



Common Cause Opposes a Constitutional Convention

The call for a federal constitutional convention is a dangerous threat to our democracy. Common Cause opposes a call for a constitutional convention, regardless of the amendment being proposed, for the following reasons:

- **THREAT OF A RUNAWAY CONVENTION:** There is nothing in the Constitution to prevent a constitutional convention from being expanded in scope to issues not raised in convention calls passed by the state legislatures, and therefore could lead to a runaway convention.
- **INFLUENCE OF SPECIAL INTERESTS:** An Article V convention would open up the Constitution to revisions at a time of extreme gerrymandering and in an environment of unlimited political spending. It could allow special interests and the wealthiest to re-write the rules governing our system of government.
- **NO RULES:** There are no rules governing constitutional conventions. A constitutional convention would be an unpredictable Pandora's Box; the last one, in 1787, resulted in a brand new Constitution. There's a significant danger that opponents of certain civil liberties or other members of the organized Right could change the scope of the convention and undermine basic rights long protected by the Constitution.
- **UNCERTAIN RATIFICATION PROCESS:** A convention could re-define the ratification process (which currently requires 38 states to approve of any new amendments) to make it easier to pass new amendments, including those considered at the convention. This happened in 1787, when the convention changed the threshold necessary for ratification.
- **THREAT OF LEGAL DISPUTES:** No judicial, legislative, or executive body would have clear authority to settle disputes about a convention, opening the process up to chaos and drawn out legal disputes that threaten the functioning of our democracy and economy.
- **APPLICATION PROCESS UNCERTAINTY:** There is no clear process on how Congress or any other governmental body would count and add up Article V applications, or if Congress and the states could restrain the convention's mandate based on those applications.
- **POSSIBILITY OF UNEQUAL REPRESENTATION:** There are no rules for how states would choose delegates to a convention, how states and citizens will be represented within a constitutional convention, and who would ultimately vote on matters raised in a convention.

Common Cause is a nonpartisan grassroots organization dedicated to upholding the core values of American democracy. We work to create open, honest, and accountable government that serves the public interest; promote equal rights opportunity, and representation for all; and empower all people to make their voices heard in the political process.