

EDITORIAL

Campaign costs hurt candidates

Former vice president Dan Quayle is the latest victim of a growing phenomenon of American politics — the growing cost of presidential campaigns.

Quayle said he wanted to spend more time with his family, but a number of sources close to him have said he was having problems raising the funds necessary to make a run for the presidency.

In this sense, Quayle isn't alone. Conducting a presidential campaign these days is a spendy proposition, and a number of candidates have either dropped out of the race or don't run altogether because of a lack of money. Some have said that to be viable to run for the presidency in 1996, a candidate must raise \$20 million by the end of 1995.

To be honest, running for president these days requires a candidate to be able to beg for money. In the first months of a campaign, presidential races are more of a contest to see who can raise the most money in the time allotted rather than a discussion of political issues. This detracts from democracy by making the campaign less dependent on ideas and policies while making it more reliant on funding, an unfortunate proposition for voters.

Another problem is the frontloading of primaries for Republican presidential candidates. Within a six-week period in the spring of 1996, decisions will most likely be made about who will be the Republican nominee for president. This only highlights the need for early money for candidates.

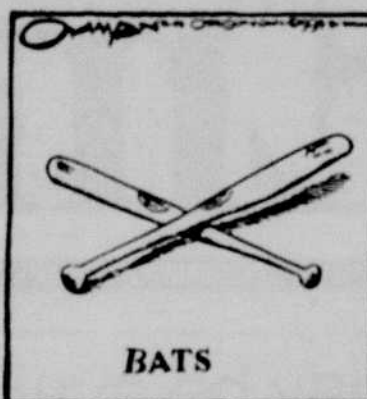
Although little can be done by the average citizen to reduce the costs of primary campaigns, Americans can help to fund the general election.

Tax time is upon the country again. By checking off the box on a tax return for the Presidential Election Campaign Fund, a person can dedicate \$3 of his or her tax money to a fund that helps to equally fund candidates during the final and decisive months of a presidential campaign.

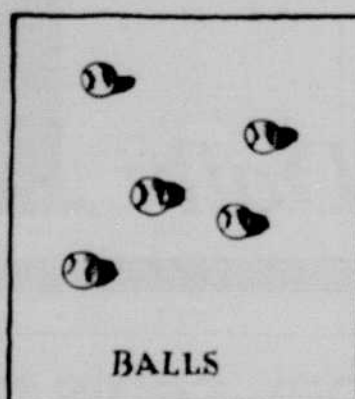
Checking off the box does not add to the taxes paid by an individual or deduct anything from a possible refund. It simply sets aside \$3 from the return to reduce dependence of candidates on special interests for part of the election season — something that just about everyone would agree is a positive and worthwhile idea.

It is unfortunate that money is the deciding factor in elections today, as it narrows out otherwise legitimate candidates who just don't have the financial resources to run and reduces choices for voters.

However, the campaign fund check-off is a unique and productive way to combat this problem. It allows taxpayers to get involved in politics and show that campaigns need not be funded totally from special interest dollars. It is truly a win-win situation for both voters and candidates.



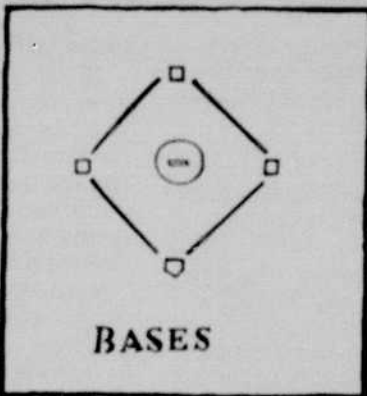
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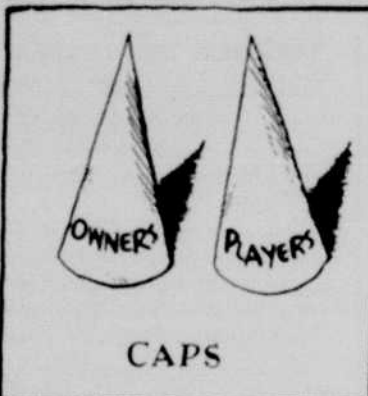
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■ OPINION

Stop special interests with term limits



PRIMO A. J. FONTANA

One of the hottest topics in the pundit business these days is term limits. It was a part of the Republican's *Contract With America* and has been one of the most passionately debated issues to face Congress this session.

