

S_Patten_Written_Testimony_2022_Hearing_Testimony_

Uploaded by: A Stephen Patten

Position: FAV



CONVENTION *of* STATES ACTION MARYLAND

February 23, 2022

Stephen Patten
1574 Quiet Meadow Way
Hampstead, MD 21074

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, Maryland Senate

Dear Mister Chairman:

For the past four years I have had the great honor of volunteering alongside fellow Marylanders, with the goal of adding Maryland to the growing list of states that intend to use Article V of our Constitution to propose amendments, to our Constitution.

I'd like to use my testimony to address the idea that, *"there is no precedent as to how an Article V Convention for Proposing Amendments would be organized or operate."*

In conducting a little research, I easily found plenty of information done by Constitutional Scholars like Independence Institute's Rob Natelson, Princeton's Robbie George, Georgetown's Randy Barnett, and Alliance Defending Freedom's Michael Farris, all laying out multiple examples of in-state convention practices, multi-state convention practices, proposing convention practices, plenipotentiary convention practices and ratifying convention practices.

In addition, I found documentation referring to local, state and federal American government conventions in two centuries of post-Founding official documents, hundreds of state legislature applications, and a string of court decisions stretching from 1798 right into the 21st century -- including a Supreme Court case, *Smith v. Union Bank* in 1831 that refers to a convention for proposing amendments as a "convention of the states."

In reading the research done by the earlier mentioned academic heavyweights, there are records from twenty intercolonial conventions held prior to Independence, eleven in-state and multi-state conventions held from 1776 to 1787, and in the two centuries following ratification there are records of six more conventions with the most recent being held in 2017.

Were these all Article V conventions acting with Constitutional power to propose amendments?

No, none were, but to say there is no historical precedent for conventions sponsored by American governments is just not accurate.

Those that make the argument that there is no precedent for an Article V Convention for Proposing Amendments are either wrong or being untruthful.

My goal is to bring to your attention that there is plenty of scholarship available and it summarily disputes the Article V objection that, 'we don't know how a convention would work.'

I sincerely thank you for time and attention and respectfully ask that you find SJ8 favorable for further debate among the complete senate so these concerns can be accurately discussed and measured with your colleagues.

Sincerely,

Stephen Patten

Constituent of District 5

State Director, Convention of States Action Maryland

stephen.patten@cosaction.com

443-871-5332

Carrie Wolford Testimony SJ8 FINAL 2022 (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Carrie Wolford

Position: FAV

Written Testimony in **SUPPORT of- Senate Joint Resolution SJ8**, concerning -United States Constitution – Amendments Convention – Limitations on Federal Power

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 21, 2022

Name

Address

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

Hello, I'm Carrie Wolford from District 1. Service to our country runs deep on both sides of my family!

My generational Grandfather, Michael Paugh crossed the Delaware River with George Washington along with his brother Meshick Paugh. While fighting in the Revolutionary war they also camped at Valley Forge.

The sacrifice they made to this country is still within my soul. I think about the stories I hear about the conditions of our soldiers at Valley Forge- The soldiers were starving for lack of food. If they even had shoes at all, they were riddled with holes. Their uniforms were torn and tattered and not appropriate for the long cold winters, no blankets to keep them warm, and sickness was all around. Many of the soldiers froze to death. They were willing to sacrifice their lives in order to have freedom.

They were at times, not receiving just compensation for their service. So, at the end of the war George Washington made sure that they were given parcels of land in Garrett County. I will cherish that land until the day that I die.

Most of the men in my immediate family also served in the military. I do not take their sacrifice for granted and that is why I volunteer with the Convention of States. It is the solution that is as big as the problem.

My family was always willing to shed blood for our inalienable rights - not for a bureaucracy to take them away with a stroke of a pen. They fought for the right to self-govern, to earn their own way.

Many Marylanders are in the movement to preserve our freedoms and to use Article V of our Constitution. We want to know whether you are willing to stand with us? We do not want you to sacrifice our State or our rights, and hand over your power to some crazy agenda in Washington D.C.

We once united against the British in the Revolutionary War, we were united in calling the late federal convention, we need to unite again, NOW! For the peace and happiness of America before it is too late.

As a descendant of generations who were willing to give everything that they had so that you have liberty and that you have a right to your individual pursuits of happiness, I am asking that you vote Favorable on resolution SJ8 and allow it to the Senate floor for debate.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carrie Wolford

Written Testimony in SUPPORT of- Senate Joint Reso

Uploaded by: Cody Tristan White

Position: FAV

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

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 22, 2022

Cody White

41151 Glenwood Ln.

Mechanicsville, MD 20659

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

My name is Cody White, I am ten years old, and a homeschooled sixth grader from Mechanicsville, MD.

You are probably thinking and asking yourselves, “What is a ten year old doing here today? What does he know about governance and passing laws? Well, I am here today to support Bill SJ8.

A couple of weeks ago, I won an essay about, “What is Federalism and Why did the Framers and Founders created such a government system for America?”

The Founding Fathers built America to have freedom from the excessive power of the monarchy of England. The Founders and Framers made sure that a government system would work to protect the people's rights and freedom. The Constitution was written and Federalism was born in America.

Federalism is the separation of power between the States and the Federal government, with the Constitution as the supreme law of the land. This way, the States and Federal governments will not have too much power over the other.

This country is a democratic republic. A hybrid system between democratic and republic government systems. The Founders and Framers wanted the best out of these two systems, with the purpose of protecting the rights of people as the number one priority. **Why? Because without people, there is no government.**

The Framers made sure that factions would not be created, because they could have too much power and control of the government. The Framers knew that when people get too powerful, they may become corrupt and greedy. As a result, they stay in power for too long. They become detached to the needs of people.

Today, we children, mostly hear and read news about, Biden vs Trump, Democrats vs Republicans, war, inflation, corruption! It's all about pointing fingers!

