

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 979 (Delegates Hornberger and Stewart)
Rules and Executive Nominations

**State Constitutional Convention - Question on Ballot - Passage by Majority of
Votes Cast**

This proposed constitutional amendment alters the majority vote requirement under Section 2 of Article XIV of the Maryland Constitution, which requires that the question of whether to call a constitutional convention for the purpose of altering the Maryland Constitution be submitted to and voted on by voters in the State once every 20 years. The proposed amendment requires only a majority of the votes cast on the question of calling a convention to trigger a convention, instead of a majority of voters at the election. The proposed amendment also makes technical and conforming changes.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not directly affect State finances.

Local Effect: The bill does not directly affect local government finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Section 2 of Article XIV of the Maryland Constitution states that it is the duty of the General Assembly to “provide by Law for taking, at the general election to be held in [1970], and every twenty years thereafter, the sense of the People in regard to calling a Convention for altering this Constitution[.]” If “a majority of voters at such election or elections” vote for the convention, the General Assembly must provide by law at its next session for the assembling of, and elections of delegates to, the convention. Any new constitution or change or amendment to the existing constitution that is adopted by the convention must then be submitted to the voters of the State to be adopted “by a majority of voters voting thereon.”

State law contains various provisions applicable to ballot questions, including ballot questions relating to the calling of a constitutional convention. Under the provisions, a question relating to the holding of a constitutional convention qualifies for the ballot automatically every 20 years pursuant to Section 2 of Article XIV of the Maryland Constitution. Other provisions relate to the text of the questions and notice provided to voters. The next question submitted to the voters of Maryland relating to the calling of a constitutional convention will be in 2030.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Board of Elections; Legislative Services; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 5, 2026
jg/mcr

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