



**TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**SJ 2 United States Constitution - Amendments Convention - Democracy Amendment**

**POSITION: Oppose**

**BY: Lois Hybl and Richard Willson, Co-Presidents**

**DATE: March 5, 2020**

While the League of Women Voters is thoroughly sympathetic with the desire to get rid of the flood of money in politics that the Citizens' United decision enables, we strongly oppose calling for an Article V Amendments Convention as this legislation proposes.

After two years of study and consensus about amending the constitution, in 2016 the following position was announced: *"The League of Women Voters is concerned that there are many unresolved questions about the powers and processes of an Article V Constitutional Convention."*

***The League believes that such a convention should be called only if the following conditions are in place:***

- *The Constitutional Convention must be transparent and not conducted in secret. The public has a right to know what is being debated and voted on.*
- *Representation at the Constitutional Convention must be based on population rather than one state, one vote, and delegates should be elected rather than appointed. The delegates represent citizens, should be elected by them, and must be distributed by U.S. population.*
- *Voting at the Constitutional Convention must be by delegate, not by state. Delegates from one state can have varying views and should be able to express them by individual votes.*
- *The Constitutional Convention must be limited to a specific topic. It is important to guard against a "runaway convention" which considers multiple issues or topics that were not initiated by the states.*
- *Only state resolutions on a single topic count when determining if a Constitutional Convention should be called. Counting state requests by topic ensures that there is sufficient interest in a particular subject to call a Convention and enhances citizen interest and participation in the process.*
- *The validity of state calls for an Article V Constitutional Convention must be determined by the most recent action of the state. If a state has enacted a rescission of its call, that rescission must be respected by Congress.*

**Congress has taken no action to make sure that the safeguards outlined above are in or will be in place.**

The House of Representatives has passed HR1. Among its features are: improvements to Automatic Voter Registration, public financing of elections through small donor matching funds, and **overturning Citizens United**. We are hoping that the Senate might see its way to pass such fundamental reforms in the future. We believe this is a safer way to improve democracy.

**Therefore, we strongly urge an unfavorable report on SJ 2.**

*The undersigned organizations strongly urge state legislatures to oppose efforts to pass a resolution to call for a constitutional convention. We also strongly urge state legislatures to rescind any application for an Article V constitutional convention in order to protect all Americans' constitutional rights and privileges from being put at risk and up for grabs.*

African American Health Alliance

African American Ministers In Action

AFSCME Retirees

Alliance for Justice

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL–CIO)

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)

Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote

Bend the Arc Jewish Action

Brennan Center for Justice

Campaign Legal Center

Center for American Progress

Center for Community Change

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Center for Media and Democracy

Center for Medicare Advocacy

Center for Popular Democracy

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Children's Defense Fund

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)

Coalition on Human Needs

Common Cause

Communications Workers of America (CWA)

Community Advocates Public Policy Institute

Daily Kos

Democracy 21

Democracy For America

Dream Defenders

Earthjustice

Eclectablog

Economic Policy Institute

EMILY's List

Every Voice

Fair Elections Center  
Faith in Public Life  
Family Values at Work  
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)  
Franciscan Action Network  
Greenpeace USA  
International Association of Fire Fighters  
Jobs With Justice  
Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
Main Street Alliance  
Mi Familia Vota  
NAACP  
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council of La Raza Action Fund National Disability Institute  
National Disability Rights Network National Education Association (NEA)  
National Employment Law Project (NELP) National Fair Housing Alliance  
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)  
National Partnership for Women & Families National WIC Association  
National Women's Law Center People Demanding Action People For the American Way  
ProgressNow  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Sierra Club  
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership  
Social Security Works State Innovation Exchange  
The Arc of the United States  
The Forum for Youth Investment The Public Interest  
The Voting Rights Institute UNITE HERE  
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Voice for Adoption  
VoteVets Action Fund  
Women's Voices Women Vote Action Fund Working America