

# **The Congressional Accountability Act of 2012**

*A House Joint Resolution Bill intended to amend the U. S. Constitution.*

*Authored by UnifyAmerica.org*

WHEREAS, the People of these United States of America have unified in an effort to restore the power of the people and to restore the democratic principles upon which this country was founded.

WHEREAS, the People of these United States of America seek to reform the elected government and its role in serving our nation, do hereby request that the Congress approve and submit for state approval the following changes, to be enacted into law as an amendment to our Constitution.

## **Section 1 – Term limits**

A. All members of Congress shall be elected to a two year term, not to exceed four years in a lifetime. Terms may or may not run concurrent, but the lifetime rule shall apply in either case.

## **Section 2 – Compensation and Benefits**

A. Congressional compensation shall apply as follows:

1. Representatives shall be compensated at 10% above the median average income of the District in which they serve, taken from the most recent Census Bureau report available prior to the Representative taking office.

2. Senators shall be compensated at 10% above the median average income of the state in which they serve, taken from the most recent Census Bureau report available prior to the Senator taking office.

B. Retirement benefits

1. All members of Congress shall have the opportunity to participate in a Thrift Savings Program, the same one used by federal hourly employees, but shall not be provided any other retirement benefits beyond that. Participation is not required, and any other retirement savings beyond this program will be at the sole expense of the member.

2. All members of Congress shall be required to make payroll tax contributions to Social Security and Medicare, per the guidelines set forth for all other federal employees.

C. Health, disability, and life insurance

1. All members of Congress shall have the opportunity to participate in a health insurance program, the same one used for federal hourly employees, at the same cost as is provided to the federal hourly employees. Although not obligated to participate in this program, no further

benefit will be provided. This rule shall hold true for health insurance, all forms of disability insurance, and all forms of accidental death and/or life insurance. All shall be at the sole cost of the Congressional member.

#### D. Other compensation

1. No member of Congress shall be permitted to accept any form of compensation, gratuity, gesture, service, or anything of value, from any person or entity, while serving in office and for a period of ten years commencing the date service is terminated. Any violation shall be subject to criminal prosecution, and a subsequent fine of no less than \$100,000 and not less than 5 years in federal prison.

#### E. Penalties for non-performance

1. In the event Congress does not perform with respect to meeting its deadline to pass an annual budget, all forms of compensation shall be suspended for all members until the day after a budget is passed.

#### F. Effect of termination

1. All forms of compensation, including all forms of compensation and benefits, shall cease upon termination of service, and there shall be no further compensation due, of any kind or nature, to the outgoing member.

#### G. Conflict and Compliance

1. Congress shall NOT have the authority to vote on matters affecting their own compensation or benefit programs. Instead, a Congressional Compliance Committee of volunteer, non-political members shall be formed to oversee compliance to the compensation and benefits program, as well as serve as the decision making entity for any future changes. They will also be responsible for reviewing staff and personal expenses for each Congressional member, and to publish a quarterly report made available to the general public, including advice on corrective action to be taken. This committee shall be made up of 13 volunteer citizens, whose members will be chosen via a lottery for a term not to exceed one year. The committee would be required to meet quarterly, would report directly to the President, and would receive no compensation other than reimbursement for actual expenses, subject to per diem thresholds.

#### H. Effect on prior policy

1. These changes are to be in full effect no later than 30 days after ratification by the states, and shall serve to effectively terminate all prior agreements and programs related to compensation and benefits, including pensions.

### **Section 3 – Application of Law**

1. Congressional members shall abide by all laws set forth for the citizens of the United States, and shall receive no special consideration or preference, in any circumstance or condition.

### **Section 4 - Campaign reform**

A. Congressional candidates shall be allowed to raise campaign contributions, but the total funds raised via public and/or private contribution for any one candidate, in any one election, may not exceed \$500,000.00. No individual or entity may contribute more than \$500.00 cumulative to any one candidate, in any one election. Campaign funds used beyond those caps shall be at the sole personal expense of the candidate.

1. All candidates are required to submit a monthly account ledger stating clearly the source and amount of each individual contribution. Those account ledgers are to be audited by a third party accounting firm, chosen by the Congressional Compliance Committee, and any violations will be subject to a \$50,000 per violation fine. The cost for this audit service shall be distributed equally among the candidates.