

Bill: SB0517 – Article V Convention – Commissioner Guidelines

Position: FAVORABLE

Chairman, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit this written testimony in support of SB0517.

This legislation is not about whether Maryland should pass a Resolution to call an Article V Convention of States. SB0517 addresses a separate and necessary matter — how Maryland will establish qualifications, selection procedures, authority, duties, compensation, and accountability standards for any commissioners it appoints to an Article V Convention of The States.

Article V of the U.S. Constitution provides two methods for proposing constitutional amendments. If two-thirds of the states apply, then Congress is required to call a Convention. Should that occur, Maryland — and every state — will be responsible for appointing commissioners to represent its citizens.

This legislation creates the statutory framework to:

- Define who is eligible to serve as a commissioner
- Establish the method of appointment
- Clarify the scope of authority granted
- Bind commissioners to the subject matter authorized by the General Assembly
- Provide transparency and reporting requirements
- Establish compensation parameters
- Create a clear removal process if a commissioner exceeds the authority granted

The bill does not initiate a Convention. It does not expand its scope. It does not endorse any specific amendment proposal.

When the threshold of 34 states is reached — when two-thirds of the states have passed a resolution to call a Convention under Article V — Maryland will be required to appoint commissioners. That responsibility will fall to this body. The question is not ideological — it is practical: Will Maryland be ready?

SB0517 is responsible governance. It ensures that if Maryland participates in a constitutional dialogue among the states, it will do so deliberately, transparently, and under clear legislative direction.

Preparation does not equal endorsement of a Convention call. It reflects foresight. It reflects stewardship. It reflects respect for constitutional process.

An Article V Convention is no longer a remote or theoretical discussion. States across the country have adopted similar commissioner-guideline legislation to ensure they are not caught unprepared. Maryland should do the same.

This bill is about accountability. It is about clarity. It is about ensuring that Maryland's voice at a Convention of States speaks with discipline and under the direct authority of its elected representatives.

I respectfully ask for a favorable report on SB0517 so that Maryland is prepared when a Article V Convention is convened.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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