

OPPORTUNITY *Ohio*

Ohio Needs a Political Time Limit

Results should matter. In the real world, each of us is measured by the outcomes we achieve. Success brings higher pay, advancements, and accolades. Failure brings pink slips, stagnation, and dejection. Good intentioned people, including me, believed term limits would increase accountability, decrease corruption, and move Ohio forward. Unfortunately, none of those things have occurred in the thirty years since voters approved term limits.

After thirty years with Republicans controlling the legislature and statewide offices nearly that entire time, Ohio remains an economic laggard.¹ In the first half of 2021, Ohio was **dead last** for net percentage private sector job growth. From 2000 to 2010, Ohio came in 50th only besting Michigan. Since 2010, Ohio is ranked 32nd. Over the last thirty years, [Ohio had the 8th worst private sector in America](#). Ohio's private sector today is roughly half-a-million jobs **smaller** than it was when it hit a peak in March 2000.

Even before the pandemic hit last February, Ohio's private sector still had not recovered the jobs lost since March 2000, which made it just one of the three states holding that dubious distinction. Outside of an ellipse circling the greater Cincinnati and Columbus areas, only 18 counties in Ohio experienced increased job growth greater than 1% since 2000, with 68 counties having lost more jobs than they gained in the last 21.5 years.

Population trends tell the same sad story. From 2000 to 2020, only [27 counties increased their populations by 1% or more](#), as 61 counties lost citizens. That negative trend only accelerated since 2010 with 69 out of 88 counties losing people. Ohioans spend billions educating our kids in K-12 public schools and a robust public higher education system only to watch our best and brightest head south and west to where good job opportunities are plentiful. Each decade Ohio loses more political power in Washington, D.C., as our congressional seats get shipped to Texas and Florida. A simple [comparison of Ohio and Florida](#) over the last thirty years shows how weak Ohio has become.

Fiscally, Republicans have managed Ohio no differently than Democrats would have, with [state spending up 107% since 2000](#) (versus just 3.9% total population growth).² As I predicted, John Kasich's Medicaid expansion continues to grow now swallowing 50% of all state spending. Per

¹ Republicans typically appease social conservatives by enacting good pro-life, pro-Second Amendment, and pro-school choice/voucher laws in which opposition only comes from smaller segments on the Left.

² Republicans will cite the solid bond rating Ohio receives, but that bond rating is due to revenues exceeding spending, not necessarily fiscal prudence. As [Fitch Ratings](#) noted: "The state's fiscal 2021 actual tax revenue performance was stronger than original budget estimates. Tax receipts exceeded projections by about \$1.5 billion (6.2%), with both personal income tax and sales tax collections ahead by 4.5% and 9.0%, respectively."

capita spending in Ohio skyrocketed from \$1,693 per Ohioan in 2000 to \$3,369 by 2023. Had policymakers restrained spending to population growth plus inflation since 2000, Ohio could have become the ninth state with no income tax, which surely would have spurred job growth and prosperity.

And corruption pervades the corridors in Columbus. Two top leaders have resigned in disgrace, with several other legislators going down, Medicaid mismanagement is rampant, and the House Bill 6 energy scandal engulfs more policymakers each month, with the stink swirling ever closer to Governor Mike DeWine and Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted.

Given these dismal results, you'd think voters would hold these politicians accountable. The problem, however, is these career politicians have too tight a hold on the donor class and industries they regulate so defeating politicians with such meager records proves near impossible. Unless you have millions in personal wealth to spend in a primary, are good friends with Peter Thiel, or can get endorsed by Donald Trump, political accountability is non-existent in Ohio.

It is for these reasons I believe it is time to ditch term limits and enact a time limit for all state-based politicians. Let's give anyone in the state legislature and statewide office twenty years to do their work. After twenty years, they can either find a local government job to do, head to Washington, D.C., or, God forbid, get a real job in the real world.

Two examples show why twenty years is plenty. For Democrats, Barack Obama entered politics as an Illinois state senator and exited politics as a two-term president. He went from obscurity to global hero in eighteen years. For Republicans, Ronald Reagan served as the two-term governor of California followed by two-terms as president. He conquered the Left Coast then stagflation and the Soviet Union in just sixteen years. If they can do it, so can our politicians and if they can't, well, that might just show they lack the talent needed to truly succeed for Ohio.

The current system incents the rise of career politicians who play musical chairs with elected offices until it is "their" turn to be governor. It also keeps good, experienced outsiders from serving. Imagine how many successful business persons or thought leaders stay on the sideline because they know they can't beat the Establishment fundraising game. Our Founding Fathers were rich men who became poor in politics; today's politicians are poor men who become rich in politics (see Obama, Kasich, Pat Tiberi, and Bernie Sanders). It isn't supposed to work that way.

Ohio desperately needs new political blood to bring fresh ideas to bear and to push the reforms Establishment politicians are too timid to touch. There is nothing that comes out of the mouths of the current elected officials that hasn't already been tried and shown to not work. Ohioans can't afford thirty more years of mediocrity and unaccountable politicians. The time has come for putting politicians on the clock.

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