We, children, do not want politics! We do not want war! We want good education and great leaders to teach us. You are our leaders, you are our examples!

I humbly ask you, Senators, please support SJ8. Please, do not forget what our Founding Fathers and Framers set out to do. Do not let one government go unchecked!

Protect us, your children, your future! Thank you!

Sincerely,

Cody White

SJ0008 Favorable Coley Brown.pdf

Uploaded by: Coley Brown

Position: FAV

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

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 22, 2022

Coley Brown

695 Knight Island Rd

Earleville, MD 21919

Hello Committee Members and Mr. Chairman:

My name is Coley Brown. I live in District 36 where I represent 1,327 supporters as their Convention of States Captain. I want a floor debate on SJ8 to have Maryland to participate in a national Convention of States. This will allow Maryland a voice on: fiscal responsibility – federal overreach – and term limits. These are popular topics with Maryland voters.

To clarify why:

- The Convention of States is not a partisan movement.
- This is not the first Convention of States or without precedent. Our Bill of Rights came from the first Convention.
- The Convention is not chartered to pass any Constitutional amendments.
- The Convention will only have authority to discuss these topics. If the Convention agrees to any recommendations, they go back to each respective state legislature to consider approving. Further for a Constitutional amendments to be accepted, $\frac{3}{4}$'s of the 50 state legislatures need to approve.
- If only part of an individual state's legislature disagrees, then that state will not approve the Convention's recommendations. Opposition from only $\frac{1}{2}$ of the legislatures in $\frac{1}{4}$ of the 50 states will stop an amendment from being adopted.
- Most importantly, If Maryland refuses to attend the Convention, your voters voices and your opinions will not be heard.

I vehemently implore you not to **CENSURE** this discussion! 28,000 of your voters ask you for a simple action and are watching your results. Let SJ8 come to the floor to debate its merits and its flaws.

Thank you sincerely,

Coley Brown

COSA_WRITTEN_testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Deirdre Elvis-Peterson

Position: FAV

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

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 21, 2022

Deirdre Elvis-Peterson

4123 Bedford Rd, Pikesville MD 21207

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

My name is Deirdre Elvis-Peterson. I am a naturalized American citizen, emigrated from Guyana South America at the age of 6 with my 3 siblings, our parents, & our grandmother. My parents actually LEFT their 4 children for 2 years in order to seek out the promise of a better life offered in the United States of America before our grandmother flew w/us here. That was 1980.

In my time growing up here, I learned how the American government was SUPPOSED to work. It was a unique design. There were measures put in place. "Checks and balances".

Over the past few years, I've become a parent. Something changes with that responsibility. I began to pay attention in a different way...other parents will understand. I started to see things I did not like for my children's future.

For instance...

I went to public school BUT couldn't send my children there due to the degradation of the public school system.

I went to college, but SHUDDER at the thought of MY children doing so, because of the debt they would incur, the propaganda I feel is being pushed, and the lack of safety for my 3 daughters in what used to be their exclusive spaces.

I grew up in Maryland and sadly...I fear I may have to relocate to a state where the legislature will actively work to protect my freedoms.

I have witnessed our federal government exercise powers that it should not be able to.

I have witnessed lifetime politicians use their seats for THEIR benefit - not that of their constituents! ...and some of these politicians have been in office as long - or longer - than I have been ALIVE! THAT is disturbing!

I've seen our national debt grow to something that generations to come will be struggling to pay off.

I've seen states cooperate with the federal government to the detriment of their citizens because of the promise of federal funding. **HOSPITALS** were unable to make individualized care decisions and use their expertise during this pandemic BECAUSE OF THE TIES TO FEDERAL FUNDS .. it IS, and continues to be, appalling!

Our government needs reeling IN. We turn to our State legislatures to do the jobs they were elected to do.

By voting Favorable on this joint resolution and moving it to the full Senate for debate, you are showing me that you actually hear our voices and there is FINALLY hope in Maryland for a full and open debate about this legislation.

Please vote Favorable on SJ8. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Deirdre Elvis-Peterson

E Weakley Testimony SJ8.pdf

Uploaded by: Elliott Weakley

Position: FAV

February 22, 2022

Elliott M Weakley

43685 Lifelong Landing Lane

Hollywood, MD 20636

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,

Hello, I am Elliott Weakley. I am in 6th grade and live in Hollywood, Maryland. But I have not always lived here.

My dad is in the military and we used to move around a lot. In fact, I lived in 4 different states by the time I was 5.

We don't have to move around much anymore, but when we did – it was kind of hard. When I was little most of the time it was just me and my mom – moving away from friends, having to spend birthdays apart, and missing my dad was not easy. They say that being a military kid makes you tough, and I guess I can see that, but I'm just grateful that we're here in Maryland and my dad doesn't deploy.

I've learned about American government in school and just wrote an essay about federalism for the Convention of States Maryland essay contest. Learning about federalism was interesting. Our government was designed to split power between branches of government as well as levels of government. This was done to make sure that no one person became too powerful and so states were able to make decisions based with their people.

Unfortunately, we've kind of messed it up. Right now, the federal government and the President are making a lot of decisions that impact a lot of people in really bad ways.

My parents don't want me to worry about this, but I know my dad is currently fighting taking the vaccine. He's a Marine and his job is to protect the Constitution. The first amendment of the Constitution protects the right to practice your religion, and that right shouldn't be taken away from you because you're in the military.

My parents also don't want me to worry about what's happening with Ukraine, but that's hard, too. My family is Ukrainian and my aunt and uncle are actually stationed in Germany. He's got an important job in the Army and deployed A LOT to Afghanistan, and I worry about him having to go back to war.

Until this summer, America was at war my entire life. I don't want my friends, family, and I to go through it all again.

