

Wood County Green Party Co-Chair Joseph R. DeMare's testimony before the General Government Committee 06/17/25 in opposition to SJR 3.

It's nice to see my Senator, Theresa Gavarone, here. I have tried repeatedly to set up a meeting with her to discuss this bill, but have been completely shut out. I think, perhaps the Senator is remembering the last time my co-chair Helen Dukes and I managed to have a meeting with her.

That was the meeting where we told her not to vote for HB6. We explained to her all the problems with that bill, how it would hurt ratepayers and the environment. She chose not to follow our advice, and instead voted for HB6. In fact, she was the deciding vote on that awful bill. It's taken five years, 2 criminal convictions, major legislation, and two suicides for Ohio to partially recover from that terrible mistake.

I'm here today to tell you that, if SJR 3 or SJR 6 passes, Ohio may never recover.

Quite simply, the convening of a constitutional convention would mean the end of democratic rule in the United States of America. The convention is the ultimate authority. Its decisions can't be overturned or appealed. The democratic processes which have allowed Ohio to slowly, painfully claw our way back from the HB6 mistake do not exist, here.

There are those who claim that, with supporting legislation limiting its scope, democracy could survive a convention. However, most legal scholars, including such luminaries as Thurgood Marshall and James Madison, disagree. With all due respect, my dear Senators and Representatives, I trust their judgment more than I trust yours. With a simple stroke of the pen, the convention could override any state legislation and the conventioners could indemnify themselves from any consequences.

And who would those conventioners be? What's to stop Ron Desantis from appointing Trump or Greg Abbot from appointing Musk? We are already seeing unprecedented and illegal grabs for power by Trump and the executive branch. What happens when Trump or his acolytes are given the power to overturn the constitution itself?

The Bill of Rights? Gone. Separation of church and state? Gone. Term limits for Trump? Gone. Of course, none of this may upset you. Increasingly Republicans have shown themselves to be opposed to Democracy. You disagree? Prove it. Reject this bill. Here's your chance to prove your detractors wrong.

When you were sworn in to this body, you solemnly swore to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America. You will be breaking that solemn oath in the most direct way possible if you hand our Constitution over to a pack of politically appointed dogs to tear to pieces.

Remember, you swore an oath to THE Constitution, not A Constitution. Whatever emerges from this convention would be sure to tear our already divided country apart. The men and women in our armed forces have promised to lay down their very lives to defend THE Constitution, again not A Constitution. We've already seen signs of unrest in our military. This could lead to open revolt.

Besides, there's no great advantage to being the 6th state from the last to call for a convention. The money and campaign contributions really start to flow for the final five. Ideally, you want to be the very last domino to fall. Senator Gavarone can tell you that, by being the deciding vote for HB6, she was able to carve out special deals worth many millions of dollars. Send these folks packing this year. They'll be back next year with even more money.

The HBO series "Dark Money" shined a blinding light on what was really going on with HB6, how dark money forces actually control what's going on in Ohio's State House, why our legislators ignored hundreds of hours of testimony from citizens to pass really bad legislation. Now, those same dark forces are demanding that you pass truly ruinous legislation, overturning the Constitution itself.

My son, a fine young man, asked me why I was bothering to come speak before you, today. He said, "This is the endgame of 25 years of Republican scheming. There's no way they're going to listen to you or turn back, now." I disagree.

As state legislators, it's in your own enlightened self interest to limit federal power. The 10th Amendment in our current Constitution says, "...any powers that are not specifically given to the federal government... are reserved to the States or to the people..." If that amendment is overturned, then YOU become superfluous. States' Rights, which used to be a conservative rallying cry, will cease to exist.

In fact, every Amendment that ensures our liberty has been the result of many years of work, anguish, and sometimes blood shed by Americans who, for 250 years, have been seeking a more perfect union. That search has made us the most powerful and important Nation on Earth.

One of the proponents of this bill during her testimony pulled out a big binder, whining that the Constitution was too big and complicated. Well, MY copy of the constitution is much smaller, but it contains the accumulated wisdom of hundreds of years of running our big, beautiful, diverse country. Don't throw that wisdom away. Don't tear up the constitution. Reject this bill, let it die, here, in Committee, as terrible ideas are supposed to do.