

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairwoman John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the Committee:

My name is Ron Oates and I live in Hilliard, House District 24, where I am a software developer and entrepreneur. Thank you for this opportunity to present my thoughts on why I think an Article V Convention of States is important and gives me hope that “We the People” can work together to save our Republic.

In my opinion, America is Great because Americans are Free. Our lives are a gift from our Creator, and our Founding Fathers gave us the next best gift we will ever receive – a form of government that secures our “unalienable Rights” by “deriving [its] just Powers from the Consent of the Governed”.

As far as I know, our US Constitution is unique in the world. Even as more countries move to more democratic forms of government, self-governance as defined in our Constitution continues to stand alone. If we adhere to our Constitution, then “We the People” are in charge of our destinies.

Our Constitution grants the Federal Government limited enumerated powers. The Tenth Amendment guarantees that ALL other powers are “reserved to the States respectively, or to the people”.

Unfortunately, Washington continues to grab more and more power, seemingly at will. The Federal Bureaucracy has grown so large and its own power so overwhelming, even Congress can no longer control it. Our Constitution does not provide for a “fourth” branch of government, especially one that operates outside the checks and balances of Articles I, II, and III.

Self-governance depends on “We the People” having a voice. Our voices can be heard clearly in our neighborhoods, our local school boards, our towns and cities, and in our States. According to the Tenth Amendment, that is exactly where our voices should be focused, where our “powers are reserved”.

By the time our voices reach Washington they fall on deaf ears. Political “elites”, oligarchs, special interest groups, big money lobbyists, the federal bureaucracy – all think they know best. Sadly, they are more concerned with their own self-promotion and have little regard for the interests of each State, let alone “We the People”.

With its limited, enumerated constitutional powers, the Federal Government has no right to decide how we pursue our “Lives, Liberty and Happiness” in Ohio. But, unfortunately, they DO decide – think about who controls education, health care, commerce, religious freedom, transportation, and on and on. Washington has their hands on virtually every aspect of our lives. Freedom suffers, and without Freedom, America declines.

American States are as diverse as the melting pots of the people who live in them. What works in one State is probably not good for another. I’d venture to say that you can’t find any two States that would benefit from a “one-size-fits-all” approach. But that is where we are headed with the current situation in Washington.

For me, the “power and jurisdiction” pillar of the proposed Convention of States resolution is the most important, as I believe that the “federal government has ceased to operate under a proper interpretation of the Constitution”.

Term limits are also very important, as they would return the idea of “service” to representative government and help bring an end to the power structures that lead to corruption.

And, of course, a balanced budget would force Washington to live within its means. Unlimited access to money enables the Washington “ruling class” to do pretty much anything they want – again, without regard for what is best for Ohio.

It is time for “We the People” to take back our power guaranteed by the Constitution and the Tenth Amendment and restore fealty to Our Constitution. I urge you to pass HJR1.

Thank you for your time today, and for your service to the citizens of Ohio.