I'm testifying today because I know you're supposed to listen to me. I learned about the Convention of States when I learned about federalism, and that it will help more people get their ideas out there – and I think that having people have more say in government is a good thing!

My dad always tells us “team work makes the dream work” and I think we need to work together as a team to help our country and our people. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Ellie Weakley

Written submission McCowin2022.pdf

Uploaded by: Gayle McCowin

Position: FAV

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

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 22, 2022

Gayle McCowin

3323 Foster Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21224

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

I am Gayle McCowin and I am a Baltimore City resident within Senator Ferguson's district 46, a one-year volunteer with Convention of States and a retired Lieutenant Colonel of the US Army. I write to ask you to vote SJ8, the joint resolution supporting Article V Convention of States(COS), out of committee for a proper floor debate this year.

Service members who take an oath to the Constitution truly understand the meaning of service to something greater than themselves. This virtue is long lost on career politicians of Washington who exhibit little desire to serve their constituents.

The federal government has become much larger than our founding fathers intended. New committees, new commissions, new regulations, new policies, and new agencies, and with each initiative comes the need for funding, while creating new solutions to old problems, when many of the solutions should be solved at the state level.

Marylanders believe this too. Our petition numbers are steadily growing within the State. I have attended many events representing COS and Maryland citizens are talking, and they are disgusted and ready to exercise Article V for Maryland and for the people of Maryland who are tired of supporting federal politicians who don't support their desires and fail to represent them once they are elected.

If We the People can't get our federally elected officials to work on our behalf, nor hold them accountable, the check and balance answer *for the people* is written into the Constitution as Article V. As a supporter and participant in COS, the State of Maryland would then have the ability to address limitations on out of control Federal overreach.

I am asking you to vote favorably for SJ8.

Thank you.
Respectfully,

Gayle McCowin

Lieutenant Colonel, Retired, US Army

James McQueen 2-23-22 Testimony filed.pdf

Uploaded by: James McQueen Sr

Position: FAV

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

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 22, 2022

James McQueen Sr

12345 Algonquin Trail, Lusby, Md 20657

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

Senators, I'm James McQueen Sr, Born & Raised in Md. I'm SoMD Regional Captain for the Convention of States, speaking for our regions 3154 supporters.

How did we end up here?

The Constitution of the United States sole function was to define the exercise of government & limit governmental powers.

History has shown government bureaucracy adds burdens and limitations on the people.

Today the amended Constitution of the United States is 3,000 +pages. Civil servants, civil authorities do not pledge to a government - but principles of our Constitution.

How can anyone pledge an oath and truly understand everything in a 3,000+ page book?

What does your oath mean to you?

We escaped Great Britain's Ruling Class due to the tyranny, overreach and religious persecution, and founded this United States of America based on the tenants of freedom from Government Rule.

The Rich Elites are killing our free society with malice controlling everything in our culture and Government bureaucracy.

Today many see the American Flag feel the owner could be a terrorist, extremists not a Proud Patriot.

Don't silence 28,000+ Maryland Patriots that are counting on you to hear their fear, their grief and hope, Please shuck the bureaucracy so our Nation can turn from its path of destruction.

Why can't you / we stand up for the principles of our Constitution.

Vote for SJ8 to move out of Committee and onto the floor for honest debate. Article 5 is our founders answer to living in tyranny.

Thank You for your time.

Sincerely,
James McQueen Sr
COS SoMD Regional Captain
jamesmcqueensr@cosaction.com
484-274-9534

Carrie Wolford Testimony SJ8 FINAL 2022 (2).pdf

Uploaded by: James Wolford

Position: FAV

Written Testimony in **SUPPORT of- Senate Joint Resolution SJ8**, concerning -United States Constitution – Amendments Convention – Limitations on Federal Power

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 21, 2022

Name Carrie Wolford

Address 306 Walnut Street Westernport, MD 21562

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

Hello, I'm Carrie Wolford from District 1. Service to our country runs deep on both sides of my family!

My generational Grandfather, Michael Paugh crossed the Delaware River with George Washington along with his brother Meshick Paugh. While fighting in the Revolutionary war they also camped at Valley Forge.

The sacrifice they made to this country is still within my soul. I think about the stories I hear about the conditions of our soldiers at Valley Forge- The soldiers were starving for lack of food. If they even had shoes at all, they were riddled with holes. Their uniforms were torn and tattered and not appropriate for the long cold winters, no blankets to keep them warm, and sickness was all around. Many of the soldiers froze to death. They were willing to sacrifice their lives in order to have freedom.

They were at times, not receiving just compensation for their service. So, at the end of the war George Washington made sure that they were given parcels of land in Garrett County. I will cherish that land until the day that I die.

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My family was always willing to shed blood for our inalienable rights - not for a bureaucracy to take them away with a stroke of a pen. They fought for the right to self-govern, to earn their own way.

Many Marylanders are in the movement to preserve our freedoms and to use Article V of our Constitution. We want to know whether you are willing to stand with us? We do not want you to sacrifice our State or our rights, and hand over your power to some crazy agenda in Washington D.C.

We once united against the British in the Revolutionary War, we were united in calling the late federal convention, we need to unite again, NOW! For the peace and happiness of America before it is too late.

As a descendant of generations who were willing to give everything that they had so that you have liberty and that you have a right to your individual pursuits of happiness, I am asking that you vote Favorable on resolution SJ8 and allow it to the Senate floor for debate.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carrie Wolford

Jennifer Brown Favorable SJ8.pdf

Uploaded by: Jennifer Brown

Position: FAV

Written Testimony in SUPPORT of- Senate Joint Resolution 8 concerning -United States Constitution – Amendments Convention – Limitations on Federal Power

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 23, 2022

Jennifer Deems Brown
1019 Heaps Road
Street, MD 21154

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

My name is Jennifer Brown and I am a political science instructor, Convention of States volunteer and supporter of SJ8. In one year, I have watched a dramatic shift in political ideology among my students. Once supporters of centralized federalism, many have shifted their views. I listen to stories of job loss due to vaccine mandates or business shutdowns. I hear about the cost of gas, food and retail items; and the effect it has on students working and attending school simultaneously.

