

5. Limit the Term of Office of Supreme Court Judges: Recently we saw one political party refuse to hold hearings on a supreme court nominee on the grounds that it would rather wait until after a presidential election when it hoped to have an opportunity to approve a nominee that it expected to have an philosophy more in accord with its own views. Clearly, the supreme court has become a *political entity* where decisions may be affected not only by the constitution and congressionally enacted laws, but also by the personal political, philosophical, and even religious beliefs of the judges.

We also have heard politicians discuss the advantages of appointing relative young judges. Given the lifelong tenure of tenure of supreme court judges this has a number of effects that some may consider undesirable:

- Age and personal beliefs become important variables in the selection and approval of supreme court judges; and
- Some supreme court judges remain on the court even when unable to work full time, and possibly, in some cases, when their knowledge and reasoning ability declines, sometimes because of fear that a judge with differing viewpoints will be appointed if they step down.

Partial Solution: The solution is obvious. Most judges in the U.S. are appointed or elected for time-limited terms. The terms of U. S. supreme court judges should also be time limited.

The question is, how long should the term be. I would take a lesson from the Federal Reserve Bank of the U.S. and suggest appointing supreme court judges for 14 years. This is the equivalent of three and a half presidential terms and assures that whoever is appointed, assuming good health, serves under at least two presidents. Since they cannot be reappointed, they are not likely to be easily influenced by political pressures. This approach has worked well for the Federal Reserve.