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Passing of term limit measure doubtful

WASHINGTON (AP) — Anticipating defeat on a key element in their *Contract With America*, House Republicans hope to reap credit for holding a vote on term limits while blaming Democrats for the measure's likely demise.

"If we get half the Democrats, we will pass the term limits constitutional amendment," House Speaker Newt Gingrich said Tuesday as debate opened. He said that more than 85 percent of GOP lawmakers would vote for the measure and "it ought to be possible to get half the Democrats to side with the country that elects them."

Gingrich's partisan jabbing aside, the term limits issue has had a rocky path toward this week's expected vote, particularly for an issue that commands support in the 70 percent range in public opinion polls.

Some senior Republicans oppose the limits. Rep. Henry Hyde of Illinois, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, called them a "dumb idea" that would rob Congress of needed expertise. Texas Rep. Tom DeLay, the party's whip, said the limits would enhance the power of unelected bureaucrats.

Efforts to build public support

for a specific version have been hampered by squabbling among outside interest groups, and GOP energy has been diverted into hard-fought struggles over welfare, taxes and other legislative issues. In addition, Gingrich noted earlier this month that constitutional amendments often take years to amass the support needed to pass them.

It takes a two-thirds vote — 290 if all 435 lawmakers vote — to send the measure to the Senate. Republicans hold 230 seats in the House, Democrats 204, and there is one independent.

Republican leadership aides,

speaking on condition of anonymity, predicted roughly 190-200 GOP lawmakers and about 40 or 50 Democrats would vote for term limits, leaving the measure well-shy of passing.

"I'm against any abridgement of the right of voters to choose," said one Democratic opponent, Pat Williams of Montana.

Even before the vote, supporters are discussing their next step. Some said they hope Gingrich will commit to holding another vote before the 1996 elections. There was also scattering of support for capping lawmakers' pensions after 12 years of service.

Lawyer for daughter of Malcolm X under fire

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Prosecutors asked for a gag order and sanctions Tuesday against attorney William Kunstler, who is defending a daughter of Malcolm X against charges that she plotted to kill Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

The motion accused the prominent civil rights attorney of "consciously and blatantly" violating court rules, despite repeated warnings, as part of a strategy to prejudice potential jurors.

Kunstler represents Qubilah Shabazz, who is scheduled to go on trial next month on charges that she tried to hire her high school friend Michael Fitzpatrick to kill Farrakhan.

According to transcripts of their telephone conversations, Shabazz believed Farrakhan was responsible for her father's assassination in 1965, and feared for the safety of her mother,

Betty Shabazz, because her mother had publicly expressed her suspicion of Farrakhan.

Shabazz, 34, has pleaded innocent and Kunstler and her other attorneys have claimed she was entrapped by Fitzpatrick, the government's star witness. Farrakhan, who denied any role in the assassination, has also said he believed Shabazz was set up.

The prosecutors' motion cited a rule that says, in part, that lawyers should not release information or opinions if it is likely that doing so would interfere with a fair trial.

"It's the pot calling the kettle black," Kunstler said in a statement. He had no further comment.

U.S. Magistrate Franklin Noel of St. Paul, who has been handling pretrial motions in the case, warned attorneys on both sides in a

letter Jan. 24 that they had not been fully complying with the rule.

"I will not hesitate to issue any orders which may be necessary to compel compliance with this court's policy," Noel wrote.

There was no indication when Noel would take up the gag order request.

The government accused Kunstler of violating the rule by revealing the existence of a statement Shabazz gave to the FBI, repeatedly attacking credibility of prospective witnesses, breaching confidentiality of plea negotiations and giving his opinions "in the most inflammatory way" about specific evidence in the case.