In 2018 this body passed legislation that funds tuition at state community colleges, but if federal policies force prices so high that students have to choose work over school, what benefit is funding that will never be used? Your work for the citizens of Maryland is erased by poor policy decisions and federal overreach. Those same students are worried about completing degrees in fields where they can no longer work. They ask what happened to their “right” to work and to make their own choices.

Students are surprisingly unified on this topic, regardless of party affiliation. What they see happening at the federal level is awakening them. They are paying attention and are anxious for their opportunity to vote. They don’t want the United States to become a nation where freedom is trampled and economic prosperity ceases.

Like my students, I want to see something done to curtail federal overreach. As a former legislative aide, here in Annapolis, I have seen the process work. Each of you are far more inclined to listen to your constituents than any federal representative. All powers not specifically granted to the federal government are left to you or to the people. As Maryland representatives you have the jurisdiction and the obligation to exercise those powers.

That is why I want you to support SJ8. This convention is vital to restoring the proper balance of federalism. Ultimately, your ability to represent your constituents depends on how you exercise your federal oversight using Article V. Article V allows you to play a pivotal role in calling for a convention of states to pass comprehensive amendments limiting the power and scope of the federal government, thus returning power to the states where it belongs.

It is this delicate balance that secures freedom for you, for me, and for all of your constituents.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Deems Brown

COS Testimony.pdf
Uploaded by: Justin Ready
Position: FAV

JUSTIN READY
Legislative District 5
Carroll County

MINORITY WHIP

Finance Committee



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 315
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3683 • 301-858-3683
800-492-7122 Ext. 3683
Justin.Ready@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 23, 2022

SJ8 – U. S. Constitution – Amendments Convention – Limitations on Federal Power

Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chairwoman Kagan, and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

This resolution is being presented to offer a structural solution to a structural problem. It offers the chance to restore the balance of powers in our federal system by using our state legislature constitutional authority under Article V.

The activities of Washington, D.C. today would have been unimaginable to the founders of our country. Federal laws and regulations now touch upon every aspect of our lives, from what kind of light bulbs we can buy to farming practices to school curriculum to health care.

Meanwhile, we live under the shadow of a crushing national debt that threatens to envelop our grandchildren and their children. This has been a bipartisan problem with plenty of blame to go around. In addition Supreme Court throughout the past decades has vastly expanded federal power through its precedents with frequently willing accomplices in Congress and the Executive Branch. The Supreme Court has created loopholes to the Constitution's limit on federal power, and those loopholes will remain there until someone closes them.

That "someone"- by design – is supposed to be us as elected state legislatures. In their wisdom, our founders predicted that this very situation would arise over time. Toward the very end of the Constitutional Convention, George Mason specifically predicted that the federal government would one day overpower the states. And that is why he insisted that Article V include a way for states to propose constitutional amendments through a state-controlled convention.

Mason's proposal was adopted without dissent. This final version of Article V gave the states the ultimate constitutional power—the power to unilaterally amend the Constitution of the United States, without the consent of Congress.

The way it works: 2/3s of the state legislatures (34) pass resolutions applying for a convention to propose amendments on the same topic (which serves as the meeting agenda). Each state chooses and instructs its delegation of commissioners, who attend the meeting and work with the other state delegations to hammer out possible **amendment proposals** on the topic(s) specified in the 34 state applications. Because they act as agents of their state legislatures, the

commissioners only have legal authority to act pursuant to that specified agenda, and only to act in pursuance of their legislature's instructions. Every state gets one vote.

Any proposals that are supported by a majority of the states at the convention then get submitted back to the states for ratification. Only when 38 states ratify a proposal can it become part of our Constitution.

By passing the resolution before you, Maryland will effectively be raising its hand to say, "Yes, we believe it is time for the states to gather to consider proposing amendments that will re-balance federal power with state power." Specifically, the Article V convention called pursuant to SJ8 would be limited to three topics for amendment proposals:

1. Amendments that impose common sense fiscal discipline on the federal government;
2. Amendments that again responsibly limits the power and jurisdiction of the federal government; and
3. Amendments that set term limits for federal officials—including or possibly limited to federal judges as well as department heads.

Now, let me be clear, this does not mean that the convention must propose an amendment on each of these topics. Rather, these topics describe the outer limit on what would be germane for consideration at the convention.

My motivation for introducing this legislation is not just because of the central idea of the need to limit and reorder the federal government's hold on local and state governments, although that is certainly important. My motivation is also watching the out-of-control vitriol and lack of trust that has surged in the past decade as it relates to national politics. Who is in the White House and who controls Congress has taken on what should be outsized importance as the federal government's power has surged to the point where one side fears the other will drastically and punitively change the other side's way of life irrevocably. I believe that a part of the solution to this rancor is to calm and lower the stakes by purposefully restoring the proper balance of power to the government entities closer to the people and far more nimble, efficient and responsive in addressing specific, day-to-day problems than the federal government.

The Convention of States Action Maryland (all-volunteer) organization comprises 100s of volunteers and over 28,000 total supporters from all across Maryland. A few of them will be testifying here today and I humbly ask that you take to heart their testaments, and conclude with a favorable report.

SB688 Sponsor Witness Signup Form_2022 (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Justin Ready

Position: FAV

Senate Standing Committee
Sponsor Witness Form

This form must be emailed to the Committee Manager for the Committee hearing the bill. For bill hearings scheduled on or before February 11th by 10:00 am two (2) business days in advance of the scheduled bill hearing. For bill hearings beginning on February 14th by 10:00 am one (1) business day in advance of the scheduled bill hearing. Please include the date of the bill hearing and the bill number in the subject line.

