



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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SJ 1 - United States Constitution – Amendments Convention – Limitations on Federal Power Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee March 14, 2023

OPPOSE

**Donna S. Edwards
President**

Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to SJ 1. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

An Article V Constitutional Convention would inject chaos and uncertainty into our government. A convention opens the door to massive changes to our Constitution, without any clear direction or understanding of the consequences of those changes.

Despite our Constitution being amended 27 times, there is no precedent for an Article V Convention. No judicial, legislative, or executive body would have the 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, how representatives would be selected, whether delegates would be proportional to population, or who would ultimately be in charge.

An Article V Convention clears the field for special interests to involve themselves directly in the process of writing the basic rules of this country. Every one of our civil liberties would be open to debate and change. Basic principles that we take for granted like voting rights, civil rights, privacy rights, could all be subject to change. Our rights to free speech, assembly, and freedom of religion would all be fair game during a convention. Workers rely on many of the rights given to us by the Constitution to organize and form unions.

America already stands perilously close to convening an Article V Constitutional Convention, and with SJ 1, we would move one more vote closer. For these reasons, we urge an unfavorable report on SJ 1.