Chairman Hall, Vice Chair Ferguson, Ranking Member Humphrey and esteemed members of the Ohio House Government Oversight Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in writing today. My name is Sue Barber. I am a citizen, taxpayer and Army veteran. I am strongly opposed to HJR 2, one of the many house joint resolutions that this legislative body is attempting to pass, this one applying to congress for a convention of states proposing amendments regarding imposing fiscal restraints, limiting power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limiting terms of office for its officials and members of Congress.

First - one of the major concerns of a Convention of States (COS) is that it could not be controlled easily and could lead to sweeping changes beyond its intent. As there are no rules to how a convention would be governed then any change to the Constitution would be possible. And it could be used as a means to subvert our current amendment process, which has been used many times to make targeted amendments by representatives that have been elected by us, the electorate. The Constitution already outlines steps to amend it, steps that have worked time and again.

Second - regarding fiscal restraints as stated in the resolution there are organizations using the current budget concerns as a means to apply to Congress for a COS. We know that there are issues with our current federal deficit as it continues to rise, some think that it's due to out of control spending but they fail to look at the lack of revenue as the true cause. As stated by Brendan Duke of the Center for Federal Budget Policy, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) during a House Judiciary Subcommittee "Addressing the nation's long-term fiscal problems with any constitutional amendment to require annual balanced budgets would be ill-advised. It would threaten significant economic harm while raising a host of problems for the operation of Social Security and other vital federal functions. Policymakers who support lowering deficits should craft tax and budget policies to lower deficits, not rely on an unworkable constitutional amendment." According to the CBPP "The increase in our debt is not due to higher spending on programs but due to a drop in projected revenue from 21.6% to 17.3%, mostly because of the two rounds of tax cuts as the key programs such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance program, and the ACA Premium Tax Cuts came in below the CBO's 2012 projections." We need to

continue to protect lower to middle income Ohioans and the many retired workers who have contributed to this social safety net and not leave this responsibility to a handful of unelected delegates.

Third - limit the terms of office for its officials and members of Congress. We already limit the terms of officials through our election processes. By our votes we determine who our elected representatives are and if we disagree with the policies that they vote for then we, the electorate can vote them from the office. James Madison, one of the primary authors of the Constitution as well as a former President, thought that state legislators should choose their Senators in Congress as a bulwark against federal overreach. But the criticism for this grew when three elections from 1857 to 1900 underwent Congressional investigations on grounds of corruption. Since state legislators could choose Senators they were open to bribes by wealthier and more influential individuals. Also a deadlock occurred mid-1850s in Indiana when a deadlock by that state legislature had a vacant senate seat for 2 years over partisan issues. Our representatives need to make decisions based on their constituents and not state legislators that may have ties to special interests.

Ultimately - an Article V convention is a dangerous threat to our democracy, our US Constitution, to include our civil rights and liberties. These are the basic tenets that bind our citizenry together. Do not be fooled by what has been written in this resolution because there are a number of organizations and wealthy donors that are the impetus behind it and are attempting to rewrite the constitution to enact their own ideology. As stated previously, the Constitution already outlines steps to amend it, steps that have worked time and again.

That is why I write to you today regarding my concerns about this legislation. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on HJR 2. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in writing.

Sincerely,

Sue Barber
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