

**TESTIMONY  
OF  
DIANA TELLES**

**GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE  
OHIO HOUSE  
COLUMBUS, OHIO**

**LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON H.J.R. 2**

Chair Hall, Vice Chair Ferguson, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the committee, my name is Diana Telles, and I live in West Chester, Ohio, House District 45.

**Story of the Parents and the Rebellious Teenager**

I'd like to begin with a fictional story that illustrates an important lesson related to HJR-2. The story begins with man and woman who married and decided to have a child. Together, by God's grace, they had a baby boy.

The parents rejoiced in their little boy and life was good. When the son was a toddler, he was relatively well-behaved. However, as he grew into a teenager, he became spoiled and his parents refused to discipline him. Without correction, the teenager became more and more rebellious and eventually came to believe that he was in charge of the household, not his parents.

The teenager got access to his parents' bank account and selfishly spent all their money. He even took his parents into massive debt to pay for his lavish parties with friends. Still the parents refused to intervene.

Life for the parents became unbearable and so they confided in friends and pleaded for advice. After learning how the teenager had abused his parents and nearly bankrupted them, their friends asked, "Have you tried disciplining your son?" The parents replied, "No. We've heard that's too dangerous!"

In disbelief their friends asked, "Too dangerous for parents to discipline a rebellious child? Where did you hear this?" The parents answered, "Well, from our teenager."

**Relation to the United States and Article V of the Constitution**

As absurd as this story sounds, it bears a striking resemblance to the relationship between the federal government and the states. It also touches on a solution - Article V of our Constitution - and claims that we hear from those who oppose its use and oppose the passage of HJR-2.

The States created the Federal Government when it ratified the Constitution in 1788. The states are the parents; the federal government is the child. I repeat, the States are the parents, and the federal government is the child, not the other way around.

When delegates from the states wrote the Constitution, they feared that the federal government would forget its parentage, become spoiled, usurp power over the states, and abuse them.

Therefore, the states placed within Article V a provision that allowed them to discipline the federal government. The states have the authority to both propose and ratify amendments to the Constitution.

Even if the federal government became like a spoiled, abusive teenager, the states can rein it in through Article V of the Constitution. This was done in the name of creating a system of government that would best foster federalism.

But what the states feared in the 18th century has fully materialized in the 21st century. It is clearly time, if not long overdue, for the states to discipline their child.

The founders gave the states Article V not as a last resort, but as a safeguard. Madison called it a way to enable the states to check federal overreach. Washington warned against the consolidation of power in his farewell address. Jefferson believed every generation might need its own constitutional updates. There is absolutely no reason to sit back and hope that Congress proposes common sense legislation or amendments to the Constitution when we the states can do it ourselves.

There are those who would say, “No, that’s too dangerous. The states cannot be trusted to propose and ratify amendments to the Constitution! There could be a runaway convention!” To which we reply, “How absurd. The states wrote and ratified the Constitution. We are the parents. The facts bear out that the real danger lies with the spoiled behavior of the federal government that has put us \$36 trillion in debt.”

And since when do Americans reject corrective action based on hyperbolic messaging? We do not avoid driving because someone insists it’s too dangerous. We take medication and endure surgeries to address debilitating health issues and largely expect a positive outcome. Practice, level-headed people do not live their lives in paralyzing fear.

The real danger is for state legislatures to refuse to step up and behave like parents and discipline the federal government before it is too late.

Individuals who oppose an Article V convention are under the impression that the Constitution the federal government follows is simply the original constitution with 27 amendments, a document small enough to be tucked away in briefcase. That is entirely false, because the federal government follows the “interpreted Constitution” which is the Constitution as interpreted by the Supreme Court.

This is a book that is over 2,600 pages in length. You see, every time the Supreme Court rules on the federal constitutionality of a case, it is added to the interpreted Constitution. It literally gets thicker every year.

The Supreme Court has effectively amended the Constitution virtually every year since the Constitution was ratified. **However, the States have never proposed an amendment to the Constitution. Not once!**

Given the abysmal performance of our federal government, I would say that it’s about time that we, the States, step up and have our voices heard! If you are unhappy that federalism is essentially dead and want to curb the ever-growing power of the federal government, then it is time for Ohio to add its name to the list of states requesting an Article V Convention of States.

HJR2 is Ohio's opportunity to exercise its Constitutional parental authority to wisely rein in its rebellious teenager.

### **Symbolism of The American Flag**

I now invite you to consider our beautiful American flag. The American flag is the most American symbol there is in our country.

It represents our country and our core values. Look at the symbols on it. There are 13 red and white stripes which represent the original 13 states that created the federal government. The stripes represent the very origin of our country. The 13 states, represented on this American flag, expressly reserved the authority to rein in the federal government through amendments.

There are 50 white stars on a dark blue background that represent the 50 states that we are today.

I submit that to deny the states represented here in this American flag, their sacred constitutional right to exercise their authority under Article V of the Constitution is anti-constitution and anti-American.

History is on our side. The facts are on our side. The Constitution is on our side. Common sense is on our side. We now invite all of you in this committee to also be on our side by voting in favor of HJR-2. Thank you.