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## Term Limits and the Dismantling of State Legislative Professionalism

The wisdom of term limits and professional politics has been debated since the time of Aristotle, spurring “reforms” of legislatures in Athens, Rome, Venice, and the United States under the Articles of Confederation. This book examines recent trends in American states to investigate the age-old question of how the rules that govern a legislature affect the behavior of its members and the policies that it produces. The clear and consistent finding is that the two reforms have countervailing effects: Whatever professionalization has brought more of, term limits have reduced. This lesson comes from quantitative analyses of data from all fifty states and detailed examinations of legislative records from six states, informed by interviews with more than one hundred legislators, staff assistants, lobbyists, journalists, and executive officials.

Thad Kousser joined the University of California at San Diego faculty in 2003 after receiving his Ph.D. in 2002 from the University of California at Berkeley. He has previously worked as a legislative aide and committee consultant in the California State Senate and more recently as an aide to Senator Ron Wyden through the APSA Congressional Fellowship. His publications include work on term limits, reapportionment, campaign finance laws, the blanket primary, health care policy, and European Parliament elections. This book is based on his dissertation, which won the APSA’s William Anderson Prize in 2003.

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*University of California at San Diego*



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*To the Koussers,*

*Kate, Morgan, Sally, and Rachel*

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