

**THE AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL TENURE:
THE ENACTMENT AND IMPLICATIONS OF
THE 22ND AMENDMENT TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION**

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Abstract

The 22nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, passed by the 80th Congress in 1947 and ratified by the required three-fourths of the state legislatures in 1951, states that no President shall be elected to a third term. The Amendment responded to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's defiance of the two-term tradition.

Several factors explained why the Amendment won the support of the Congress and the state legislatures: fear that unlimited presidential tenure would weaken the position of Congress and threaten the separation of powers and the system of checks and balances. Advocates of this change believed that setting a limit to the President's term of office would prevent dictatorship.

FDR's long presidential tenure significantly augmented the executive powers of the President, promoting fears that this growing trend toward centralization threatened the decentralized system of federalism. The American people were convinced that the nation had been exposed to the dangers of unrestrained executive authority.

The Amendment remedies the lack of a written limit concerning the presidential tenure in the Constitution and the ambiguity or uncertainty of whether the two-term tradition would apply when a Vice-President succeeds to the Presidency.