



## Article V Convention: Dangerous Precedent, Dangerous Loyalties

The various purportedly unrelated efforts by self-professed conservatives, socialists, and progressives to call for a new constitutional convention are moving forward. Many otherwise well-meaning state legislators are falling for their common line that such a convention is the only way to save the Republic.



The self-professed conservatives, on one hand, insist that if a new convention isn't held, the [growth of the federal government will go on forever](#) until all power is consolidated in Washington, D.C.

Their [socialist and progressive collaborators](#), however, are pushing for an Article V convention as a means of finally changing all the things they believe are wrong about our form of government.

Rhetoric and political leanings aside, the result of either scenario is a new Constitution. Of course, the Convention of States (COS), the Compact for America, and other Article V proponents on the right, argue up and down that they are not calling for a new constitutional convention. Then, as if that weren't enough, they criticize those of us who oppose their movement for being "false constitutionalists," and for believing that the Constitutional Convention of 1787 was a "runaway" convention.

I've [written](#) so [much](#) about [that last accusation](#) that I believe there is little more that could be said. There is one point, however, that remains to be made.

### Whither the Articles of Confederation?

If the Constitutional Convention of 1787 was not a runaway convention — that is to say, a convention whose result did not exceed its authorized mandate — then the Article V supporters would be pushing for amendments to the *Articles of Confederation*, because that document would still exist, albeit in amended form!

Follow me, here. If the convention held in Philadelphia in 1787 had confined itself to the narrow purpose for which it was called by Congress — to propose and vote on amendments to the Articles of Confederation — then we would still be living under that first constitution, not the one that came out of the Philadelphia convention.

We got lucky in 1787. Throughout that summer, the future of our country was in the care of men such as James Madison, James Wilson, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, etc. Before you sign on to the current call for a constitutional convention, ask yourself this question: Will the men and women who would be in attendance there be of the calibre of our Founders? Would you trust them to rewrite or "tweak" the Constitution with the same care, erudition, and commitment to timeless principles of liberty demonstrated by our illustrious Founding Fathers?

On that subject, there is one important point that needs to be made that will perhaps illuminate one of



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the most frightening aspects of an Article V convention.

### **Plan vs. Product**

James Madison is called the Father of the Constitution, but is he really? There is no doubt that were it not for his able arguments and his shepherding in the House of Representatives there would be no Bill of Rights. But look at the plan — the Virginia Plan — that he wrote and his colleague Edmund Pendleton proposed at the Constitutional Convention of 1787. That blueprint and the Constitution that was eventually approved at that convention have very little in common.

There isn't space in this article to lay out all the differences between the two plans, but readers are encouraged to compare them and realize that very little of what Madison intended ended up in the final product of the Philadelphia convention.

What difference does that make, you may ask. It makes a big difference. Imagine that you agree with the amendments that have been drafted by the COS or Compact for America. Imagine, furthermore, that you believe that once the doors close on this new convention there will be delegates who propose these amendments. At that point, remember the Virginia Plan. There will be other delegates at that convention, delegates committed to less-than-conservative causes who will bend and shape any proposal into something that likely will bear as little resemblance to the COS/Compact for America draft amendment as the current Constitution does to Madison's Virginia Plan.

The men behind these balanced budget, term limits, and other proposals overestimate their ability to have their way at a convention. All the ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council) money in the world won't buy the cooperation of the socialists who are slaving at the thought of getting their hands on our Constitution.

Perhaps those who identify as conservatives pushing for the constitutional convention genuinely believe they can not only compose amendments that will survive the innumerable legal challenges that will undoubtedly plague them, but that they are possessed of the skill and sway necessary to get the Soros-funded progressive bloc of the convention to go along with them. It will never happen.

### **Article V Promoters: Where do Their Allegiances Lie?**

Speaking of ALEC, there is much to be feared in this organization's influence over the Article V convention movement. As this reporter has chronicled in other articles, ALEC was the engine that drove last year's Mount Vernon conference. While there may be some good points in the ALEC agenda, there is also much that would prevent members from devoting themselves 100 percent to the cause of the Constitution.

For example, in the program for the ALEC board meeting held in August 2013, state chairs are asked to "[put the interests of the organization first.](#)" Is that the pledge of allegiance that you would expect delegates to a convention that could change the Constitution to be loyal to?

When the doors close at the convention and the gavel falls, can you be certain which pledge of allegiance the ALEC-associated delegates will be loyal to: that to ALEC and its [lengthy roster of corporate sponsors](#) or the one they swore to the Constitution? At that critical moment in our history, will they care more about the Constitution or more about the millions in campaign contributions?

No one can say with certainty, and that is too big a chance to take when we're talking about the future of our Constitution and the liberties it protects.

Before signing off on any call for a convention, readers would be wise to investigate the matter and see



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if the state legislators sponsoring the Article V proposal have ties to ALEC. If they do, perhaps those lawmakers should be asked to declare their allegiance before they are entrusted with “fixing” our Constitution.

On that point, if these state legislators were as committed to federalism, states’ rights, and forcing the federal beast back inside its constitutional cage as they say, wouldn’t they be on record opposing the acceptance of even a single cent of federal grant-in-aid money? Wouldn’t they be on record offering and voting in favor of bills to declare state economic independence from the federal government?

Check the data. Most states receive at least one-third of their budget funds from the federal government. It hardly seems consistent with a commitment to state sovereignty to shake one’s fist at Washington with one hand while cashing its checks with the other. The facts don’t lie.

### **Responsibility to Research**

Finally, dear readers, the pro-Article V coalition is banging the convention drum so loudly that it is sometimes difficult to hear the arguments against it. That is understandable as there is much that is attractive about the various Article V proposals. The problem, as has been laid out in this and the other articles in the series, is that once you scratch off the enticing conservative coating, you find a very bitter progressive, corporate-funded, and self-serving pill — one that if swallowed, would be fatal to our Republic.

The undeniable fact is that there is nothing other than proponents’ promises that can guarantee the rose-colored, conservative outcome promised by the COS, Compact for America, and other groups calling for this convention. Before jumping on that bandwagon, though, every one of us is under an obligation to do the research. To that end, several enlightening links are provided in this article and the others that were published previously.

Balanced budget amendments, term limit amendments, and the various other “power to the people” amendments backed by the socialist wing of the Article V movement are all, in one way or another, contrary to the intent of the Founders and to the principles of liberty they enshrined in the Constitution. Remember, no matter how “conservative” or “constitutional” a group or individual claims to be, if their proposed amendments change the basic structure of the Constitution or alter even in the slightest the delicate balance of power provided by the Constitution, then you should realize that although their lips draw near to the Founders, their hearts are far from them.

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