

SJ 0002 Amendments Convention - Democracy Amendment

Opposed

Honorable Chairmen and Senators, I am Pastor David Whitney Senior Instructor at Institute on the Constitution where I teach the only course offered anywhere on the Maryland State Constitution. I had the privilege of developing this course with the help of scholars and attorneys and I have taught this to many citizens in our Old Line State. The Student Manual contains a detailed outline of each of the lectures I deliver along with reading assignment for the student in its 283 pages.

While I applaud every attempt to reign in our Federal government, I oppose this bill as it places us in a greater danger from the Article V Convention which it calls for.

Our Maryland State Constitution begins with a Declaration of Rights which reads,

We, the People of the State of Maryland, grateful to Almighty God for our civil and religious liberty, and taking into our serious consideration the best means of establishing a good Constitution in this State for the sure foundation and more permanent security thereof, declare:

Then Declaration of Rights Article 6 reads,

That all persons invested with the Legislative or Executive powers of Government are the Trustees of the Public, and, as such, accountable for their conduct: Wherefore, whenever the ends of Government are perverted, and public liberty manifestly endangered, and all other means of redress are ineffectual, the People may, and of right ought, to reform the old, or establish a new Government; the doctrine of non-resistance against arbitrary power and oppression is absurd, slavish and destructive of the good and happiness of mankind.

Because the people have this right to establish a new Government, a Convention such as this bill calls for is unable to prevent the delegates to that Convention from doing exactly that, forming a new government.

Our Declaration of Independence recognizes that a People have the "self-evident Right" to throw off their government and set up a new government. As a people we have already invoked that Right twice: In 1776 we invoked it to throw off the British Monarchy; and in 1787, James Madison invoked it to throw off our first

Nothing in Article V, US Constitution permits the federal or state governments to control the Delegates to an Article V convention. As Sovereign Representatives of "We the People," the Delegates have the power to do whatever they want, including proposing a new Constitution with a new mode of ratification. Our Declaration of Independence recognizes the "self-evident Right" of a people to throw off one government and set up a new one with a new and easier mode of ratification.

We can fix the issues we are facing by learning and applying our existing Constitution. There are many more effective means to reigning in the Federal Government that are contained in our State Constitution. As Senior Instructor I would like to offer our Maryland Constitution Course free to any elected or appointed official in Maryland.

I ask for an unfavorable report on this bill SJ0002.

Thank you.