Hearing Date: February 23, 2022

Bill Number: SJ 8

Lead Proponent Name: Mike Rilee

Organization: Convention of States Action

E-mail Address:

Phone Number:

Panelist Name: Leslie Jenkins

Organization:

E-mail Address:

Phone Number:

Panelist Name: Seth Lipko

Organization:

E-mail Address:

Phone Number:

Please also submit, along with this document:

- Any audio-visual presentation the sponsor wishes to show during his or her presentation.
- Any special requests for bill order. Please note, the Committee will do its best to accommodate requests.

Contact information for the Committee Managers:

Budget and Taxation: kim.landry@mlis.state.md.us

Education Health & Environmental Affairs: lamorea.stanton@mlis.state.md.us

Finance: tammy.kraft@mlis.state.md.us

Judicial Proceedings: sandra.popp@mlis.state.md.us

SJ8 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Leslie Jenkins

Position: FAV

Written Testimony in SUPPORT of SJ8- Senate Joint Resolution concerning -United States Constitution –
Amendments Convention – Limitations on Federal Power

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 21, 2022

Leslie Jenkins

3101 Slasman Road

Finksburg, MD 21048

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

I am Leslie Jenkins I am a Maryland volunteer for the Convention of States.

Article V was given to the citizens of this nation as a tool to be used when the government has become despotic.

Our founders said that this method of amending the Constitution will probably never be resorted to unless the federal government should betray symptoms of corruption. Symptoms don't even begin to describe the problems our nation has right now. You must be willfully ignorant to not see the corruption and the progression into a socialist country that we have become, or maybe you do, and this is exactly what you would like to see happen.

Article V is to be used and at our disposal instead of a last-minute ditch effort to expedient measures to try and reign in the federal government once it has crossed the barrier of no return. If this occurs, we would then be at the mercy of some radical and ineffectual measures that have no guarantee to retain our freedoms.

I applaud the founders in their wisdom to provide this safe, and peaceable measure by calling for a Convention of States. The abuse of power when allowed to go unchecked brings about greed and corruption as we are seeing today. Article V is the remedy.

This is indeed one of the greatest beauties of the system. And it should strongly be recommended to every candid mind to understand the wisdom behind Article V.

The Constitution of any government which cannot be regularly amended when it has gone off the rails, reduces the people to two dilemmas-

1. they must either submit to its oppressions.
2. or bring about amendments--more or less, by a civil war.

The Convention of States and its petition signers have seen the progression towards the destruction of our country. We are educating ourselves on the lack of leadership to maintain and secure our rights. Our leaders are choosing to follow a communist doctrine that is enriching their lives instead of retaining our liberty. To do that they have to take the self-governing power from the people and the States so that they can be the only reigning authority.

We are trying to avoid the radical remedy and be proactive with a peaceable remedy which our Constitution gives to us through Article V.

As a Maryland citizen I am asking "If you believe in the Constitution, then use it and bring SJ8 to the floor for a vote."

Thank you for your time,

Leslie Jenkins

FINAL MD Senate Mary Jane Feb 23.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Jane Perraut

Position: FAV

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

*Mary Jane Perraut
2128 Darcy Green Place
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Date: February 23, 2022*

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

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

I'm Mary Jane Perraut, a volunteer with the Convention of States, and trying to preserve the freedoms that I have always taken for granted.

28,000 conscientious Marylanders and I hope all members of this committee agree that the country is in trouble. As a volunteer, it was sobering to speak with several first-generation immigrants, who wondered if they had made a mistake coming to the United States. They said it is similar to the communist country they left, including censoring speech, growing crime, outright corruption and spiraling debt. It's alarming to see the federal government take sweeping measures and wasting billions to try to solve all problems for all people. That's not the role of the federal government.

As state legislators, you are more closely aware of our needs and how to best allocate resources in our communities, yet you are becoming less relevant. We need to give the power back to you where it belongs through an Article V Convention of the States.

We are losing our economic freedom. Imagine a stack of dollar bills from here to the moon. Now image 9 stacks. That's our National Debt - \$30,000,000,000,000. It's astronomical! In fact, the ratio of debt to GDP is more than after WW2. If this continues unchecked, financial default is inevitable and it will devastate the freedoms of generations to come, who will be punished by our inactions.

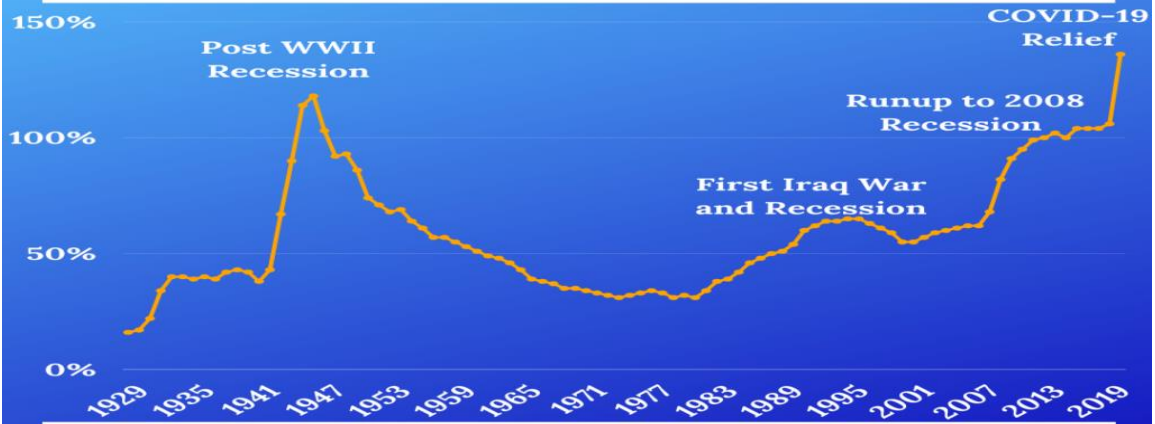
Do you think Congress will reduce spending on its own? I think we can all agree that this won't happen without a Convention of States, which gives us not only the right but an obligation to act when necessary. It's time to act to determine your own fate, the fate of Maryland, and that of the Country.

