

# Legislators, Political Scientists, and Advocates to Debate Term Limits at UMSL Conference

*The Center for Ethics in Public Life hosts its first annual Public Ethics Conference titled "Term Limits: Two Decades of Lessons," on Saturday, October 6, 2012.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ST. LOUIS – August 14, 2012 – Outgoing Speaker of the House Steven Tilley will be among the participants debating term limits for state legislators at the Center for Ethics in Public Life's first annual Public Ethics Conference titled, "Term Limits: Two Decades of Lessons." The conference will take place at the University of Missouri–St. Louis on Saturday, October 6, 2012. In 1992, Missouri voters overwhelmingly approved (75 percent to 25 percent margin) a lifetime limit of eight years in each of the Missouri Senate and House of Representatives. Twenty years later this conference will explore in detail the positive and negative effects of this policy on state legislative processes and develop strategies for the future.

"The policy has come to full fruition in the 20 years since its passage," says Senator Wayne Goode, vice chairman of the University of Missouri Board of Curators. "Moving ahead, term limits will be instrumental in shaping the strategy for any significant legislative activity. Therefore, this is the perfect time for an in-depth conversation about the goals of the term limit policy, its effects, and its future."

"Term limits will have an impact on every legislative agenda for the foreseeable future," says Representative Joe Ortwerth, executive director of the Missouri Family Policy Council. "By bringing together political practitioners and political observers, as well as participants from both sides of the aisle, and both sides of the issue, the conference should engender a fascinating discussion of this highly consequential policy and how to move forward in light of the new legislative reality it has created."

This conference brings together current and former Missouri legislators, political scientists, state and local officials, lobbyists, attorneys, advocates and the interested public. Speakers include Speaker Steven Tilley; Senator Robin Wright-Jones; Representative Chris Kelly; former Senator Franc Flotron, who is now a lobbyist; Paul Jacob, past president of U.S. Term Limits; Greg Upchurch, who served as the chairman of Missourians for Limited Terms; Dr. David Valentine, retiring associate director for public service at the Truman School of Public Affairs; Dr. Marjorie E. Sarbaugh-Thompson, professor of political science, Wayne State University; Dr. Thad Kousser, associate professor of political science, University of San Diego; and Linda Claire McDaniel, co-president of the League of Women Voters of St. Louis;.

"Fifteen states have now had term limits for about 20 years," says Dr. Wally Siewert, director of the Center for Ethics in Public Life and discussion moderator at the conference. "This provides a rich and varied data source for the political scientists who study their effects."

The vision of the Center for Ethics in Public Life is to advance the principles of honest, open government that enables citizens to be informed participants in the democratic process and to promote the value and practice of governance based on the merits of issues, free from corruption, undue influence, favoritism, prejudice or conflict of interest.

The center was created at the state legislative level with a broad mandate to advance the cause of ethics in the body politic of the State of Missouri. Housed at UMSL, it is a collaborative entity intended to bring together, around the issue of ethics in public life, those who study governance and those who practice it. The Center's mandate includes education, research and advocacy on public ethics issues at all levels.

"I was originally involved, along with Senator Chuck Gross, in creating the Center, motivated by the belief that an ethical political process is at the heart of the democratic exercise of governance," says Senator Goode.

The Center for Ethics in Public Life presents this conference in cooperation with the UMSL Political Science Department and the Public Policy Administration Program. To attend, registration is \$25 and includes a continental breakfast, lunch and reception. Attorneys have the opportunity to earn seven MOBAR CLE hours. To register, please visit [cepl.umsl.edu](http://cepl.umsl.edu) or call (314) 516-5974.

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