

## **A Constitutional Convention Could Put Our Democracy at Risk**

*New Hampshire should rescind its call for a constitutional convention*

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(504 words)

The United States Constitution is a hallmark of democratic process known around the world. It came to fruition through the 1787 Constitutional Convention, during which the convention's delegates - the Founding Fathers - engaged in rigorous deliberations that resulted in the document that has become the cornerstone of our democracy.

As we mark Constitution Day today, it is important to remember that the Constitution, although it has been amended, has remained intact in the 231 years since the 1787 Convention.

It may come as a surprise to many Americans that a well-funded effort, spearheaded by special interest groups on both the extreme political right *and* left, is underway in states across the country to convince state legislatures to issue calls for a new constitutional convention. New Hampshire is one of 28 states that have passed resolutions, at some point, in support of a new convention to take up a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution.

Article V of the United States Constitution makes provisions for states to call a constitutional convention that can be assembled only if more than two-thirds of state legislatures, or 34 states, pass resolutions in their legislatures. Today, supporters of the Convention claim that, at most, they're just six states shy of this goal.

The Constitution doesn't give any guidance or guardrails to structure a convention. Each state will decide who becomes a delegate -- a process that is likely to become a lobbyist dream come to life, but a nightmare for our country.

Despite the claims of Article V supporters, nothing limits what a convention could potentially address, which means a constitutional convention could effectively set its own agenda, opening up the *whole* document for revision that could lead to major alterations to our core values and rights.

Article V's ambiguity about the process of convention proceedings is troubling; while many proponents may want to modify just one part or write one new law, delegates are free to change their intentions during the convention and edit any part of the Constitution they choose.

Special interest groups have been pouring their efforts into our state legislature, urging representatives to call for a constitutional convention to include provisions ranging from limiting federal fiscal oversight to overturning the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision. The time to act is now.

New Hampshire successfully rescinded a similar resolution before and we can do it again. It's time we stand up to the special interests attempting to use New Hampshire in their quest to take over the U.S. Constitution. This is a power grab that could produce a long legal battle while creating extraordinary tension in our country. Now is not the time to throw our country into turmoil.

As New Hampshireites we have an opportunity to call upon our representatives in Concord to protect not just our fellow community members, but all Americans, by rescinding all Article V calls for a constitutional convention.