Amendment 22, first sentence: No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of the President more than once.

The painting hangs in the Louvre Museum in Paris. It is tremendous-actually almost life-size and the neo-classic detail is extraordinary. We see the interior of the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris as the setting. We see distinguished foreign visitors and people of obvious wealth opulently dressed in the finest clothing that could have been imagined at the time. The elements are lush and the image is endlessly fascinating, providing the thrill of discovery at each glance. At the center of the image, besides the Pope, is a woman, draped in velvet and ermine, crown regally perched on her bowed head. She is kneeling on a delicate velvet pillow, at the feet of the man…. who appears to be the focal point from whom all light is emanating, and he is about to crown **himself** as emperor of France!!! Yes, the painting is called, “The Coronation of Napoleon,” and it was the masterful work of Jacques-Louis David, Napoleon’s official portrait painter. What makes this painting so extraordinary? Is it the tremendous scale and detail of the work? Is it that it took David almost two years of his life to paint it? Or is it that Napoleon Bonaparte, war hero and champion of the rights of all Frenchmen and a seemingly staunch advocate of the **Republic** of France, decided **he** was going to be the **Emperor,** history and republic be damned!! (**HS-Can you say damned?)**

The 22nd Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified in 1951 and had its roots in the early history of our young nation. Some say that George Washington chose not to seek a third term as a means to support our founding fathers who firmly believed that, as Thomas Jefferson had confessed, “If some termination to the services of the chief Magistrate (or President) be not fixed by the Constitution, or supplied by practice, his office, nominally four years, will in fact become for life.” To the citizens of our young nation, the thought of having a leader for life was the last thing they wanted for their new country. After all, they just fought a bitter war to be free of the constraints and hierarchy found in countries ruled by monarchies. No President of **these** United States would have even the slightest chance to lead for life. Many of the early Presidents such as James Madison and James Monroe believed in the same two-term limitation on the Presidency. Franklin D. Roosevelt was the only President to serve three terms, but given the circumstances surrounding his tenure, namely the struggles and hardships everyone experienced during World War II, it was believed that continuity of strength and morale was of the utmost importance during such extraordinarily difficult times.

Although he was a brilliant military leader and audacious champion of the free French Republic, or so it seemed, Napoleon did the unthinkable. He took a sacred tradition, one that is passed down through the blood of the aristocracy, and had the nerve to crown himself as Emperor. When we take a look at what is at the heart of many revolutions, it is the citizenry’s overwhelming passion to be free and equal amongst all people. The French Revolution was fought to rid the Republic of the tyranny of Bourbon rule, yet only a few years later, Napoleon “smelled” the power and took it upon himself to void history. When we think about it, this was happening at the same time as our nation really began to live within the framework of our Constitution. When we compare great historic figures, it’s ironic to think that Thomas Jefferson was serving as our President at the same time that Napoleon was “ruling” France.

The history of the 22nd Amendment demonstrates how concisely, considerately and completely the framers of our government created and enforced the essential principles needed to create and sustain “a more perfect union.”

Thank you!