

## Measure limits time in office

GRANTS PASS (AP) — With voter anger at their elected officials flooding the nation, no one dares to mount a campaign against Measure 3, which would limit the number of times Oregonians could be elected to state and congressional office.

Even the Oregon AFL-CIO, which filed the only argument against term limits in the Oregon Voters' Pamphlet, won't shovel its time and money against the tide.

"The polls are showing it's going to pass 3-1," said Steve Lanning, political education coordinator for the labor organization. "People are just staying away from it."

Measure 3 was launched by Gresham athletic club owner Frank Eisenzimmer, one of the authors of the Measure 5 property tax limit that rode a wave of taxpayer anger to passage in 1990.

With 14 other states considering term limits Nov. 3, its part of a national upwelling of feeling that politicians are more interested in getting elected than solving the state's and the nation's problems, said Eisenzimmer.

Challengers can't be expected to defeat incumbents one by one, Eisenzimmer said. The incumbents hold too many advantages: name recognition, free mailing, travel and TV time; piles of special interest money, and pork barrel largesse.

"Half those people in the state Legislature, that's their only job," Eisenzimmer said. "We need people from all walks of life to serve in Congress. They are concerned with solutions, not getting elected. Term limits is going to do that."

Measure 3 would amend the Oregon Constitution to restrict service in the Oregon House to six years and the Oregon Senate to eight years, with a total of 12 years in both chambers. Statewide offices would be limited to eight years. Service would stop after six years in the U.S. House and 12 years in the U.S. Senate.

Oregon voters got a look at term limits last year when a measure surfaced in Washington.

Oregon's version offers a major difference: It isn't retroactive, so the clout the state would lose by forcing out veteran Sens. Mark Hatfield and Bob Packwood wouldn't go immediately.

Robert Johnstone, a professor of politics at Earlham College in Richmond, Ind., is surprised term limits has gained such popularity.

"Efforts to restore competition for congressional seats seems to me a good idea," he said. "Term limitations seems to me a bad method of doing that. It's a quick-fix approach that, while it stimulates competition, it creates other problems."

## Panel selection process irks news organizations

NEW YORK (AP) — Some major news organizations, NBC and CBS among them, are refusing to allow their employees to participate as panelists or moderators in the presidential debates because the campaigns have a role in their selection.

The latest debate over the debates comes during a year of unusual rancor between the news media and at least two presidential campaigns — those of President Bush and Ross Perot.

The two networks, along with the Associated Press and some other organizations, said they don't believe it is appropriate for the campaigns to dictate who is — or is not — allowed to ask questions of the candidates.

"Debate moderators and panelists should be chosen by independent groups, not political parties," NBC President Michael Gartner said.

At *The Wall Street Journal*, which has a similar policy against participating in the debates, Washington bureau chief Al Hunt said one *Journal* reporter was asked to be on a debate panel and said no.

Still, Bob Neuman, a spokesman for the bipartisan Commission on Presidential Debates, said there was no lack of journalists willing to participate. About 15 news organizations have volunteered to take part in the debates, which begin Sunday, and still others might be willing.

"To turn them down would

be to lose an opportunity to ask a politician a question you think is important," ABC anchor Peter Jennings told the *New York Times*.


ABC has said it would decide whether to participate only after it is invited. CNN has said much the same thing.

"CNN would like the opportunity to question the candidates in this forum," spokesman Sven Haarhoff said. But he also said that CNN wants its principal anchor, Bernard Shaw, to be chosen and hasn't decided whether it will accept an invitation to someone else.

The *New York Times*, while harboring concerns about the process, is also waiting to rule on the process until it is invited to participate, according to Allan M. Siegal, an assistant managing editor. "There is no point in our taking a position while it is theoretical," he said.

The selection process, worked out by the campaigns of President Bush and Democratic nominee Bill Clinton in conjunction with the bipartisan commission, makes the presidential nominating process look simple.

Essentially, it boils down to this: Two of the three panelists at the debate Sunday will have come from lists that were drawn up by the two campaigns. The final choice will be up to the bipartisan commission. A similar procedure will be used to choose a moderator.




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Robert Grudin is Professor of English at the U of O. He graduated from Harvard and received his Ph.D. at the University of California at Berkeley. His other works include: *The Grace of Great Things and Time and the Art of Living*. Hardcover 19.00

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