The main battleground has been the House of Representatives, for GOP senators, including Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., are far less apt to support them than their more rabid counterparts in the lower chamber.

However, even some of the established House Republicans, most notably House Majority Leader Dick Armey, R-Texas, tried their best to back away from them after November's decimation of the Democratic Party. But, due to an overwhelming public demand, they are going to have to deliver.

Every state that has voted on term limits has passed them. The constitutionality of this is now being debated in the United States Supreme Court. Some public opinion polls show support for them to hover around an astounding three-quarters of respondents, a number that Bill Clinton, Bob Dole, and Newt Gingrich dream about. Obviously, to the American voters, they are an idea that's time has come.

Just for reference, most proposals have a 12-year limit for each chamber of the Representative branch — two six-year terms in the Senate, and six two-year terms in the House. Some stricter lengths have been proposed, but that seems to be the current standard.

Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and the rest of our nation's founders did not include term limits in any of our country's documents. This is one of the main arguments opponents have used against

them.

Even though they are a relatively new idea for members of Congress, most states have such rules for their governors, and as we all know, there is a two-term limit on the Presidency as well.

Why now for our representatives? That is the question which must be addressed. Something about Washington has changed so dramatically in the past few years that they are now regarded as a necessary step towards alleviating the problems of our capital.

The current lobbying system has certainly brought the question to the forefront. K Street, the place where many of the largest lobbies in the country are located, has become the fourth branch of government. The NRA, labor unions, senior citizen's groups, big businesses, pharmaceutical companies, environmentalists, you name it. All have a firm grip upon the major policy debates that are presented before Congress.

Supporters of term limits believe that their programs will cut the influence (largely monetary) of these special interest groups. They think that our representatives will no longer be able to form long-term reciprocal relationships with lobbying groups since their days will be numbered, and that this will cut down on the established collusion between the government and special interests.

Although this may be true, lobbying restrictions and campaign finance reform, which Republicans have defeated at every opportunity, would get to the point more directly.

There should be tough restrictions, if not a complete abolition, of financial compensation for votes. If the GOP was serious about ending the influence of lobbyists, that's what they would give us.

Term limit supporters also say that incumbents have a disproportional advantage in campaigns against political newcomers. They believe that this is unfair, and adds to the political entrenchment within Washington.

Television advertising and talk radio, problems which Jef-

The biggest danger once term limits pass is that people will think they are enough, because they certainly are not.

erson and Madison probably could not have truly comprehended in their day, have destroyed all rational public debate in the political arena.

True solutions to these and other campaign problems are not as simple as the GOP would suggest. Rather than the slimy spate of high-tech political ads and big media blitzes we witnessed in November, direct debate between candidates must be encouraged to give the public a clear, rational view of those for whom they are voting.

Also, candidates should be accountable for the complete truth — this is the most necessary reform of all. The new strain of "spinning," which my parents taught me to call "lying" (how old-fashioned), has made every number, every statistic, every event, every vote, a pliable idea rather than a firm fact.

The public should get straight facts, not half-truths, not innuendoes. Term limits will not fix the current Limbaughization (the master spinner himself) of American politicians, for it certainly will exist no matter how long people remain in office.

Term limits are an unfortunate and immediate necessity. Our representative political system is failing in its performance. It is sad that democracy must be interfered with in this manner, but it is the only answer.

The biggest danger once term limits pass is that people will think they are enough, because they certainly are not. Along with them, tough and sweeping campaign reforms must be passed to truly change how Washington works.

If this doesn't happen, special interests will continue to control our government, and our lives.

Primo A. J. Fontana is a columnist for the Emerald.

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