Please vote favorably on SJ8.

Sincerely,

Mary Jane Perraut

US NATIONAL DEBT TO GDP RATIO BY YEAR



HISTORYinCHARTS

SJ8_Written Testimony_Favorable_2022.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Colburn

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony in SUPPORT of- Senate Joint Resolution (SJ0008)
concerning - United States Constitution – Amendments Convention –
Limitations on Federal Power**

Maryland Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 23, 2022

Michael Colburn
3122 Stephanie's Lane
Huntingtown, MD 20639

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

The United States of America is at a crossroads right now. The Land of Opportunity, where millions of people from across the planet have sacrificed life and limb to reach our shores is in danger of becoming a distant memory. These millions have come here and continue to come here because this great nation represents freedom and equal opportunity. Our founding document, the US Constitution guaranteed the freedoms that we now take for granted and will soon lose if we do not take immediate action. We are losing our freedoms to a bloated and self-absorbed Federal government and Washington DC establishment who want to centralize more power and wealth amongst its own elite class.

This centralization of power and wealth comes at the expense of the people of the United States, and you, the state legislators. Through the 10th amendment to the US Constitution, the Maryland state legislature, as well as the state legislatures of the other 49 states, are given all of the power that is not specifically given to the federal government. However, the Washington DC establishment continues to absorb more and more power through its limitless spending and limitless bureaucratic growth and the American people have become enslaved to the Washington politicians and DC swamp. The Convention of States organization stands to peacefully and Constitutionally stop this sometimes insidious but often overt power grab by the Washington establishment.

The Convention of States would like to amend the US constitution through Article V to limit the power of the Federal Government and restore it to the state legislatures. As the organization grows, and American citizens are awakening and realizing the brilliance of our founding fathers. They realized a tyrannical federal government would never amend the US Constitution to limit its own power. Therefore, the founders included the Convention of States clause in Article V of the US Constitution for this reason, and for this reason alone.

Unfortunately, there is an uphill battle to face off against the Goliath that the DC establishment has become. With overwhelming forces and finances, it counts every single institution and industry as an ally who'll fight tooth and nail to maintain its power and the status quo. The forces include the US Congress, extends to both political party machines, and includes the entire federal bureaucracy, higher education, K-12 education, Hollywood, the media, any foreign nation receiving US financial aid, and literally every industry that you can think of because they all have an interest group with lobbyists. There are only two groups missing from this list: the American people and the State Legislatures.

The main attack on the Convention of States effort has been to spread fear that there will be a "runaway convention" and the entire US Constitution will be re-written. This fear is completely unfounded. The Constitution itself states any amendment must be ratified by three fourths of the states, meaning only 13 state legislatures can derail any proposed amendment, let alone an entire rewrite of the US Constitution. It's actually much easier to stop a "runaway" convention than it is to build the necessary numbers to hold the convention itself. Our founders designed it this way on purpose.

Additionally, media hit pieces that attempt discredit the Convention of States are becoming more frequent. They call into question the content of character of its people and attempt to associate them with various unsavory groups and movements. None of it is true. The Convention of States is diverse and inclusive and does not see color, race, religion, sexual preference, nor political party. The people of the Convention of States see only red, white and blue.

Despite these attacks, the Convention of States Organization continues to grow at a rapid pace, with over 2.2 million grass-roots supporters nationally and over 28,000 across MD. It stands peacefully and Constitutionally to stop the power grab by the Washington establishment. Through the tool gifted to us in the Constitution by our founding fathers, the American people and the state legislatures can reign in the power of the federal government and restore it to the people and to the states where it was meant to be. Please help save America and support SJ8.

Sincerely,
Michael Colburn
Concerned Maryland Resident
25 Year USAF Veteran

Rilee SJ8 2022 Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Rilee

Position: FAV

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

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 21, 2022

Michael Lee Rilee
16919 Glen Oak Run
Derwood, MD 20855

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

My name is Michael Rilee, and I am State Director for Maryland of Convention of States Action, a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to rebuilding a culture of self-governance in America.

We are over 28000 Marylanders who have signed up in support of our resolution calling for a convention of states under article V of the US Constitution to discuss and propose constitutional amendments involving a limited set of topics. The topics are 1. federal fiscal restraint, 2. federal overreach, and 3. term limits for federal officials, including Congress. Our numbers have doubled in the last two years, because Marylanders are coming to realize that serious challenges require serious tools. An Article V Convention of States is a powerful tool.

Once 34 states pass the same resolution, we will have the convention. Any amendments to the constitution proposed by the convention would have to be ratified by 38 states to become part of the Constitution. My colleagues will give more details about why we need an Article V Convention of States and how it works.

America is ready for the Convention. I believe that a Convention of States is the right tool to bring us together as a country.

When the convention meets, the whole thing will be under a microscope. Pundits will argue about every point in the debates. There will be a tornado of social media activity.

America will hold a national discussion about where we are, where we're going, and who we want to be as a country.

Given the challenges we face, this discussion is long overdue.

If Massachusetts can pass the resolution to the floor for debate, so can we in Maryland.

Please support our resolution calling for an Article V Convention of States.

Sincerely,

Michael Lee Rilee

Weakley Testimony SJ8 Final.pdf

Uploaded by: Nichole Weakley

Position: FAV

February 22, 2022

Nichole M Weakley

43685 Lifelong Landing Lane

Hollywood, MD 20636

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.

