

## **De-Limited by Dan Jacoby**

In light of the current economic difficulties, Mayor Bloomberg has proposed extending term limits so that he can keep his job past the end date set by voters. He should be ashamed of himself. Christine Quinn, the Speaker of the City Council, appears to be supporting this effort; she should be ashamed too.

Mayor Bloomberg is known for not making definite statements until he's ready to do so. It is difficult, therefore, to pin him down on opposing an extension of term limits. For example, he has been reported as saying that he doesn't remember how he voted on the two term limits referenda in the 90s.<sup>1</sup> In that same article, he was directly quoted as saying that he "always thought term limits were a good idea," but also that, "You can debate how many terms that should be."

Speaker Quinn has a serious problem, however, since she did pin herself down last December. She released a statement saying, "I will neither support legislation nor will I seek or support a new referendum eliminating or altering term limits."<sup>2</sup> Then she made an even more definite statement, saying, "I am today making a firm and final decision. I will not support the repeal or change of term limits through any mechanism, and I will oppose aggressively any attempts by anyone to make any changes in the term-limit law."<sup>3</sup> It is impossible to walk back those statements without being called a liar.

It is also extremely difficult, if not outright impossible, to explain the moral justification for overturning, by legislative fiat, the twice-expressed will of the people.

Decisions made in haste, during a time of stress, are almost always wrong. As I write this, the House of Representatives is once again debating a so-called "bailout" bill. That bill is almost universally derided as sloppy, poorly thought out, mostly ineffective, and now loaded down with a bunch of garbage. If there weren't a general sense of urgency, bordering on panic, this bill would never pass.

A bill to extend term limits, introduced as it will be in the middle of a severe financial downturn, should not pass either.

The concept that there is one, and only one, person who can lead us out of this mess is not only foolish, it is un-American. Seven years ago, many people claimed that only Rudy Giuliani could lead us past the smoldering embers that had been the World Trade Center. They were wrong. All new citywide officeholders, and 38 out of 51 Council members, took on the challenges and turned this city around. A new mayor and mostly-new City Council will deal with whatever challenges this city faces a year from now.

Finally, we still have a year before the current officeholders are out. By that time, either Mayor Bloomberg and the Council will have dealt with the problems, in which case even their most ardent supporters will have to admit we don't need them, or they won't, in which case we will desperately need to replace them. Either way, it will be time for Mayor Bloomberg and two-thirds of the City Council to go.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.nypost.com/seven/08272008/news/regionalnews/mike\\_fuzzy\\_on\\_his\\_early\\_limits\\_votes\\_126302.htm](http://www.nypost.com/seven/08272008/news/regionalnews/mike_fuzzy_on_his_early_limits_votes_126302.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/12/03/council-speaker-supports-keeping-term-limits>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.nypost.com/seven/12042007/news/regionalnews/quinn\\_now\\_wont\\_fight\\_term\\_limits\\_525380.htm](http://www.nypost.com/seven/12042007/news/regionalnews/quinn_now_wont_fight_term_limits_525380.htm)