Congressional Quarterly, 1414 22nd St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037.

Launched last year, the movement to limit the number of terms congressmen and state legislators can serve has already scored successes in citizen initiatives in three states: California, Colorado, and Oklahoma. But the reality of term limitation in the states may not turn out to be all that its proponents hope, warns Katz, a *Governing* staff writer.

Reformers such as Lloyd Noble II, a Tulsa oilman who led the fight for Oklahoma's new law, contend that term limitation is needed because incumbents' fundraising ability and other advantages make them almost invulnerable at the polls, with the result being row upon row of lifetime legislators badly out of touch with the public. With term limitation, reformers promise, fresh citizen-legislators will sweep into

state capitals and legislatures will at last behave rationally. Legislative leaders will be chosen on the basis of ability, not seniority, and the lawmakers will keep lobbyists and bureaucrats where they should be kept—at arm's length.

Not everyone finds this idealistic vision plausible. "This notion that you're going to get citizen-legislators is silly," Gary C. Jacobson, a University of California political scientist, told Katz. "You're going to get those people who can afford to interrupt their careers for a few years, and that precludes people who have a normal job or family life."

It's also possible, Katz points out, that instead of *more* turnover in the term-limited legislatures, there will be *less*. Over the 12-year period from 1977 to 1989, according to a study by the National Conference of State Legislatures, the lower houses of California, Colorado, and Oklahoma all experienced membership turnover of 89 percent or more. With term limitation, however, much of the competition for legislative seats within the prescribed period of terms could dry up, as potential challengers simply wait for the seat to open up automatically.

Nor will selection of legislative leaders necessarily be as "rational" as reformers imagine, with more competition and people chosen for their abilities and stands on issues. With nobody having much seniority, Katz says, it might become *more* precious. "Awarding key positions on an auto-



In the 1990 election, 97 percent of incumbent U.S. senators seeking new terms and 96 percent of incumbent congressmen were reelected.

The Culture War

Why did Ronald Reagan so dismay liberals? It was not so much what he did, writes Midge Decter in *Commentary* (Mar. 1991), as what he symbolized.

People spoke of the "Reagan Revolution," but no revolution ever came to pass . . . Still, in Ronald Reagan's case, for good and ill, it was the intention that counted. The mere articulation of each of [the] uncompleted missions of the Reagan agenda—that peculiar amalgam of old conservatism and new anti-liberalism—had set off a response in the liberal community ranging from deep confusion to panic. The reason was that the two decisive Reagan elections bore testimony not so much to a wish for radical new policies as to an open declaration of war over the culture. And a culture war, as the liberals understood far better than did their conservative opponents, is a war to the death. For a culture war is not a battle over policy, [but] rather a battle about matters of the spirit . . . The underlying and all-enveloping and finally non-negotiable issue is this: are the citizens of the United

States entitled, constitutionally, morally, or socially, to rights without limit, or must the rights of truly free and equal people be realized, enriched, and safeguarded by their assumption, individual as well as collective, of the very heavy responsibilities pertaining thereto? In short, are all Americans to be paid the minimal respect owing to a free people of being appropriately rewarded or penalized for their actual conduct? This is the real question at the center of the controversy between so-called conservatives and so-called liberals. It touches everything, from crime to poverty, from the schools and universities to religion and the arts; and it even affects our relations with other nations. Whether held consciously or unconsciously, the proposition at the heart of the late-20th-century American liberalism is that when it comes to rights, some individuals and groups are more "equal" than others . . . [Given] how far our society has strayed from a properly grounded, life-enhancing definition of the word freedom, the culture war is apt to be a long and bloody one.

matic basis to the least inexperienced people might be hard to avoid."

Moreover, with so many unseasoned members, legislatures may well find themselves *more* dependent on lobbyists for information and *less* able to deal with state bureaucrats, not to mention governors.

In the end, reformers may be pursuing the wrong remedy. "It isn't just a swarm of special interests that block[s] the enactment of sound public policy," Katz writes. "[It is] also the absence of any public consensus on major issues. Term limitations wouldn't change that."

Isn't That Special?

"The Rise and Fall of Special Interest Politics" by Paul E. Peterson, in *Political Science Quarterly* (Winter 1990-91), Academy of Political Science, 475 Riverside Dr., Ste. 1274, New York, N.Y. 10115-0012.

The Tax Reform Act of 1986, which eliminated a host of valuable tax loopholes, represented a defeat of the special interests that many analysts thought would never happen. Can it be that special interests have lost much of their renowned influence in Washington? Exactly, argues Peterson, a Harvard political scientist. "Special interests may have been steadily gaining in influence throughout the 1960s and 1970s," he writes, "but both during the Reagan years and during the initial

years of the Bush administration, these groups lost much of [their] clout."

Peterson has his own rather special definition of a special interest: It "consists of or is represented by a fairly small number of intense supporters who cannot expect that their cause will receive strong support . . . except under unusual circumstances." Peterson names no names, but examples might be the Consumer Bankers Association or the National Tire Dealers and Retreaders Association. Excluded