

Coburn: Convention of States Needed Because Washington Will Never Fix Itself

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By [Barbara Hollingsworth](#)

(CNSNews.com) – “Washington is never going to fix itself,” said former Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK), explaining why he intends to spend the next few years trying to “cheat history” by helping to organize the nation’s first-ever Convention of the States.

The purpose of the convention will be to rein-in a federal “leviathan” that he says has overstepped its constitutional bounds.

Under [Article V](#) of the U.S. Constitution, two-thirds of the state legislatures can call a convention to propose amendments to the Constitution that limit the scope and jurisdiction of the federal government.

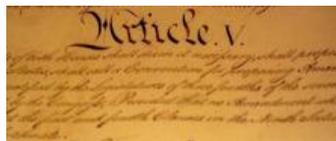
Alaska, Florida and Georgia passed Article V resolutions last year. [Two dozen](#) other states are also considering that option.

On January 6, the House of Representatives passed [House Rule XII, Section 3\(c\)](#) ordering the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee to keep track of all Article V Convention applications and have the Clerk’s Office make them “[publicly available](#) in electronic form, organized by State of origin and year of receipt.”

“It’s a difficult job,” Coburn, who recently signed on as a senior advisor to the [Convention of the States](#) project, told CNSNews.com. “You have to get 34 states to agree. But the group is very well-organized and has over 200,000 grassroots activists helping them.”

Coburn admitted that calling a convention of the states is a tacit admission that Washington is unable to solve the huge problems facing the country, but believes the United States has few options left.

“Most people know Washington is broken,” he told CNSNews.com. “Politicians there care about the next election, not the next generation. The career politicians make promises knowing they will be out of office when the bills come due. And I don’t see that there’s any way Congress is going to fix this in the next 10 or 15 years.



“That’s why I left early,” added Coburn, a family physician who [retired](#) from the Senate two years before his term expired after being diagnosed with prostate cancer.

“I identified \$400 billion of waste, fraud and duplication, but none of it was eliminated. Nobody had the courage to eliminate it. And that’s why we need a Convention of the States: to diminish the power of the federal government.

“The CBO [Congressional Budget Office] and OMB [Office of Management and Budget] are not using real numbers and are not telling Americans the truth,” Coburn continued.

“We have \$144 trillion in unfunded liabilities and we’re [\\$18 trillion](#) in debt. When you divide that by the population, it’s more than \$500,000 for each American, which nobody has,” he said.

“Three thousand businesses closed last year. That hasn’t happened since World War II. Who’s going to loan the United States money knowing we can’t pay it back?” Coburn asked.

The U.S. financial system will collapse if something is not done about the federal government’s out-of-control spending, he pointed out. “Nobody knows when this will happen, but it will happen sooner rather than later,” he said. “Unless we unwind this, we’re going the way of the Romans and the Greeks.”

CNSNews.com asked Coburn why his fellow Republicans, who supposedly support limited government, have gone along with the vast expansion of federal power.

“The Republican Party is not the party of small government,” Coburn replied. “I’ve been in Washington for 16 years, when Republicans controlled Congress and the White House, when Democrats controlled Congress, and every combination in between. There is no difference. There’s no difference,” he emphasized.

No matter which party was in charge, the federal government continued to grow and Americans’ liberty continued to diminish, he pointed out.

“They’ve already stolen the future from the next generation,” he said, adding that the current policies will continue “until the power is taken away and given back to the states.”

“It is testament to the wisdom of our Founders to have included the Convention of States provision in Article V in the Constitution because they knew

someday government might grow too big, take on too much debt and promulgate reams of regulation that stifle American prosperity. There is no question that is the Washington that exists today,” Coburn wrote in a recent [oped](#).

“Moreover, the Founders trusted the states and the people to step up and defend their own liberty and sovereignty. So do I.”

Coburn dismissed claims that an Article V Convention would open the door to malicious tampering with one of the nation’s founding documents, pointing out that just 12 states can stop any amendment from advancing to ratification.

“What I hear from conservatives is ‘Oh, we can’t do it. We might not be successful. It might be runaway,’” Coburn [told](#) Greta van Susteran. “You know, 69 of the 99 legislative bodies in the states are controlled right now by Republicans.

“But forget that. People in the country, outside of Washington, have a lot of common sense. They’re not about to let our First Amendment, our Second Amendment, our Fourth Amendment, our Sixth Amendment rights be taken away in some runaway convention. And besides, it only takes 25 legislative bodies to stop anything that would come out of that,” he said.

“If they go crazy, it’s not going anywhere,” Coburn told CNSNews.com. “Not doing anything is worse than the worst outcome” of an Article V Convention, he added.

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