



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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SJ 7 – United States Constitution – Amendments Convention – Democracy Amendment Senate Health, Education, and Environmental Affairs Committee February 18, 2021

OPPOSE

**Donna S. Edwards
President
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to SJ 7 – United States Constitution – Amendments Convention – Democracy Amendment. My name is Donna Edwards, President of the Maryland State and DC, AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments.

While the State Federation fully supports the goal of SJ 7 – to bring our Democracy to the people and out of the hands of wealthy corporate donors – an Article V Constitutional Convention would inject chaos and uncertainty into our government, and, ironically, would allow those corporate donors to run roughshod over our Democracy. A convention opens the door to massive changes to our Constitution, without any clear direction or understanding of the consequences of those changes.

There is no precedent for an Article V Convention. No judicial, legislative, or executive body would have clear authority to settle disputes, should any arise. We have no idea how the rules would even be set for the proceedings of a convention, or who would ultimately be in charge.

An Article V Convention opens the field for special interests to involve themselves in the process. Wealthy lobbyists could, quite literally, create amendments to the Constitution that benefits them at the detriment of the citizenry.

Our civil liberties would be open to debate and change; citizenship, civil rights, privacy rights, etc. These could all be open for massive negative changes. Our right to Free Speech, Assembly, and Freedom of Religion would all be fair game during a convention.

America already stands perilously close to convening an Article V Constitutional Convention, and with SJ 7, we move one more vote closer.

For these reasons, we urge an unfavorable report on SJ 7.