

HO#3

HR 5802

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Government corrupted by Vice, and recovered by Righteousness (excerpt)

By Samuel Langdon on May 31st, 1775 to the Congress of
Massachusetts.

When a government is in its prime, the public good engages the attention of the whole; the strictest regard is paid to the qualifications of those who hold the offices of the state; virtue prevails; everything is managed with justice, prudence, and frugality; the laws are founded on principles of equity rather than mere policy, and all the people are happy. But vice will increase with the riches and glory of an empire; and this gradually tends to corrupt the constitution, and in time bring on its dissolution.

This may be considered not only as the natural effect of vice, but a righteous judgment of Heaven, especially upon a nation which has been favored with the blessings of religion and liberty, and is guilty of undervaluing them, and eagerly going into the gratification of every lust.

In this chapter (Isaiah 1) the prophet describes the very corrupt state of Judah in his day, both as to religion and common morality, and looks forward to that increase of wickedness which would bring on their desolation and captivity. They were "a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that were corrupters, who had forsaken the Lord, and provoked -the Holy One of Israel to anger." The whole body of the nation, from head to foot, was full of moral and political disorders, without any remaining soundness. Their religion was all mere ceremony and hypocrisy; and even the laws of common justice and humanity were disregarded in their public courts. They had counselors and judges, but very different from those at the beginning of the commonwealth. Their princes were rebellious against God and the constitution of their country, and companions of thieves, giving countenance to every artifice for seizing the property of the subjects

into their own hands, and robbing the public treasury. Everyone loved gifts, and followed after rewards; they regarded the perquisites more than the duties of their office; the general aim was at profitable places and pensions; they were influenced in everything by bribery; and their avarice and luxury were never satisfied, but hurried them on to all kinds of oppression and violence, so that they even justified and encouraged the murder of innocent persons to support their lawless power and increase their wealth. And God, in righteous judgment, left them to run into all this excess of vice, to their own destruction, because they had forsaken him, and were guilty of wilful inattention to the most essential parts of that religion which had been given them by a well-attested revelation from heaven.

The Jewish nation could not but see and feel the unhappy consequences of so great corruption of the state. Doubtless they complained much of men in power, and very heartily and liberally reproached them for their notorious misconduct. The public greatly suffered, and the people groaned and wished for better rulers and better management; but in vain they hoped for a change of men and measures and better times when the spirit of religion was gone, and the infection of vice was become universal. The whole body being so corrupted, there could be no rational prospect of any great reformation in the state, but rather of its ruin, which accordingly came on in Jeremiah's time. Yet if a general reformation of religion and morals had taken place, and they had turned to God from all their sins, if they had again recovered the true spirit of their religion, God, by the gracious interpositions of his providence, would soon have found out methods to restore the former virtue of the state, and again have given them men of wisdom and integrity, according to their utmost wish, to be counselors and judges. This was verified in fact after the nation had been purged by a long captivity, and returned to their own land humbled and filled with zeal for God and his law.

A yes vote on Term Limits will:

1. Take away power from the people.

The right of the people to choose their best representative and reward them for representing them well is the only thing being eliminated!

2. Take away power from the legislative branch.

- a. Destroys institutional wisdom & memory.
- b. Increases the influence of lobbyists and bureaucrats.
- c. Quick fix over long term solutions
- d. Lame Duck Representatives

3. Gives power to the administrative branch.

The Administrative branch is the beneficiary of the weakened legislature. Unelected, career bureaucrats can obfuscate, mislead, and frustrate the representatives of the people much easier because they are more inexperienced, unaware, and diminished by term limits. The legislature is much less likely to be a check on the administrative branches abuse of power.

Alexander Hamilton: "Nothing appears more plausible at first sight, nor more ill-founded upon close inspection [than term limits].... One ill effect of the exclusion would be a diminution of the inducements to good behavior. There are few men who would not feel much less zeal in the discharge of a duty when they were conscious that the advantage of the station with which it was connected must be relinquished at a determinate period, than when they were permitted to entertain a hope of obtaining, by meriting, a continuance of them." (The Federalist, #72)

Thomas Jefferson: When the legislative or executive functionaries act unconstitutionally, they are responsible to the people in their elective capacity. . . I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society, but the people themselves: and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their controul with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is, not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education. This is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power. (Letter to William Charles Jarvis, Sept. 28, 1820)