

SNG-Term limits now-5-22-17

Term limits now—Here's how

By Jim Nowlan

If there is no comprehensive full-year state budget by the May 31 end of legislative session in Springfield, I am seriously considering creation of an Illinois political action committee to be called "Throw the Bums Out." The stated purpose would be to defeat *all* state legislators, of both parties, as well as Gov. Bruce Rauner.

For three years now, the governor and lawmakers have blatantly failed in their constitutional responsibility to adopt an annual state budget, the fundamental task of any government, or business, for that matter.

As a result, the horrendous pile of unpaid bills and wreckage in higher education and elsewhere have also piled onto our state's near-laughingstock reputation across the nation for corruption and government dysfunction.

This is how the parlous situation has come about: After election in 2014, several students of state politics recommended to Republican Gov.-elect Rauner that he could deal with entrenched Democrat Speaker of the House Michael Madigan in addressing the state's problems, as each needed the other to get anything done.

Instead, Rauner determined it was more important to destroy Madigan and his near-dictatorial power once and for all, which is a legitimate political objective.

The Rauner strategy: Withhold support for a state budget until Madigan and Democrats agreed to his business-friendly reform ideas. Madigan would ultimately have to cave, the thinking went, because lack of a budget would hurt low-income and vulnerable populations important to many

Democratic lawmakers. If Madigan refused, then ultimately a number of Democratic House members would defect in order to see the services to their people restored.

The strategy obviously hasn't worked. Thus the stalemate.

By now, all parties involved are embarrassed, but unwilling to be the first to concede anything, which would be a sign of grave political weakness.

But the situation is now intolerable, unforgivable.

Action (or lack of action in this case) should have consequences. Their failure should be punished, not rewarded.

So, I am dead serious about my Throw the Bums Out (TTBO) initiative.

I am not naïve about what I propose. Years ago, I ran political campaigns for U.S. Senate and presidential campaigns for a living, and was successful, if I do say so. For example, the

*Washington Post* book on the 1980 presidential election called my efforts that year, which took little known Illinois congressman John B. Anderson into the thick of that year's race, "brilliant."

This year, a couple of buddies and I created a political action committee to elect candidates to the board of our troubled public community college and oust the board president.

It was a piece of cake. We raised money, created the Facebook page, advertised in print and on the Internet, flooded newspapers in the 9-county district with letters to the editor, even did some door-to-door.

We elected our candidates and ejected the board president by a two-to-one margin.

The TTBO campaign would be about two orders of magnitude greater than the college effort, yet cut from the same cloth.

My point is this. With a creative, well-designed campaign plan, TTBO might just captivate the imagination of an angry electorate, snowball, and make a big difference. What a marvelous, constructive grassroots celebration of democracy during our great state's bicentennial.

There are a number of excellent legislators, many are friends of mine. But it's too complicated to pick and choose, and all are complicit in the failure.

The big challenge would be in knocking off Speaker Mike Madigan, who operates from a true rotten borough (district drawn by him to be impregnable), though the demographics are changing on him. But it can be done.

Gov. Bruce Rauner has demanded term limits. We can fulfill his demand this coming year, at the ballot box. This would be better than the blunt instrument of a constitutional amendment, which in any case wouldn't affect any of the present crew that has failed us so miserably.

I can envision campaign buttons right now: simple brilliant red TTBO letters on a white background.

Perfect, because nobody would know the acronym, at first anyway. "What does that stand for?" people would ask you. You would tell them, and eight out of ten, I'd bet, would ask you how they could get a button.

Gad, but I am having serious fun just thinking about this. The Springfield crowd had better enact a budget by May 31—for their own sake.

If you think my idea might have merit, let me know at [jnowlan3@gmail.com](mailto:jnowlan3@gmail.com). Responses will serve as a test of interest.

TTBO.