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Special to Rural Montana on Term Limits

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SPECIAL TO RURAL MONTANA ON TERM LIMITS

The key to making our government more effective is to get more Americans involved in the political process. Currently, only 50% of eligible Americans exercise their right to vote. That is an alarming statistic which says much about the state of our democracy.

If we were to limit the terms of our Representatives to the State Legislature and to Congress, as many have been suggesting, we would actually provide the public with dangerous incentives not to vote. Term limitations would decrease voter participation by creating a sense that all office-holders held only temporary positions. People wouldn't make the effort to vote knowing that their representatives term would eventually expire.

In addition, the process of writing legislation has become increasingly complex and learning the most effective way to legislate takes time. Term limits would force rapid turnover and broaden the class of rookie legislators. They would also create a significant number of "lame duck" members who would be unaccountable to their constituents.
There's no one in Congress who doesn't believe that our election system needs some major changes, especially campaign finance reform. However, the answer isn't to limit terms, it's to encourage involvement. I urge all Montanans to participate in our democracy. Vote for the people you like and vote against those you don't. Term limitations would discourage this participation; they are a bad idea.