

# Testimony of Leonard Rak

## in Support of House Joint Resolution 1

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairwoman John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the State and Local Government Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to share my motives, passion, and rationale behind our push to have Ohio participate in the Convention of States initiative. The imperative for preserving this great Republic, the U.S. Constitution, and our way of life as never been clearer!

I'm from Bellbrook in House District 73. Like millions of other Americans, I've become very concerned about the rapid growth of our federal government and its encroachment into our everyday lives. I remember life under Presidents as far back as Eisenhower—my, have things ever changed! I watch how our nation's top leaders purposefully cross into state and local sovereignties unfettered and without accountability. It's become increasingly clear how our government has chosen an authoritarian path.

My parents were part of the "Greatest Generation." Among many lessons, they taught us that hard work and self-reliance strengthen character and foster a strong and robust capitalist society...and they have. But those values are waning. As our American culture becomes richer and more complex, it seems to bring with it a complacent and a dependent mentality. By design, our federal government attempts to solve all the social maladies that evolve from diminishing self-respect and pride of accomplishment. A growing sense of personal entitlement has also reached new levels because our federal government feels it's their role to distribute wealth.

As each day goes by, our nation's leaders attempt to redefine the terms of our Constitution. Our federal government is rapidly rescinding the freedoms provided by God and codified by our founders. The growing U.S. federal government has imposed radical mandates, and interpreted the law to suit its own needs. As such, many of us are feeling the impact of increased government overreach into our lives. My family came to the U.S. to put this kind of life behind us, not to relive it.

I'm a proud immigrant and naturalized U.S. citizen. With all the opportunities this country provides, I chose to make a career in the U.S. military. I guess it was in my blood, so to speak. Here's what I mean...

As a member of the Polish underground during World War II, my father fought the Nazi socialists. He was ultimately captured and interned at the Buchenwald concentration camp. My mother's family was rousted from their farm in eastern Poland by Russian Cossacks and taken to Soviet work camps.

Following the war, we became a family in the U.K. living in a refugee camp provided by the British Crown. On Christmas, 1956, my parents, sister, and I immigrated to these United States with the hope of finding opportunity and freedom. While growing up in New England, I listened to their stories of tragedy and human suffering at the hands of totalitarian regimes. Their accounts were very sad, but inspirational at the same time. I wanted to be part of the solution to help preserve the values and freedoms we're blessed to have in this country, not digress toward the life my parents were forced to live in their younger days.

Today, I'm a retired Air Force officer. Over our past 45 years, our family has achieved many goals. There are several goals, however, that I believe every American must work toward each and every day. One of them involves the preservation of this Republic and the spirit of its foundational documents. This requires a personal sense of duty and commitment. These were integral lessons taught in our family units and education system. I fear both are failing the hearts and minds of our younger Americans.

The day Ronald Reagan announced his candidacy for President, he said, "I believe this nation hungers for a spiritual revival...to see government once again the protector of our liberties, not the distributor of gifts and privilege...Government cannot be clergyman, teacher, and parent. It is our servant, beholden to us." I believe he was right.

Thank you for your service to the people of Ohio, and I ask you to vote in favor of House Joint Resolution 1.