



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on March 26, 2015

Con-Con Backers Deploy False Attacks Against John Birch Society

As the battle over having states force Congress to call a Constitutional Convention under Article V heats up in legislatures across the country, increasingly vicious and false attacks are being leveled against opponents of the effort — and The John Birch Society (JBS) in particular. Among other tactics, Con-Con proponents are claiming that JBS leadership previously supported an Article V Convention and that the constitutionalist organization is now working with billionaire leftist financier George Soros to prevent one. Some critics also argue that JBS has no solutions to fix the very real problem of an out-of-control federal government.



In reality, as this article will show, not one of those claims is true.

First of all, Soros, a well-known advocate of Big Government, is not working with JBS, which works to promote less government, on the Article V issue, or any other. The myth appears to have first been propagated by the *Washington Examiner*. On March 16, the publication called the JBS a “Soros partner” because, it appears, a Soros-backed organization known as the Montana Budget and Policy Center also opposed a Con-Con resolution in that state and urged lawmakers to “direct your questions” to JBS.

The Montana resolution ultimately failed thanks to the hard work of numerous organizations and activists, including JBS members but by no means limited to them. Why the liberal group might have directed lawmakers to JBS for answers was not immediately clear — perhaps it felt the Birch Society had the strongest arguments against a Con-Con. Either way, though, it hardly implies that Soros and JBS are “partners” in opposing a Con-Con. In reality, the JBS and this magazine, which is published by the Society, have been exposing Soros and his radical agenda for years.

Since the *Examiner* article appeared, numerous Article V convention supporters have seized on the claim, amplified it, and even added more to it. Just this week, for example, leader Mark Meckler with Convention of States, the biggest force on the conservative side working to call a convention, repeated the claim in a national radio interview, saying JBS was “actually now aligned with Soros-funded groups.”

Ironically, perhaps, the truth is [essentially the exact opposite](#). In reality, there are numerous Soros-funded groups that are busy seeking to use an Article V convention to change the U.S. Constitution in pursuit of anti-liberty goals. “Within the ranks of those clamoring for an Article V convention are found numerous extremely radical, progressive, and socialist organizations that otherwise would have little in common with the conservatives fighting on the same side,” wrote constitutional attorney Joe Wolverton in an [article last year about the fact that an array of Socialist and Soros-funded groups are also working](#)



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[for a Con-Con.](#)

A massive coalition known as “Move to Amend,” which seeks to change the Constitution to undermine the right to free speech guaranteed in the First Amendment, reads like a who’s who of far-left groups funded by George Soros. The leftist group Wolf-PAC also boasts on its website that it is working to have states call for a Con-Con, using the Soros-funded show *The Young Turks* to promote its efforts to the American people.

Of course, the fact that Soros-funded groups and activists also seek to use Article V to amend the Constitution does not in any way suggest that conservative Con-Con promoters support the same agenda or the same amendments. They do not. However, it does expose the intellectual dishonesty involved in claiming that the JBS and Soros are working together to stop a Con-Con. It also shows that anti-liberty forces funded by Soros feel confident enough about a positive outcome for their agenda that they are willing to risk a a Con-Con — a fact that should alarm everyone who values the existing Constitution and the liberties it is supposed to protect.

In the same *Examiner* article, meanwhile, the reasons for the Birch Society’s opposition to a Con-Con were also misrepresented — a common tactic among those smearing JBS and relying on logical fallacies to attacks its efforts. “Groups like Birch oppose the convention out of concerns that the conservatives running it will go too far to limit government powers and fear that the public isn’t smart enough on the Constitution to change it,” the *Examiner* reported, falsely.

In fact, nobody from JBS leadership has ever suggested that the group opposes a Con-Con because it might go too far in limiting government power. The Constitution already limits government power, yet is ignored every day by the federal government. Indeed, the exact opposite is among the primary reasons why JBS opposes the plan: The convention, unable to be limited, as countless legal experts have explained, could become a “runaway” convention. That could potentially legitimize existing federal usurpations, further empower the federal government, restrict God-given rights already protected in the Constitution, and more.

Con-Con supporters say conservative states would be able to stop any bad amendments from being ratified, such as efforts to limit the rights enshrined in the Second Amendment, for example. However, it is worth considering the fact that even the overwhelming majority of conservative states already impose infringements on gun rights, such as licensing schemes, that go far beyond what the Constitution’s framers ever envisioned. What would prevent those same states from supporting such “reasonable” infringements at the federal level if the Constitution were opened up to revisions?

Another claim made by pro-Con Con activists about the JBS is that its previous leaders, founder Robert Welch and Congressman Larry McDonald (whose airplane was shot down by the Soviet regime), supported a Con-Con. Even if that were true, it would be irrelevant. However, as JBS leaders explained in a weekly newsletter and in a recent blog post, neither Welch nor Representative McDonald supported an Article V Convention to amend the Constitution.