Rick Bibbee Senate COS testimony 22322.pdf

Uploaded by: Richard Bibbee

Position: FAV

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

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 23, 2022

Richard Bibbee

21636 Kelso Dr., Hagerstown, Md 21742

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

Fellow Marylanders,

I Need YOU, (in persona of Uncle Sam)

I and Rick Bibbee, of Leitersburg, Maryland ... NEED YOU to join us in a Bi-Partisan effort to Save our State, and our Country from its own procrastinating self, by approving SJ8.

Today, speaking for myself & Rick and over 1100 petition signers from District 2 in Western Md, and many others watching online, I hope to address those of you that might object to ...or have qualms about.... an Article V, Convention of States being held.

Some will say that we will be unleashing a Pandora's Box upon the Country... that will destroy everything that has long been held sacred. **I stand against that claim**, believing that our founders built in this Article V convention, to allow us to make needed corrections to save our Union from the selfishness and the stalemates of blind partisanship.

If I still believed in my heart of hearts, that our elected US House and Senate Members would make these changes on their own, I would not be asking to testify here today.

This same desire to be heard , was once answered in 1776by 56 regular Citizens, with an average age of 45, and not a one of those 56 could ever have been called a "Statesman",

YET they found the courageto believes in something much bigger than themselves and they put it all in writing **in less than 7,000 words.**

I, NOW... better understand the way they felt in 1776 And I am asking you to allow the voices of everyday Marylanders be heard on this matter, to shape a positive future for generations of Americans yet to come. By simply focusing on the founders immortal 7,000 words and not get lost in our **current version with 1.4 million words**, .you can...allow...that to happen. This government of , by, and for the people,... must live on forever, & YOUR committees bi-partisan part in saving our country starts right here Right Now, By simply..... Rating SJ-8 as favorable for floor debate, you will be standing with a groundswell of 28,000 Marylanders & millions of Americans nationwide.

Bob Betz SJ8 2022 Written Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Betz

Position: FAV

Written Testimony in SUPPORT of:

SJ8 - Senate Joint Resolution Concerning - United States Constitution

Amendments Convention – Limitations on Federal Power

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Date: February 23, 2022

Name: Robert Betz

Address: 7451 Jennifer Way

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

My name is Bob and I live in District 9 along with 781 other voters who want Maryland to call for a convention to propose amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

According to the Maryland Manual Online, this committee reviews legislation on a variety of topics including agriculture, fire prevention, and school policy, but not on calls for amendments conventions. Because of that, I and 28,000 other Marylanders, ask you to hear our testimony and then pass resolution SJ8 to the full Senate for a discussion and vote.

Now I'd like to discuss a piece of disinformation I feel the full Senate should hear debunked. That's the claim that there are no rules for how to run a Convention of States. That's almost true. The Constitution doesn't have rules for how to do anything, it's a framework, not a cookbook.

The Constitution creates a Congress and gives it law making power and tasks a President with executing those laws. Speaker of the House, Senate Majority Leader and Executive Orders aren't mentioned, but we've got them all. Some days they even seem like a good idea.

The Constitution says we need a Supreme Court, but that's pretty much it. To quote Constitutional Scholar David Barton, "John Roberts at a card table with a candle meets the constitutional requirement for a Supreme Court". And yet we've got Supreme Court, and it rivets our national attention for weeks every time we elect a president. Maybe a few rules would have been a good idea there.

Getting back to amendments, Congress has proposed amendments 33 times and the states adopted 27 of them, without any Constitutional guidance and the same authority granted to the states, just 2 commas, two spaces and two letters later.

So what rules does the Constitution expect us to use? The same ones we always used before. The framers were well aware of how laws get made, how courts operate, and how to hold Conventions of States. You're hearing testimony today about multiple Conventions of States we've already held in the U.S. The one we're asking you to call for today, will do the same thing, the same way, one more time.

Good Afternoon

Respectfully,

Robert (Bob) Betz

SJ 8 Letter Support Robert Fischer 022222.pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Fischer

Position: FAV

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

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 22, 2022

Robert Fischer
2485 Wayside Court
Frederick, Maryland, 21702

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

I represent more than 1500 Maryland veteran voters who signed the Convention of States Action petition.

According to recent polls, about 75% of voters support congressional term limits. The 22nd Amendment to the Constitution established presidential term limits, but no limits on the legislative and judicial branches.

Today in the 118th congress, fifteen US Congress members are currently serving tenures greater than 36 years. The longest serving Supreme Court Justice has been serving 30 years.

I am sure that you are aware that 65% of the US Senate and 40% of the Congress are over 65 years of age? Does this frighten you? It should!

According to NIH, serious cognitive impairment in humans progressively worsens after age 60. The chance of getting dementia increases 6% each year after age 65 according to Harvard health.

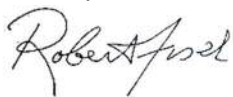
In addition, longer political tenures lead to stagnation, resistance to change, and obligation to special interests. We need to limit both senate and congressional tenure to 12 years (6 terms for Reps and two terms for Senators).

When it comes to term limits, Congress needs to police itself! Members of the Senate are we naïve enough to admit that the Congress will vote out its biggest gravy train. If we do not do this who will?

YOU are the catalyst to initiate it... to make it happen! Together we CAN make this happen!

Please support SJ8 and vote it affirmative out of committee to the floor for a recorded up or down vote!

