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**A Workable Alternative to Term Limits**

**By Terry Mitchell**

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The end of another election once again brings into focus the problem of Washington politicians raising money and running for re-election as soon as they get into office. Many citizens and various government-accountability advocacy groups have done little more than complain from time to time. However, some of them, along with many members of the media, have been pushing for term limits as a solution. But is that really the solution we need? Even with term limits, we would still be left with the same old problems, only in smaller doses, i.e., politicians would still be playing the same old campaigning and fund raising games for whatever amount of subsequent terms they are allowed. Also, we would still be stuck with the situation in which sitting Senators and Representatives (even those with no remaining terms for the office they hold) spend their time running for higher office.

I say forget about term limits in Washington as I have a better solution. I call it "term interruptions." Here's how it would work: No President/Vice President, Senator, or Representative could serve two consecutive terms in the same office and would have to sit out at least two years before being eligible for a different federal office although he/she could be elected to an unlimited number of terms in any number of federal offices. For example, a U.S. Representative could not succeed himself/herself in that office and would have to wait until he/she has been out of office for at least two years before being eligible for President/Vice President, a Senate seat, or any seat in the House of Representatives. In other words, a sitting President/Vice President, Senator, or Representative could not run for re-election and he/she could not run for any elective seat in the legislative or executive branches of the federal government. That way, they could all focus on serving their constituents rather than getting re-elected. They could use the two off-years for campaigning and raising money.

However, this proposal could be problematic for the U.S. House of Representatives, since its members currently serve only two-year terms. Under my plan, the House would see a complete turnover (all 435 members) every two years. Therefore, I would propose four-year terms for U.S. Representatives. Of course, we would still get a complete turnover in the House, only after every four years instead of every two years, so there would still be a problem.

To prevent a complete turnover every four years, terms could be staggered so that half the members of the House are up for re-election every two years. However, in the first House election under my plan, half of the House would get four-year terms, with the other half getting two-year terms. A way to determine who gets the four-year terms in the initial election would be as follows: The House member in each state with widest margin of victory in that election would get a four-year term. The 168 remaining members (on an at-large basis) with the next highest victory margins would also get four-year terms, for a total of 218. The remaining 217 members would get only two-year terms for that election only. For the next election only, members who got two-year terms would be allowed to run for re-election, without sitting out two years. Then, beginning with that election, they would all get four-year terms and the term interruptions rules would fully take effect.

Terry Mitchell is a software engineer, free-lance writer, and trivia buff from Virginia, USA. He operates a website – <http://www.commenterry.com> – on which he posts commentaries on various subjects such as politics, technology, religion, health and well-being, personal finance, and sports. His commentaries offer a unique point of view that is not often found in mainstream media.

### **How Should Alternative Medicine Be Defined**

**By Thomas DeReyna**

There is still no strict definition on what alternative medicine really is. But presently, it borders on the broadness of description covered by what we know of as conventional or orthodox medicine. However, to define alternative medicine as we believe it to be, it may be a knowledge that is considered as unaccepted, untested and unscientific. All these were true if we are to look some years back. But since alternative medicine has been studied in the later years, employed by numberless institutions (such as spas and the likes) and accepted by many as cure to their ailments (even those that may be resolved through conventional medicine), this definition for alternative medicine may already be considered as obsolete.

On other terms, alternative medicines are practices that may be considered false that sometime go to the extent of quackery. However, this definition is much abused by several authorities that have their own systems of beliefs and other things to support to. Still others would define it as practices that may not be tested, refuse to undergo tests and may continuously fail tests. On other peoples' view, this may be too unfair for those practicing the knowledge that comprise alternative medicine and too sweeping a statement since many have gained healing by means of alternative medicine.

This debate on the authenticity of alternative medicine is further made complicated by the number of practices that are labeled as alternative medicine, which has some truths in them. In actuality, alternative medicine covers procedures involving metaphysical principles, spiritual and religious underpinnings, new sets of healing approaches and non-European medicine practices. These are enough reasons why alternative medicine is much harder to accept in the West rather than in the East where most these practices originated. In addition to these, many proponents of alternative medicine contradict and many individual belief systems may reject others.

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Furthermore, critics of alternative medicine may further define it as therapy, treatment and diagnosis that may be performed legally by unlicensed practitioners. Yet, a number of doctors and physicians find good uses of alternative medicine when combined with the conventional medicine when they are trying to hit the balance.

But there are more logical and unbiased definitions that are accepted by most. Many of which deal only on the safety and affectivity of the alternative medicine without the protection on economic interests, political views and turf protection. One such definition is that alternative medicine is a field of healing, therapy and diagnosis that are not based on controlled studies.

There are however some therapies that were once covered by alternative medicine that are now accepted within the medical community since they passed approval over their affectivity. On the opposite, there were medical practices that are now disregarded within the medical circles since there are no profound evidences that prove their efficiency in healing.

In reality, the term alternative medicine is quite misleading. Both critics and advocates of the said practices support this view. Some support the idea that Western medical practices are the alternative medicines since they were preceded by ancient practices, which is somewhat true. Others would claim that the term "alternative medicine" was only devised by advocates of conventional medicine to discredit the natural methods of healing.

Detractors on alternative medicine claim that it is not worth as being accepted by the medical circles since it lacks components that may be used to support its efficiency. Yet many assert that once alternative medicine is fully tested, then there would be great rooms for wide acceptance.

Thomas DeReyna is a freelance publisher based in Cupertino, California. He publishes articles and reports in various ezines and provides a news blog.



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