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Columbia, MD 21045

March 2, 2021

Rules and Executive Nominations Committee, Maryland House of Delegates

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

My name is Paul McElheny and I live with my wife Alice in Columbia. I am the Convention of States District Captain for District 13. I represent 335 petition signers which includes 29 volunteers who support our resolution and that number grows daily.

I am from humble roots. I like it that way. My family always had healthy food on the table and clean clothes on our backs. My father was as an electrician and my mother worked as a CNA while taking care of our home. I went to work at 13 years old delivering the Washington Post every day. By age 15 I was working in restaurants. I now have a career as a tradesman, and we own our own home. I simply want to be responsible for me and my family, pay reasonable taxes, be a good person, harm none, and help others where I can.

I am a staunch fiscal conservative. I don't spend money I don't have, and I am extremely mindful when spending someone else's money. I believe that wasting someone's money is tantamount to stealing from them. Socially, I am completely indifferent how someone else chooses to live their life. I don't care what you do, so long as you don't harm anyone else or you don't force me to pay for something I disagree with. All of my votes have been bipartisan as I like the "character of a person" over the "party first" approach. I have found that no political party is right all the time. I don't care which party is in power. However, I want Maryland decisions made in Maryland, by Marylanders, with Maryland money.

That being said, I believe Washington D.C. is broken. Please list off the problems they have solved. I'll wait... The Federal government is too big, and no one knows what's going on. I believe this is by design. If D.C. actually solved a problem, they can no longer collect taxes, justify an agency / service, or campaign on fixing a bad situation.

The Convention of States resolution, HJ0006, addresses this problem in three meaningful and comprehensive ways:

1. Term limits for members of Congress, professional bureaucrats and federal officials.
2. Federal overreach. Sending power back to the states where it belongs.
3. Fiscal restraints on the federal government. For example, addressing debt, spending and taxation.

Term Limits:

Clearly term limits are needed for elected officials. The ideas, policies, goals, and execution of the business of running our nation is failing us now. Due to the power of incumbency, the likelihood of disassembling the federal power structure from within is very slim without "term limits" for Washington D.C. Congress needs new progressive leadership that is no longer married to the failed policies of old leaders. Also, if any Maryland official wants a promotion to Congress, those seats aren't likely going to become vacant without our resolution. Think about it.

As I'm sure you know, Maryland and Northern Virginia have more federal employees and subcontractors than anywhere else our nation. With this in mind, I understand that term limits for bureaucrats can seem to be a very touchy subject. However, with passage of our resolution and the return of power and money from all those federal agencies to state or local jurisdictions, these federal employees will find it very easy to transition as their

jobs will be even more abundant in the individual states. After all, they have a head start on how to do the job the best.

Also, with regards to term limits. According to Pew Research, former President Donald Trump put 226 judges on the bench (including 1/3 of the Supreme Court). Do you want them on the bench for the next 40 years? I do not. Our resolution will help.

Federal overreach:

The Federal government takes Marylander's tax dollars and keeps a percentage for their own spending, and then tells us what they require us to do to get some percentage of our own money back. Stings a little when you put it that way. Why settle for DC's crumbs when we are paying for the whole loaf of bread? Smaller Federal government equals more funds staying in Maryland. I believe that Maryland can only grow its state power so much because the residents believe the federal government "has it covered." Remove the federal government from the "solutions end" of federal agencies and make them a small "advisory group" then you get to rebuild and refund every state agency for yourselves.

I was working on my testimony across from Lake Elkhorn and saw the Howard County Bureau of Environmental Services. I often wonder how much more good they could do in Maryland, and how much more funding we could keep in Maryland, if we shrunk the Federal EPA and did the work here in Maryland rather than in the Federal government. I believe this is something to be considered - thinking about every department on the federal and state government's ledgers. The more power and work done here in Maryland, the more say the elected Maryland legislators have about our tax dollars.

As both State and Federal governments operate the same basic set of programs. When a program fails, who is to blame? Education failings.... Environmental failings... Urban development failings..... Medical funding failings.... Infrastructure failings? Who's to blame? The blame game slows solutions.

Let's be responsible for ourselves. I believe without the federal government taking our monies and sticking their nose in our business, Maryland will be better off.

Fiscal restraints:

When one is trying to get out of debt, cutting spending is the most important step. Paying off debt means nothing if one just keeps swiping credit cards. Through all of my years of working, I have been both very well to do and completely broke. Setbacks and challenges are good. We learn through struggle. As I pondered bankruptcy a few times (never did do it) I learned just how truly bad being in debt is since one needs to pay someone all their post responsibility money for as long as needed just to become broke. We should be working to pay down the national debt rather than constantly finding ways to increase it. Less debt means more prosperity for all Americans.

The national deficit is just shy of \$28 trillion, barely comprehensible when you realize that none of our national problems have been fixed, which means first we need to right the ship, then cut and reallocate whatever money it takes to fix our finances. If we don't start to try, the system will crash, this will be our children's, grandchildren's, and great grandchildren's reality. We must prevent that. The only way to fix the system and clearing our federal balance sheet is to systematically shrink Washington DC. Overtaxing will not work. As a nation, we are too far past the ability to "outgrow" our debt/bills. Shrinking and cutting the extra and unnecessary is the only way now.

Possible Amendments that could be discussed at a convention to address fiscal restraints are:

- Single subject appropriation bills
- Enforcement of the auditing of expenses with civil or criminal charges for theft or purposeful waste
- Mandatory bill review time
- Mandatory zero deficit federal spending

-Required minimal 3% of the GDP budget must go into an interest building national fund for environmental disasters or the next pandemic.

As I personally feel complaining about a problem without offering suggestions of solutions is both counterproductive and lazy, here are a few of my own ideas....

-Required P3 initiatives on ALL federal projects.

-Shrink the military's standing personnel through our superior technology/R&D.

-Run a "Gofundme" type federal government. Let the people choose which federal "pet projects" they want to fund. It's their money and should be their choices.

-Sell interest accruing bonds for infrastructure projects.

Shrinking the federal government will cut down on regulations, which will increase the number of businesses. More jobs = less unemployment. Federal and state governments don't make money, We the People make money. We need the Federal government to end their waste. Every single dollar the Federal government spends is one less dollar Marylanders have to take care of their families, invest in their businesses to expand and lift up others, or for corporations to open more facilities. Also, pulling the checkbook from Washington DC will help lessen the divisiveness in our nation as people will not be forced to pay for things they don't believe in or want. Imagine the good our great people of America can do if they get to keep more of their money.

I am looking to you to do the right thing. I can only encourage you, as you are the representatives of our/my desires. I don't get a vote about HJ0006. Please use this opportunity to help every citizen by supporting our resolution. It is my belief that fiscal responsibility and ending federal overreach will effectively end poverty and suffering as the opportunities will be so vast, especially in minority communities. Less federal government equals more prosperity. We can do better. We need to do better.

Finally, everybody wants to be Santa. Nobody wants to be the Grinch. It will take strength and resolve to fix this economic train wreck. This needs to be done now, and we need your help. I'm pleading with you to be strong & do the right thing. Please don't just kick the can down the road. I know our current path is unsustainable & it is always the right time to do the right thing, no matter how hard the task.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Paul J McElheny