

NEWS DIGEST

your quick guide to news from around the world

Congress rejects term limit amendment

1 WASHINGTON — The House overwhelmingly rejected a proposed constitutional amendment Wednesday to slap term limits on members of Congress after a debate marked by debilitating infighting among supporters.

The vote was 217-211, 69 votes shy of the two-thirds necessary for approval of the measure to limit lawmakers to 12-years in office — and fewer than it gained two years ago.

"They're eating their own. It's just bizarre," GOP Rep. Christopher Shays, a term limits opponent, exulted as supporters quarreled among themselves over whether six years, eight years or 12 years should be set as a limit for House service.

In the end, none of the proposals came close to amassing the two-thirds needed to prevail, leaving the issue dead for the foreseeable future.

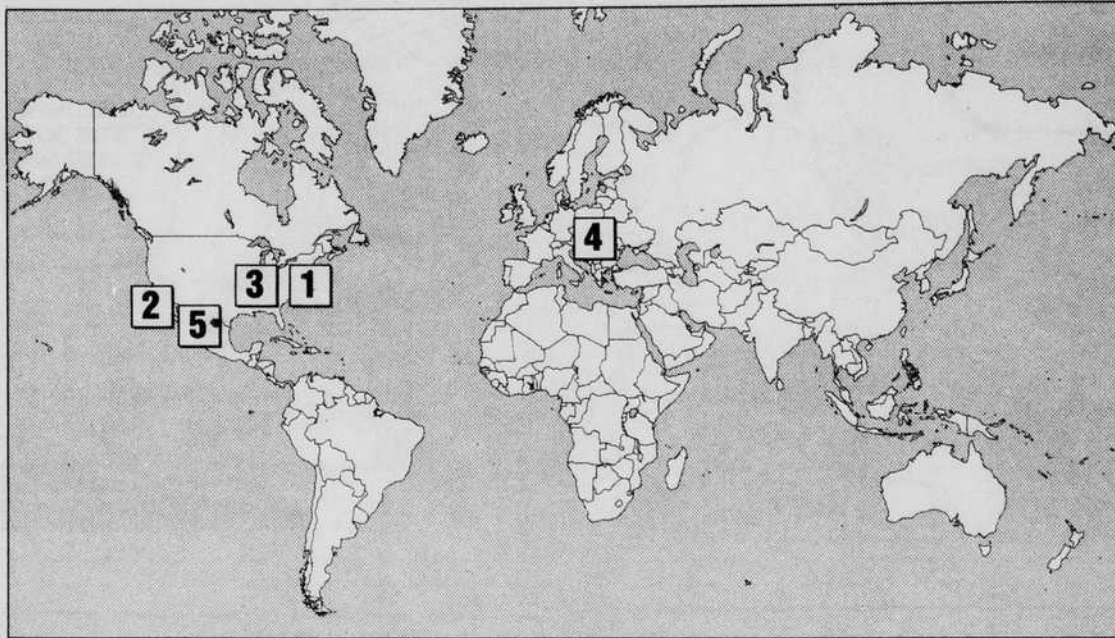
The final vote, for 12-year term limits to be applied beginning after ratification by the states, drew the support of 180 Republicans and 37 Democrats. Voting no were 45 Republicans, 165 Democrats and independent Bernard Sanders of Vermont.

"Internecine warfare" poses a grave threat to the uphill drive for success, Rep. Bill McCollum, R-Fla., mourned as the proposal moved toward its preordained doom.

Without a truce involving U.S. Term Limits and other organizations, he warned, "there will be gridlock and people who are opposed to term limits will prevail."

The more fundamental divisions over the wisdom of term limits were overshadowed in the day-long debate, although they surfaced occasionally.

"To adopt term limits is to play Russian roulette with the future," argued Rep. Henry Hyde, a 12th-term Republican.



Goldman would forgo millions for confession

2 SANTA MONICA, Calif. — Fred Goldman said Wednesday he would give up his hard-won claim to O.J. Simpson's millions if the football great would admit he is a killer and sign a detailed confession.

"I don't want to play games," Goldman told The Associated Press in a telephone interview.

"But if he wanted to sign a confession with all the details of his crime and broadcast it all over the country and publish it all over the nation, I would drop the judgment."

Goldman is the aggrieved father who never accepted Simpson's murder acquittal 16 months ago and doggedly pursued him to civil court.

He added: "All I ever wanted is justice. It's never been an issue about money."

Simpson's lawyer Robert Baker said he was discussing the offer with his client.

Colombian troubles raise coffee prices

3 CHICAGO — There's a different kind of jolt coming soon to coffee lovers. That cup of joe soon could cost more.

Too much rain in Latin America and a strike in Colombia have sent prices for future delivery of beans bubbling toward two-year highs.

The nation's top seller of regular coffee — Folgers — already has said it will raise prices seven percent next month, and others are expected to follow.

Coffeeshouses could increase prices five cents a cup by the end of summer, and grocery stores could raise prices by the end of the month unless the wholesale prices drop back, said Ted Lingle, executive director of the Specialty Coffee Association of America.

Among the 49 percent of Americans who are coffee drinkers, many are not about to give up that daily fix.

"We just can't do without it," Yvette Kukuk said as she sipped a cup at a Seattle Starbucks.

University apologizes for using Nazi book

4 VIENNA, Austria — Vienna University apologized Wednesday for its involvement with Nazism and announced a broad investigation into whether the bodies of Holocaust victims were the basis for detailed drawings in a highly acclaimed, widely used anatomy book.

"As a human being, and as a representative of the University of Vienna, I am ashamed by the university's culpable involvement in the horrors of Nazism," university Rector Alfred Ebenbauer said.

"I regret that relatively little was done in the past 50 years to work through this dark chapter of the University of Vienna, and that working through certain events now is more difficult."

The atlas, "Topographical Anatomy of the Human Being," was compiled by Eduard Pernkopf, a leading Nazi who headed the university's medical faculty after Hitler annexed Austria in 1938.

Jackson might be new father of a baby boy

5 LOS ANGELES — The self-proclaimed King of Pop and his wife had a baby boy on Wednesday, a television station reported.

KNBC-TV, citing hospital sources, said Michael Jackson's wife gave birth at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. Debbie Rowe Jackson's due date was Valentine's Day.

Medical center officials and Jackson representatives said they could not confirm the account.

"If that's the case, I'm not aware of it," said Ron Wise, spokesman for Cedars-Sinai.

A spokesman for Jackson's MJJ Productions said he knew nothing about Mrs. Jackson's status.

"If and when Mr. and Mrs. Jackson have something to announce, they will tell us," Bob Jones said.

Security at the hospital was tight, with at least six uniformed guards in the lobby. Others stood watch in the third-floor maternity ward.

Doctors and nurses leaving Cedars-Sinai ignored questions from reporters.

Audrey Ruttan, a celebrity impersonator who dressed like Jackson, was the lone fan outside Cedars-Sinai on Wednesday.

"I wanted to come out to support him. I care for Michael Jackson. He's a great artist," said Ruttan, clad in black leather with silver studs, black loafers, white socks and sunglasses.

Early last November, Jackson announced that Rowe, a nurse at his plastic surgeon's office, was six months pregnant with his child. The couple wed in November in Sydney, Australia.

Jackson has denied a tabloid report by London's News of the World that the couple used artificial insemination and that Rowe was paid \$528,000 to carry the baby.

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The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon. The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

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