

Debunking Article V Convention Myths

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Throughout the first 190 years of American history, citizens and state legislators alike viewed the Article V Convention as a vital state check on federal power with over 700 state applications to call a convention to address dozens of different issues. Unfortunately, no single issue ever reached the 34 state applications required to call a convention.

It wasn't until the mid 1970s when the states launched a campaign to propose a balanced budget amendment that Washington really fought back. Vice President Walter Mondale took the lead as dozens of liberal groups launched a stealth sabotage campaign to discredit the convention by suggesting it's delegates could 'run-away' and unilaterally re-write the Constitution or repeal the second amendment.

The claims made by the Washington liberal establishment were farcical due to the fact that convention delegates can only propose, not ratify amendments.

Unfortunately, two conservative groups bought into these attacks and have used them to brainwash an entire generation of citizens and state-lawmakers to believe that Article V is the root of all evil in the Constitution. Accordingly, we will debunk the myths they've propagated.

MYTH 1: Conspiracy theorists assert that since the Constitution doesn't give Congress the power to control the Article V Convention, the delegates could 'run-away' and re-write the Constitution.

FALSE. The 10th Amendment grants the states all powers not given to the federal government which means that the states can limit the convention to one amendment and remove any delegate who attempts to defy that limit.

MYTH 2: Conspiracy theorists assert that the far-left could take over the convention and use it to re-write the Constitution or repeal the 2nd amendment.

FALSE. The far-left doesn't have enough states. The Democratic party only controls 17 state legislatures of which only a half-dozen could be considered far-left. It takes 26 states to control the convention.

MYTH 3: Conspiracy theorists assert that the Article V Convention is really a Constitutional Convention the true purpose of which is to write a new Constitution.

FALSE. When our founders drafted the U.S. Constitution, they specifically rejected language for Article V that would have allowed the states to call a wide open "Constitutional Convention." The Constitution refers to the Article V Convention as a "Convention for proposing Amendments." It does NOT have the power to re-write the Constitution. State convention delegates can only propose individual amendments, not a new Constitution.

MYTH 4: Conspiracy theorists assert that the original Constitutional Convention was a 'Run-Away' convention because our founding fathers exceeded the authority given to them by the Continental Congress.

FALSE. When our founders delivered the Constitution to the Continental Congress, that body transmitted the Constitution to each of the States for debate and ratification. If our founders had gone beyond the scope of their authority, the Continental Congress would have rejected the Constitution and never passed it on to the States.

MYTH 5: Conspiracy theorists assert that James Madison was against the Article V Convention as evidenced by this quote, *Having witnessed the difficulties and dangers experienced by the first Convention . . . I should tremble for the result of a second.*

FALSE. James Madison helped to craft the text of the Article V Convention himself and approved of it by SIGNING the Constitution! The above quote was taken from a private letter in which Madison worried about the attempt by two states to call an Article V Convention to completely re-write the Constitution before it ever took effect. Fortunately, the safeguards our founders established to prevent abuse of the Article V Convention worked exactly as they intended. The two troublemaking states failed (by a long shot) to reach the two-thirds state threshold required to call a convention.