

**TESTIMONY OF**  
**DIANA TELLES**  
**GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**  
**OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**COLUMBUS, OHIO**

**LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON HJR-3**

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chairman Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the committee, my name is Diana Telles and I am from West Chester Twp. I am a volunteer with Convention of States Action and seek your support of resolution HJR-3.

Washington is broken, yet clearly has no plans to address our nation's problems with permanent solutions. So as with any institution, we must look to the country's by-laws for answers: the Constitution. Though never invoked before, a state amending convention under the authority of Article V of the Constitution offers a safe, civil, and effective response to our country's dire situation.

Despite limited enumerated powers granted to the Federal government, America is on a dangerous path, suffering at the mercy of poor interpretations of the Commerce and General Welfare clauses, out-of-control spending, and tenured career politicians who are no longer beholden to their constituents.

Can you imagine playing a role in the adoption of any one of these amendments that could provide enduring solutions in Washington, D.C.?

- Balance the budget annually.
- Set term limits for Congress and all Federal offices.
- Limit Federal legislation to single-subject.

Please be sure to carefully read and consider the words of our resolution HJR-3. It is straightforward and only four pages. Simply put, it is an application to Congress for a state amending convention. No more, no less. This is all we are asking you to support. We ask you not to be distracted by the noise of a few objectors. The passage of HJR-3 is far too important to allow its meaning to be overshadowed by doomsday predictions designed to impart fear in the hearts of Americans. Our opponents even resort to ad hominem attacks to discredit the reputations of Convention of States leadership as well as the reputations of our Founders for hypothetically allowing a runaway convention in 1787.

If legislators had to contend with such apocalyptic disinformation every time they considered legislation, they would be petrified by fear and accomplish nothing. Your focus must remain on the words of the resolution and not the fear-driven propaganda perpetuated for decades by opponents of Article V. If our opponents cannot even get their nihilistic claims about a state convention published in a reputable legal journal that's reviewed by constitutional experts, then you should not take them seriously.

There were people who opposed the Founders and their Declaration of Independence from Britain. Yet the Founders forged ahead anyway. There were people who opposed the abolition of slavery. Lincoln did it anyway. There were people who opposed JFK and his challenge to place a man on the moon. He issued the challenge anyway.

While we welcome healthy debate, our opponents are so contradictory and desperate, on one hand they suggest new amendments will be ineffective. On the other, they claim the convention is a vehicle to rewrite the entire Constitution. Article V states that when ratified, amendments shall become part of *this* Constitution. The Constitution *can* be used to save the Constitution but contains no inherent provision for destroying itself.

To alleviate worry of the “runaway convention” claim, consider that the US Congress is now a permanent Article V convention. Article V authorizes Congress to propose amendments to the Constitution on any subject, any day of the week. It’s hard to imagine a state convention could be more irresponsible than Congress. Yet, there is no “running away” or dangerous near-miss with crazy amendments. Why not? Congress is constrained by nothing more than the political realities of ratification—38 states must pass any proposed amendment. Since 1789, there have been approximately 11,000 proposed amendments to the Constitution. Of these, only 33 have been sent to the states for ratification. Only 27 have been ratified – the ones that were supported by the people.

Naturally Article V was debated among our Founders when they authored the Constitution. Our opponents often quote this convenient debate verbiage featuring arguments *against* the amending provision of Article V. Yet, our opponents do not advertise that our Founders unanimously adopted the state amending portion of Article V following this thorough debate.

Proponents of Article V (like me) have become disenchanted with the notion of “just electing the right people next time” or hoping that state nullification will ever make any real difference. Unlike the opponents who tout softball antidotes to our country’s problems, convention advocates seek to play a *strong* offense in the fight for American prosperity.

Regardless of political party, the results of a state amending convention can be beneficial for you and me. A reduction in Federal spending will allow us to keep a lot more of our money. Even more important, we can curtail the growth of our national debt which is now on the backs of our children and grandchildren. Without real action, even social safety nets that provide critical support during financial hardships will eventually be unsustainable.

Effective amendments can also lead to a robust economy conducive to job creation, improved education, less government corruption, and a stronger state and local government more invested in our communities than bureaucrats in Washington.

An amending convention of states is a safety feature that was packed into our Constitution by our Founders for this very moment in history. It is unethical for the states to deny their constitutional authority while our Federal government spends our country into oblivion. You raised your right hand to uphold the Constitution of the United States. This commitment you made to the Constitution includes an Article V convention of the states. Therefore, it is the *duty* of state legislatures to utilize this tool, not deny it.

Albert Einstein once said, “The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing.” We hope you will support moving HJR-3 to the House floor for a full vote.

Thank you so much for your time today. Please reach out to us with questions. We will find answers that are based on fact, not conjecture.