

Rauner calls on General Assembly to vote on constitutional amendment for term limits in fall veto session

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SPRINGFIELD - On the heels of a Cook County Judge ruling against putting a popular measure on the ballot that would create independently drawn legislative maps, Governor Bruce Rauner today reiterated his push for good government reforms including a call for the Illinois General Assembly to vote on a term limits constitutional amendment in the fall veto session.

Following his speech in Chicago, Governor Rauner will take his message directly to the people of Illinois on a two-day swing from Rockford to Mt. Vernon.

Over the past two years, the people of Illinois, Democrats and Republicans alike, have demanded reform. In 2014 the entrenched politicians holding power in Springfield ignored those demands. They used the Illinois court system to stop proposals for term limits and fair maps that could have led to the reforms the people want.

Term limits and fair maps would give the people of Illinois more control over our broken political system.

But the politicians holding power said no.

Last week they said no again. A lower court threw out this year's Fair Maps proposal that has the support of nearly 600,000 Illinois citizens, support from both Democrats and Republicans.

We cannot let this stand. The only way to overcome entrenched political power is for the people of Illinois to never give up, to keep pushing forward for reform. That's why we're here today.

Term limits is an issue I believe in deeply. And so do the people of Illinois. Term limits is supported by 80% of the people I talk to, and it seems like 80% of the politicians are opposed. Our people want term limits now more than ever, and that's why I'm so committed to continue the fight to make it happen.

You know, I've been Governor of Illinois for a year and a half now. We've gotten some important things done. But I'm as frustrated as everyone else that we haven't been able to tackle the biggest challenges facing our state. These past 18 months have been a humbling experience - I've learned just how entrenched the politicians holding power are. They don't want to change. They are focused on their own power, rather than empowering people. But I have also learned that you want me to keep working to fix our broken political system. That is just what I plan to do.

But I need your help to get it done.

As I've travelled the state, I've learned the most from talking to people, not politicians. I've talked to people in factory break rooms, in coffee shops, in milking barns, in office buildings and at kitchen tables. After you spend enough time in Springfield, it's inspiring to talk with people facing real

challenges every day and seeing how hard they work to get ahead. It makes me want to work that much harder for all the people of Illinois.

Our people want action on the challenges we face. People want us to fix the broken system that has put our state deep in the hole. But in Springfield, too many career politicians holding power have been happy to kick the can down the road and do nothing about our biggest problems.

That is how we ended up with a \$100 billion unfunded pension liability. Even with our massive tax bills, our government spends a dollar-thirty for every dollar it takes in. It simply defies common sense. The people I talk to every day balance their budgets, and they expect us to balance the State's. To do that, we need new people with their new ideas in Springfield.

People in business are successful by making things happen. In politics, career politicians don't have to make anything happen to get re-elected. If they play their cards right, they've got a lifetime job. We've got politicians in Springfield who've been there for twenty, thirty, forty years! And look what's happened to our state in that time.

It's time for change. Two years ago, 600,000 thousand people in Illinois signed petitions calling for term limits on elected officials. The politicians long in power ignored the petitions. They won't even debate the issue. That's crazy!

We desperately need new faces and new ideas in Illinois politics. We need to make serving in government more about public service, and less about power and a government pension. That should be obvious!

We need it in the Republican Party, in the Democratic Party, and throughout the political spectrum. New faces need to believe they have an even chance of winning in a truly democratic election.

Look at the numbers:

This year over 88% of candidates for our legislature faced no opposition in their primary.

Even more amazing, two-thirds have no opposition in the general election. That's not democracy. That's a rigged system.

The system has given so many advantages to incumbents in the legislature that it's very hard to vote them out -- even if they're not doing a good job.

That's just wrong.

But we can change that. And we must change that.

That's why I'm calling on the General Assembly to vote on a term limits constitutional amendment when members return for the fall veto session.

It's certainly true that getting term limits won't fix every problem we face. We've still got to wipe out corruption, conflicts of interest, and repair our broken pension system. We've got to balance our budget without balancing it on the backs of the most needy. We've got to get our property taxes moving down, not up. All of this will help create the environment we need to attract good jobs back to Illinois.

We can overcome our challenges. We can do it together. First, we've got to fix Illinois' broken political system. And when we fix the system, we can take on any challenge Illinois faces.

Term limits will go a long way toward fixing the system by changing the culture back to public service, not personal gain, by forcing the lifetime politicians to find new jobs, and by bringing new faces and new ideas to Springfield.

All of the changes we need won't happen right away. This will take time. But now we'll be moving in the right direction.

Instead of gridlock and inaction, we'll be moving forward.

And every day we'll get closer to the future we, our kids and our grandkids deserve. Illinois can be the economic engine of the Midwest again. We can be a magnet for the best companies from all over the world and the best jobs, just as it used to be. From our rich farmland to busy factory floors to tech start-ups, Illinois will be going and growing again.

Now, cynics will say this is an impossible dream to get term limits voted on by this legislature. But that dream can become a reality if the people of Illinois demand it.

And we are not stopping with term limits. We'll keep pressing every day to lower our property taxes, to protect all our taxpayers, to protect and grow our jobs, and to ensure every child has a chance at a great education. We can do this – if we work together for the reforms our state needs.

We're facing tough challenges, but we can meet those challenges if we work together for reform. One step at a time. Starting right now. It starts with term limits.

Thank you.