

The Mueller Report Changed my Mind on Term Limits

I haven't read the Mueller report yet. I'm writing this on the day of its release (with redactions) by US Attorney General William Barr. I'll read it later, but I didn't have to read it, or even wait for its release, to reach one conclusion from it: It's time to amend the Constitution to limit the President of the United States to one term.

No, not because I don't like Donald Trump. I don't, but I didn't like his 2016 Democratic opponent either, nor do I expect to like his 2020 Democratic opponent. As long as American voters continue to limit themselves to voting for Republicans and Democrats, I don't care too much which of the two parties they vote for.

Nor because I think term limits as such would usher in an era of "citizen legislators" and solve some of the systemic problems in American politics caused by political careerism (as my friend Paul Jacob, founder of US Term Limits, believes). It's not that they're a bad idea. It's that they're more of a distraction than a solution.

But the presidency is an office of singular weight.

We can afford, at least to some degree, to have members of Congress worrying about their own re-elections at the expense of doing the people's business (however one defines that).

But can we afford to have both the president and Congress worrying about almost nothing BUT the president's re-election prospects, 24/7, for four years out of every eight?

Let's face it: That's what the entire two-year (so far) "Russiagate" moral panic has mostly been about. Democrats want to either impeach Donald Trump and remove him from office or, failing that, destroy his prospects of re-election.

And yes, that's what the last two years of Bill Clinton's first term were all about too. Republicans hoped they could find something, anything, that would make it possible to beat Clinton in 1996 (didn't work).

It didn't help the Republicans in 1996. It isn't helping the Democrats now. And ignoring real public policy issues in favor of such antics certainly did not then, and does not now, serve any rational interest of the public, except perhaps the interest of entertainment. That's what *Game of Thrones* and *F is for Family* are for.

This is a problem we can fix. Limit the president to one term. No re-election campaign by the president. No de-election campaign by the president's opponents.

One. And. Done.