

## Sec. 2—House of Representatives

## Cl. 2—Qualifications

tution are exclusive when the issue has been congressional enlargement of those qualifications, it has been uniform in rejecting efforts by the states to enlarge the qualifications. Thus, the House in 1807 seated a Member-elect who was challenged as not being in compliance with a state law imposing a twelve-month residency requirement in the district, rather than the federal requirement of being an inhabitant of the state at the time of election; the state requirement, the House resolved, was unconstitutional.<sup>340</sup> Similarly, both the House and Senate have seated other Members-elect who did not meet additional state qualifications or who suffered particular state disqualifications on eligibility, such as running for Congress while holding particular state offices.

The Supreme Court reached the same conclusion as to state power, albeit by a surprisingly close 5–4 vote, in *U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Thornton*.<sup>341</sup> Arkansas, along with twenty-two other states, all but two by citizen initiatives, had limited the number of terms that Members of Congress may serve. In striking down the Arkansas term limits, the Court determined that the Constitution's qualifications clauses<sup>342</sup> establish exclusive qualifications for Members that may not be added to either by Congress or the states.<sup>343</sup> Six years later, the Court relied on *Thornton* to invalidate a Missouri law requiring that labels be placed on ballots alongside the names of congressional candidates who had “disregarded voters’ instruction on term limits” or declined to pledge support for term limits.<sup>344</sup>

Both majority and dissenting opinions in *Thornton* were richly embellished with disputatious arguments about the text of the Constitution, the history of its drafting and ratification, and the practices of Congress and the states in the nation’s early years.<sup>345</sup> These differences over text, creation, and practice derived from disagreement about the fundamental principle underlying the Constitution’s adoption. In the dissent’s view, the Constitution was the re-

<sup>340</sup> 1 HINDS’ PRECEDENTS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES § 414 (1907).

<sup>341</sup> 514 U.S. 779 (1995). The majority was composed of Justice Stevens (writing the opinion of the Court) and Justices Kennedy, Souter, Ginsburg, and Breyer. Dissenting were Justice Thomas (writing the opinion) and Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justices O’Connor and Scalia. *Id.* at 845.

<sup>342</sup> Article I, § 2, cl. 2, provides that a person may qualify as a Representative if he or she is at least 25 years old, has been a United States citizen for at least 7 years, and is an inhabitant, at the time of the election, of the state in which she is chosen. The qualifications established for Senators, Article I, § 3, cl. 3, are an age of 30 years, nine years’ citizenship, and being an inhabitant of the state at the time of election.

<sup>343</sup> The four-Justice dissent argued that while Congress has no power to increase qualifications, the states do. 514 U.S. at 845.

<sup>344</sup> *Cook v. Gralike*, 531 U.S. 510 (2001).

<sup>345</sup> See Sullivan, *Dueling Sovereignties: U.S. Term Limits, Inc. v. Thornton*, 109 HARV. L. REV. 78 (1995).