Thank you,



Robert A. Fischer
Veterans Coalition Director, Convention of States Maryland

Seth Lipko SJ 8 2022 Testimony Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Seth Lipko

Position: FAV

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

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 21, 2022

Seth Lipko

Address

Dear Committee Chair and EHEA Committee Members,

I am Seth Lipko. I live in District 32, and represent 650 other supporters in my district. I have invested my personal time in the Convention of States movement **because of my children**, and my concern for their future. **I want my kids** to grow up in a **better world** than I was raised in, with **brighter futures and more bountiful opportunities**, and I'm sure all of you do, too. But what I've seen in the area of financial freedom isn't just stagnation, but digression from that goal, as a result of the **fiscal irresponsibility** of the federal government.

This is not a partisan issue. Regardless of which party has the majority, "we the people" are at the mercy of their expensive ambitions. With each passing administration, their agenda takes priority over economic stability and it's at the expense of the hard-earned incomes of families like mine.

The answer is not increased taxation; we cannot spend ourselves out of debt. **The answer is not more federal assistance programs;** they cost hundreds of millions and result in our greater dependence upon their existence. How is Social Security looking right about now? I hope all of you will be able to benefit from my contributions into that broken program, because I sure won't. **So, what is the answer? You.** You putting fiscal restraints on them.

Every average American family has to learn how to budget and prioritize needs as a basic survival skill. **Every business must do the same** to stay open and to profit. It's time the **feds start holding the same responsibility as the people** who are funding their irresponsibility. They've had decades to fix this problem, and have continued heading in the wrong direction. **They must be held accountable.**

You, the Senate of Maryland, **hold the power to enforce that accountability**, and as our representatives, I ask you to support a Convention of States to impose fiscal restraints on the US government. **For the sake of our children**, grandchildren, and at this point, even our great-grandchildren, who are **already in bondage to the accumulating federal debt**, we must put an end to this irresponsibility. Please move SJ8 out of committee, and be part of the solution. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Seth Lipko

COS congress speech.pdf

Uploaded by: Will Zwart

Position: FAV

Written Testimony in **SUPPORT of- Senate Joint Resolution SJ8**, concerning -United States Constitution – Amendments Convention – Limitations on Federal Power

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

February 21, 2022

Name Will Zwart

Address 105 Prussian Turn, Centreville MD, 21617

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

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'll be brief. I'm Will Zwart, I live in Queen Anne's County, and I'm here to warn you of a real and imminent threat.

Our futures, our families, and our freedom are being threatened right now. And not from any foreign enemy, but by our own federal government. The extremists in Washington has made it abundantly clear through mandates, federal supremacy, judicial activism, and even forceful intimidation, that they do not want to represent America. They want to rule it. They don't want 50 states, they don't want 50 state legislatures.

You've experienced this! Over 75% of the decisions made by the Federal Government should legally and lawfully be made by state legislatures. But Washington will never defer to the wisdom of the states because they don't trust you.

Haven't they said already that "state legislatures are blocking our progress"? So because either you're in the minority, or simply because you're in the same party as them, they say you have to fall in lockstep.

Well, Article Five of the U.S. Constitution says you don't. And they know it. And they're desperately trying to divide us and suppress us, because they're afraid that when we realize the power we have, we will wield that power, and take back our country. From Georgia to Massachusetts, states are realizing this truth:

That a Convention of States will increase the power of the people - your power - and decrease that of those who seek to control you. This resolution will gain you back the authority, wealth, and respect, that is legally and lawfully yours.

You have a rare opportunity to cement yourselves in history as the heroes who saved America. Don't let it slip away.

It is time for both sides of the aisle to unite against these intolerant federal thugs who want to destroy the aisle. I charge you to approve this Article V Resolution and bring it to the floor, so we might preserve liberty, because make no mistake, once they've taken all my freedom, they're coming for yours.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Will Zwart

SJ 8 - Article V Convention - Limits on Federal Po

Uploaded by: Donna Edwards

Position: UNF



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

7 School Street • Annapolis, Maryland 21401-2096

Office. (410) 269-1940 • Fax (410) 280-2956

President

Donna S. Edwards

Secretary-Treasurer

Gerald W. Jackson

**SJ 8 – United States Constitution – Amendments Convention –
Limitations on Federal Power
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 23, 2022**

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 8 – United States Constitution – Amendments Convention – Limitations on Federal Power. 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.

An Article V Constitutional Convention would inject chaos and uncertainty into our government, and, ironically, would allow those corporate donors to run rough-shod 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 8, we move one more vote closer.

For these reasons, we urge an unfavorable report on SJ 8.

SJ 8 - United States Constitution - Amendments Con

Uploaded by: Joanne Antoine

Position: UNF

February 23, 2023

**Testimony on SJ 8 –
United States Constitution - Amendments Convention - Limitations on Federal Power
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs**

Position: Unfavorable

Common Cause Maryland opposes SJ 8, which would call for a national constitutional convention. If successful, this effort would result in the nation's first constitutional convention since the 1787 convention that adopted the Constitution. It also would create the opportunity for a runaway convention that could rewrite any constitutional right or protection currently available to American citizens.

We are strongly opposed to a constitutional convention, which would put at risk the constitutional rights and protections of all Americans. The Constitution provides that Congress "on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several states, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments." Regardless of any limits that are being placed in the state calls for a constitutional convention, it is widely believed that once a convention is called there is no way to limit the constitutional amendments that the convention can consider and on which they can act.

Several constitutional scholars, including both Former Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger and the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, have weighed in on the perils of a constitutional convention. There are no rules on what would happen if and when a convention is called: no rules on how delegates are chosen, how voting occurs at the convention, how money can be spent to choose and influence delegates, or how the convention would operate.

This means that any existing constitutional right and protection could be up for consideration and revision by a convention. This includes constitutional protections for civil rights, civil liberties, voting rights, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and privacy, among others. The role of the courts in protecting the constitutional rights of individuals and minority interests would also be up for consideration and revision.

A constitutional convention would put at risk the constitution our Founding Fathers created and the constitutional rights and protections that exist today.

We strongly urge an unfavorable report on SJ 8.