

Ted Cruz Will Push for Term Limits in New Congress

Two conservative lawmakers plan to fight for term limits in the next Congress, saying the effort will foster accountability and complement President-elect Donald Trump's promise to "drain the swamp."

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), and Rep. Ron DeSantis (R-Fla.) announced they will introduce a constitutional amendment that would limit members of the House to three two-year terms and members of the Senate to two six-year terms.

"This is the same amendment that Donald Trump endorsed during his campaign," DeSantis said in a phone interview Tuesday with The Daily Signal. "It is the same amendment that is supported by groups like U.S. Term Limits, Inc."

Enacting term limits, DeSantis said, will "force new blood into the Congress."

DeSantis and Cruz formally unveiled the initiative in an op-ed published Friday by *The Washington Post*.

The lawmakers said their goal is to end an era of career politicians.

"We believe that the rise of political careerism in modern Washington is a drastic departure from what the founders intended of our federal governing bodies," Cruz and DeSantis wrote. "To effectively 'drain the swamp,' we believe it is past time to enact term limits for Congress."

It's a long road, as Heritage Foundation scholars Hans von Spakovsky and Elizabeth Slattery have written about amending the Constitution.

A constitutional amendment may be proposed by two-thirds of

both the House and Senate or by a national convention called by Congress at the request of two-thirds of the state legislatures. Either way, three-fourths of the states must ratify an amendment—and Congress decides whether state legislatures or state ratifying conventions take those votes.

Term limits will help address the issue of establishment politicians, DeSantis told The Daily Signal.

“The fact of the matter is the election system is designed and the rules are designed by incumbents to protect incumbents, that’s just the reality,” DeSantis said, adding:

So, if you look at the House of Representatives, for example, 90 percent of the seats are going to go to one party over the other just because of demographics and other issues. The only chance you have to really defeat an incumbent ... is in a primary.

Term limits already enjoy substantial public support, DeSantis and Cruz said in their op-ed.

They cite a Rasmussen Reports survey finding that 74 percent of likely voters support congressional term limits. Only 13 percent oppose term limits and another 13 percent say they are undecided.

Unlike some initiatives introduced by conservative lawmakers, this one may enjoy bipartisan support.

Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Calif., reportedly said she would support a discussion of term limits. Rep. John Larson (D-Conn.), former chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, praised the precedent set by Republicans in enforcing term limits for lawmakers who lead committees, Politico reported.

“A number of people would say Republicans have struck a better formula for advancement,” Larson said, according to Politico. “And I don’t think it’s a bad thing for leadership at all.”

DeSantis told The Daily Signal that lawmakers who don't support term limits will have to answer to their constituents:

The problem is that when you get up to the political class there are some members that don't want to be term-limited, and I think there had been a lot of Democrats who have kind of pooh-poohed term limits over the years. The question will be, if we keep it up and get a public vote, are they going to listen to their constituents or are they going to basically just say that we don't need term limits?

With term limits, lawmakers will have a better shot at reforming the system, the Florida Republican said.

"So, if you have a reform impulse, I think with term limits it will be much easier to be able to enact reform," DeSantis said. "When you have people that have been around for 40 years, they kind of have their own ways, and it's much harder to get them to change." {eoa}

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