

Former supporters change stance on term limits

By Mike Zapler, San Jose Mercury News

The strictest term limits in the nation, enacted 20 years ago to end the “stench of greed and vote-selling” in Sacramento, have instead made California’s government so dysfunctional, many who once backed the reform say, that they now regret pushing for it.

“Of all the mistakes I’ve made in public life, the one I regret most is advocating for term limits for the Legislature,” said Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Granite Bay, a leading conservative figure in California who was one of a small number of incumbent legislators who backed the term limits measure two decades ago. “It has harmed the institution badly.”

Whether most Californians agree will be tested by a measure that qualified for the 2012 ballot last week. It would change term limits – currently six years in the Assembly and eight years in the Senate – to 12 years total in either chamber or both.

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