



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

7 School Street • Annapolis, Maryland 21401-2096

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

President

Donna S. Edwards

Secretary-Treasurer

Gerald W. Jackson

**SB 1073 - Amendments Convention Called Under Article V of the U.S. Constitution -
Delegation to the Convention
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 1, 2024**

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 SB 1073. 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.

SB 1073 creates a process for appointing Maryland's delegation to a Federal Article V Constitutional Convention. It requires seven commissioners to represent the state as its delegation appointed by legislation, but bans commissioners under 25 years old, lobbyists, federal employees or contractors, federally elected officials or those that served within 10 years, state elected officials, and those convicted of a felony within ten years.

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. SB 1073 seems to imply that delegates would not even be elected through elections, but would simply be appointed by the General Assembly so long as the appointments did not interfere with this legislation.

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 SB 1073, we would move one step closer. For these reasons, we urge an unfavorable report on SB 1073.