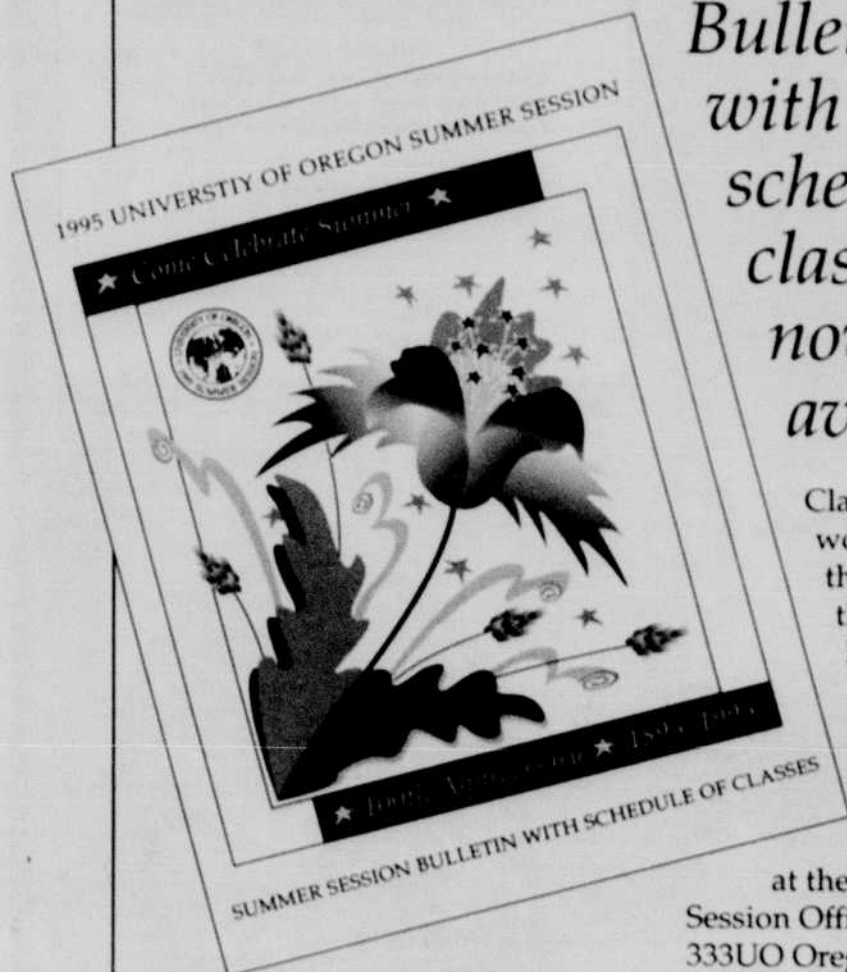
Prosecutors did not specify how the court should punish Kunstler. The motion made no mention of conduct by Shabazz's other lawyers and did not seek a blanket gag order.

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JUNE 19—AUGUST 11, 1995

Policemen acquitted of killing stray dog

GALVESTON, Texas (AP) — Two policemen were found innocent Tuesday of charges they killed a stray dog by using it for target practice.

Greg Trantham, 27, and John Overstreet, 32, who constitute half the police department in Bayou Vista, a village of 1,200 about 35 miles from Houston, had been charged with cruelty to animals and could have received a year in jail.

The officers' lawyers had contended there was no evidence to suggest the shooting even took place.

The policemen testified that they picked up the stray Lhasa

apso last April, but that it ran away from them.

They denied harming it, saying witnesses made up stories about finding its bullet-riddled carcass, and they disputed testimony that they bragged about shooting the dog.

Animal lovers across the country had deluged the police, prosecutor and judge with letters, faxes and calls. Some of the outraged had learned of the case from the Internet.

Prosecutors said the men used the dog for target practice, shooting off parts of the animal's body before killing it.

Big Boy mystery solved

TOLEDO, Ohio (AP) — The grisly Big Boy whodunit was solved Tuesday.

Eight men, most of them college students, admitted to police that they and two younger friends stole the cheery, 300-pound restaurant icon on March 17, dismembered him with a hacksaw and dumped his remains at other Big Boy restaurants in the area with notes that declared: "Big Boy is Dead."

Why?

"We were bored," said 18-year-old Tom Martinez.

The eight men will probably be charged with criminal mischief, a misdemeanor that could land them in jail for 60 days and cost them more than \$3,000 to pay for the pudgy, 6-foot Big Boy, Detective Ron Scanlon said. Charges weren't expected until Wednesday.

Two other suspects — both juveniles — failed to surrender as expected Tuesday.

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