

## **Term Limits - Lessons from Josiah Bartlett**

You should be nervous around laws that fundamentally assume that the people of Toronto cannot be trusted.

Some people will suggest that we had better have term limits because voters cannot be trusted to recognize corruption or incompetence or ineptitude. They will say we had better have term limits because City Council is not representative of the physical diversity of the city. We had better have term limits because politics is different from any other field of endeavour. They suggest that the longer you are in office, the staler you may become, the fewer good ideas you may have, the less accountable you will be to the people that elected you.

*When the playing field is leveled and the process is fair and open, it turns out we have term limits. They are called elections.*

Term limits are no answer; they are forced retirement and that may be illegal. It certainly is unfair and unethical. They are some people's easy answer to a more complex problem.



While a very small sample, we have an example of results from term limits in last October's city council election. While there were 16 candidates in Ward 19, four of which were women, gender diversity on Council was set back after the result in that particular riding. The winning candidate was supported by 18.3% of eligible voters - about average for everyone on City Council.

Therefore, the better use of our time, to make City Council and City Hall a better place is to level the playing field, make the election process fair and open.

If you want my suggestion for a better answer, make local democracy less representative and more participatory.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully submitted,

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