The saga began decades ago with the 1950s Liberty Amendment formulated by Willis Stone and supported by JBS to rein in an out-of-control federal government. It is true that the Birch Society supported the effort to amend the Constitution with the Liberty Amendment, which would have repealed the 16th Amendment on direct taxation, kept government out of business enterprises, and made it even more explicit that foreign agreements could not subjugate state and U.S. laws.

“One of the means by which this amendment was promoted was to have states call for a constitutional



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convention,” the Birch Society [explained](#) in its latest newsletter addressing the issue. “No JBS official dreamed that this would happen. Rather, agreeing with Mr. Stone, JBS leaders believed that this route to ratification would scare Congress into adopting the Liberty Amendment and then send it to the states for ratification. No one connected to the amendment wanted a Con-Con believing always that it posed a threat to the entire Constitution.”

Indeed, even Stone did not want the states to call a convention. “When asked about whether he wanted a Con-Con, Mr. Stone privately told JBS staff that he always felt that Congress would never let it go that far and that no one would be that stupid to actually want to do it,” the newsletter explained. “It was a calculated tactic that Mr. Stone promoted.” By the early 1970s, JBS toned down its support for the amendment simply because “we felt that it was not wise to use this dangerous strategy of playing chicken with the Constitution.”

When asked about a quote from Welch that appeared in an August 1963 interim bulletin urging members to support a resolution in Alabama to promote a convention for the amendment, current JBS President John F. McManus again explained the strategy then being employed by Welch and Stone. “That strategy was to have state legislatures petition for a Constitutional Convention (not a ‘Convention of the States’ as current promoters claim), not to actually result in a convention but as a way to force Congress to use its authority contained in Article V to pass the Amendment without any convention,” McManus said. “Mr. Stone’s plan was to frighten Congress to act by having numerous states back the Con-Con route. He very emphatically explained this to me years later when he asked me to become the state chairman for the Liberty Amendment.”

In the end, the plan did not work, because the fewer than 10 states that backed the effort were not enough to scare Congress into action. However, McManus continued, there is no contradiction between what Welch called for in 1963 and what the JBS is arguing today. “I can assure anyone who cares to listen that Robert Welch never advocated the creation of a Constitutional Convention,” he said. “He, like Mr. Stone, believed that Congress would act if ever the the number of state calls for a Con-Con got close to 34, the number needed to have one actually be convened.”

Separately, Con-Con promoters have suggested that JBS has no proposed solution to rein in a federal government that more than two thirds of Americans agree is “out of control” and a threat to liberty. Those claims, too, are false, as JBS Director of Missions Larry Greenley masterfully explained in a recent article headlined “[The Solution is the Constitution, Not Article V.](#)” In that piece, Greenley explained that a Con-Con would risk harmful changes to the Constitution that “very well could end our heritage of freedom and prosperity.” But there are solutions to rein in the feds.

The Constitution, he wrote, is not the problem — the fact that politicians ignore it and the American people allow it to be trampled on is the problem. As such, the solution is not to change the Constitution, but to educate Americans to ensure that it is enforced as written. “What is absolutely necessary to turn this situation around is a large-scale, grassroots education campaign on the practical aspects of how the Constitution already limits the power of the federal government,” Greenley concluded. “In order to restore our freedom, an informed electorate must be created that will roll back the power of the special interests by electing federal and state representatives who will enforce the Constitution as originally intended.”

Nullification of unconstitutional federal statutes at the state level — the tactic that ultimately brought down the Fugitive Slave Act purporting to require that runaway slaves be returned to their masters — has also proven to be an effective strategy promoted by JBS and a wide range of constitutional experts.



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Ironically, while conservative Con-Con promoters argue against nullification, more liberal states such as Colorado, Oregon, and Washington have [already successfully nullified federal marijuana statutes](#) by simply ending prohibition in defiance of the federal government and the United Nations. Conservative states can use and have already used the same tactics.

Some pro-Con Con forces have also suggested that the JBS strategies have proven unsuccessful and so more drastic ideas such as an Article V convention are called for. That, too, is false. As just one recent example, according to the architect of the plot Robert Pastor, the JBS almost single-handedly killed his Council on Foreign Relations-backed scheme to build a “North American Community” by undermining the sovereignty of the United States, Mexico, and Canada. The battle is not over yet, but the JBS strategy of education was crucial in slamming the brakes on it, as the mastermind behind the plan himself conceded.

In sum, the claims being made by Con-Con supporters to attack the JBS for its opposition are untrue. There are well-intentioned conservatives who feel an Article V convention is perhaps the last possible resort to save the Republic, but false smears and deceitful attacks against those who disagree should not be used as a tool. It discredits those making the claims and harms the overall movement to restore freedom and the Republic. The JBS opposes an Article V convention because of the risk that it could undermine or even destroy the existing Constitution — it is that simple; no checks from Soros (there was none) or anyone else influenced the decision. For more, read the related articles below.

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