

Chairman Kristina Roegner, Vice Chair Theresa Gavarone, Ranking Member Willis Blackshear, Jr, and members of the General Government Committee; thank you for the opportunity to address this concerning issue.

I write today in opposition to SJR3 as a co-chair of the Cuyahoga County Green Party and as the daughter of Virginia Watson, the precinct committee chair of a rural precinct in Lorain County. We were a team against bad ideas of every stripe and partisan identity. As long as she was alive there were no animal cruelty exhibitions called rodeos in Ohio.

I have spent some time trying to understand the actual scope of this resolution. I see three goals: term limits, fiscal restraint and limited power and jurisdiction of the federal government. Here is the most relevant statement to that question from SJR3:
“To date, all formally proposed amendments to the U.S. Constitution have been proposed by a vote of Congress. A convention of the states has never been held under Article V. The U.S. Constitution does not specify how an Article V convention must be conducted or how its delegates are to be chosen. Further, the Constitution does not indicate whether the states that apply for a convention may limit the scope of amendments the convention is to propose. If Congress called a convention as a result of the resolution and others like it, and the convention proposed amendments outside the scope of the topics listed in the resolution, it is not clear whether a reviewing court would find the proposed amendments valid.”

Term limits are fairly straightforward. Fiscal restraint is a little less so but I would expect to see a prohibition against deficit spending. But when it comes to limiting the power and jurisdiction of the federal government I do not see any details but I do hear some suggestions from the statements of the proponents of SJR3.

Already we see items in the wish list that are not specified in the scope such as a 9 member Supreme Court limitation, single subject legislation, and state empowerment of border policy. As I read further into the proponent testimonies I hear calls for Welfare reform, Commerce reform, banking regulation reform, and likely a longer list of controversial cultural issues that have been stalled in various state legislatures.

There are claims that somehow this would end corruption in government and that it would restore state sovereignty and self-governance but if anyone prefers to nominate and elect their members to the U.S. Senate there is the stated goal of returning the method of appointment of senators as originally provided for.

I have heard the proponent claims that this is a bipartisan resolution. If that is so please explain why I have not seen any goals that would engage a wide cross section of my neighbors in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County instead of widening the distrust and polarization that exists.

I urge you to turn your backs on the calls from the central powers of the federal government to limit their power (ironic isn't it) and vote no on this short sighted resolution.