

TESTIMONY OF TOM RICE  
Pickerington, Ohio  
Senate General Government Committee  
OPPOSITION to SJR 3 - June 2025

Madam Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Tom Rice. I am a former American History teacher, now retired, and reside in Pickerington, Ohio. Thank you for this opportunity to testify against Senate Joint Resolution 3, to which I am very much opposed. Years ago, when teaching about the Constitution in American History, I would insist that my students be cognizant of three basic principles:

1. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land ( Article Six ).
2. Words have meaning.
3. **The Constitution means what it says.**

Let us examine the wording of this bill. Senate Joint Resolution 3 calls for the convening of an Article Five Convention for the “ ... purpose of imposing fiscal restraints on the federal government, limiting the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and congressional term limits. “ Concerning the first two parts of this proposal, **the Constitution, as it is currently written, already restrains the federal government, and limits its power and jurisdiction!** Let me provide some additional qualifying comments which will confirm how the Constitution “ handcuffs “ the federal government. According to Article One, Section Eight of the Constitution, when Congress passes legislation, they can **only** make laws and spend money to provide for the common defense and general welfare. In this part of the Constitution, the common defense is described in Clauses Ten through Sixteen; the general welfare is described in Clauses Two through Nine, and Clause Seventeen. Additional “ handcuffing “ of the federal government by the Constitution is also provided by the Tenth Amendment, declaring if an item is not indicated in the Constitution, the federal government cannot become involved in this area ( such powers are reserved exclusively to the states or to the people ). In short, the Tenth Amendment is telling the federal government “ if we forgot anything, you can’t do that either! “ Congress cannot pass additional legislation and spend additional money on measures already not provided for in the Constitution. To do this, Congress would need to amend the Constitution.

Let us look at the third part of Senate Joint Resolution 3, which advocates in favor of congressional term limits. Under America’s first frame of government, the Articles of Confederation, the United States had congressional term limits. Realizing the deficiency of term limits ( the lack of electoral accountability of an out-of-control congressman in his final term in office, and the removal of virtuous congressmen from office ), the delegates to

the 1787 Philadelphia Convention excluded the concept of congressional term limits in the Constitution. Hypothetically, let us pretend we have congressional term limits, but we do not have an informed electorate. Under this scenario, you have “ congressional musical chairs. “ Big-spending incumbent “ Congressman A “ is term limited out of office, only to be replaced by big-spending new “ Congressman B. “ How then does the U.S. benefit from congressional term limits? The solution to what ails America is not congressional term limits, but the creation of an informed electorate. Another question: is the Constitution deficient because it does not have congressional term limits? Let me answer this question by posing to you this analogy: married for twenty years, a husband ( who has been notoriously unfaithful ) and his loyal wife, are standing before a judge in divorce court. Has this divorce scenario been caused by the deficiency of the institution of marriage, or the cheating husband? The United States does not need congressional term limits. **The deficiency lies not with the Constitution – the deficiency lies with those unfaithful Congressmen, who fail to keep their oath of office, to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution, so help me God!** Actually, we already have congressional term limits – they are called “ elections “ ( every two years in the House of Representatives, and every six years in the Senate ).

Thomas Jefferson once wrote “ ... in questions of power, let us hear no more of confidence in men, but bind them down from mischief with the chains of the Constitution. “ The Constitution needs to be obeyed as it is already written, and not tinkered with by modern day innovators; it needs to be adhered to, not amended.

For the aforementioned reasons, I am opposed to the passage of Senate Joint Resolution 3, and urge you to vote against this bill.

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