

## **Convention of States Testimony by Gary Minadeo**

Thank you for this opportunity to speak in favor of Senate Joint Resolution 1: Article V Convention of States. My purpose today is to give you the view of a United States Armed Forces Veteran in reference to the Convention of States and why it is needed today, not tomorrow. I do not speak for all veterans, but I must say that nearly all with whom I associate, the view you hear today is shared.

Addressing you is not easy. In my Army career which began with my enlistment in 1974, through my years at West Point right up until May 30, 1999, when I retired as a Lieutenant Colonel, it was ingrained in me that we in the Armed Forces did not have the freedom of civilians to be involved in the political process except for voting. It was our sacred honor and duty to follow all legal and moral orders of our civilian leaders and pray that they were all virtuous men and women with only the defense of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as their reason for sending us into the fray. However, since 1999, I have simply seen enough and stand ready to stem the 100 year canker growth of fiscal irresponsibility, federal overreach, and government officials and politicians just staying around too long.

My dismay with our government really began prior to retirement when serving on a Court Martial jury. We came to the sentencing portion of the trial and the enlisted soldier who lied on official documents and perjured himself was given a chance to speak. This soldier looked at the judge, without hesitation or quiver in his voice, and said "Sir, I did nothing that our current president hasn't done, at least I did not soil my office cubicle". Well, we had been hearing this kind of rhetoric from our soldiers in those challenging leadership times and had to swiftly correct them to always be respectful of our Commander and Chief. But what the Judge, a seasoned combat veteran and full Colonel, told this soldier was so true as it was sad, when he said "Soldier, we who are honored to wear the uniform of the Armed Forces of the greatest nation on planet earth for all time are held to a higher standard of professional and personal conduct than those civilians who lead and feed us, and for whom we are willing to die". I knew our country was changing and not for the better.

Let's now eavesdrop, with neither FISA nor wiretap authority, but more like the ghosts of Christmas past and present, on a typical discussion around the table at the local Veterans establishments in our towns across the nation. My language here is quite filtered.

So how on earth do they keep spending money they do not have?

When do we get to vote on raising the debt limit?

They killed our Ambassador and we will lead from behind?

He died at home waiting to get into the VA hospital, man, he did not wait to hit Omaha Beach.

They gave that terrorist state, which says that they will fly their flag over our capital one day, how many billions upfront and in the dead of night, and they really think they will not build a nuke to take us out?

Yep, the kid did two tours in Iraq and two in Afghanistan then got nailed, coming home with one leg and severe PTSD, but can't get a job.

Why is it that these politicians do a few years being wined and dined and then get to retire with more retirement pay than our soldiers get paid to go to war?

Wait a minute, that guy became a congressman out of college poor as dirt and in 12 short years he is a multimillionaire – do we pay them that well?

A personal server at home with government business on it – didn't one of the guys in our unit get 15 years for much less than that?

Are you kidding me, over fifty percent of our State budget is determined by the Feds?

Allow men in the ladies restroom where my wife, daughter and granddaughter could be? Over my dead body!

How the heck do they think they create jobs – they're killing jobs?

But he has been our family doctor for years and we do not know this other guy?

How much do I need to pay for this government insurance I do not need?

So she had three kids from three men with none of them providing support, but we the taxpayer provide for their medical, food, and her college education while my kid has a huge college debt, and has to pay his taxes to help her!

How did the Supreme Court come to that decision – are they reading the same Constitution?

My grandson told me that his school says the pledge of allegiance once a week on Monday morning – if they remember to say it!

Cops are bad?

That is not what they promised during the election?

I will stop there because we know it can go on quite a while. Maybe even you have thought these thoughts and echoed these sentiments. I am positive your constituents, not just the Veterans, are saying all of this.

And by way of wrapping up the spirit of these comments, “They will need to take it from my cold dead hands.” which does not promise revolution, but rather recognizes a government severely out of control and mistrusted by the people.

These are all comments from citizens who span the political spectrum. The old military saying is “If they are complaining they still care.” We still care about our republic and believe that America is exceptionally good. It is the Veteran who is your greatest supporter because we have had to live under this growing tyranny with our lives on the line. We tend to educate the young about our Constitution and provide civics instruction that has been removed from our schools long ago and replaced with social science, which I see as social experimentation, and I say that as a high school math, engineering and technology teacher for the past 17 years since retirement.

To all of this the Veteran, and the people, are saying loudly, “What can we do?” Elections do not change anything, protests are futile and often destructive, and just believing that it will get

better is fantasy. The answer is an Article V Convention of States. This one action was given to us by the founders who knew that one day the federal leviathan would come and the states would have to wrestle back control or suffer being neutered. As Representative Patmon says, "They gave us a back door!"

In closing, Veterans and all elected officials share the oath that says "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic." Foreign enemies are clearly understood. It has been over the past 17 to 20 years that the "domestic" enemy has become crystal clear to me – we the people being unwilling to act against the soft tyranny of the federal government.

I take great satisfaction in that the Convention of States Project has 2 million people who are taking action across all fifty states with eight states having approved the resolution. We have abandoned all hope that the federal officials in congress, or in the established bureaucracy, will return to the proper respect of the people and their respective state governments. We come to you, the state legislature as our last line of orderly and proper defense, ready to fight the good fight, and empowering you to bring Ohio to the front of the fight sooner rather than later. We urge you to stand strong with Senator Huffman and Representatives Patmon, Hagen, and Conditt. We need you to swipe away the opposition with their boogie-man tactic of a runaway convention by knowing that you will design an expert team of Ohio legislators and citizen commissioners to craft those amendments that will impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limit the terms of office for its officials and members of Congress.

Do not wait for others to join and then you get Ohio on the bandwagon when the waters look safe. Ohio must lead. Have faith and step out now knowing that we have your back and are willing to do in civilian life what we did on active duty – trust you to be the virtuous men and women sworn to protect the Constitution. We will hold your hands high over the battlefield as you grow weary and we will not fail. Thank you, and May God bless you, this grand Buckeye State, and the nation we so dearly love.