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**Written Testimony in SUPPORT of- Senate Joint Resolution concerning -United States Constitution – Amendments Convention – Limitations on Federal Power**

**Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee**

Dear Committee Chair, the Honorable Senator Paul Pinsky, and EHEA Committee Members,

My name is Dr. Nichole Weakley. Last year I voiced my concerns for the ever-growing irresponsibility of government - fearing that, if left unchecked, we were on a path toward destruction similar to the country my family fled from.

This concern has only increased, and frankly I suspect we are approaching the time where we cannot turn back.

Over the last 15 years I've worked with children across home, school, and clinic settings with the leading non-profits and universities in the United States. As a scientist-practitioner who cares deeply about the policies that effect children and education – I believe that SJ8 is a long-standing solution to the heart of the issue.

Children, particularly those in marginalized populations have often been described as the “canaries in a coal mine” because negative outcomes will often show with them, first – watching these populations should allow for us to quickly adjust policies.

I can state plainly that I have never before experienced the despondency that I am seeing in the field of mental health and education. The top-down policies that have come from Washington for generations create a cascade of secondary and tertiary effects that impact – without fail – those most at risk. This has never been more evident than during the past two years where education and intervention services have been all but desecrated while referrals for significant mental health issues are through the roof – I'm now fielding concerns of suicidal ideation in children as young as 8. The CDC data for 2020 indicates that suicide was the 2nd leading cause of death in ages 9-14. For reference, children between the ages of 9 and 19 are 18xs more likely to die from suicide than from COVID, yet our recent child health and education policies are entirely myopic and void of data-based decision making.

I joined this bipartisan effort to call for a Convention of States because though our system is struggling – we still have the ability to course correct. It's largely accepted that focused, individualized interventions lead to the greatest results for clients – and I would argue the same for politics. A stronger relationship between the elected and their constituents will lead the

greater results for people and communities. It's time we bring governing back to YOU here at the state. I ask that you move SJ8 to the floor for full debate. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Nichole Weakley, Ph.D.