

# What will a Convention of States look like? Our Florida team may have an answer

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Posted by Mrs. Brenda MacMenamin on July 28, 2015

*The Convention of States team in Florida recently held a Convention of States simulation to educate and inform grassroots supporters about how an Article V Amendments Convention would operate. The following report is from Florida State Director Brenda MacMenamin.*

District Captain Spencer Reeves was the first to suggest that we hold a Convention of States simulation in Florida. He had attended a similar simulation at Patrick Henry College in Purcellville, Virginia, and we immediately loved the idea of hosting another event here in the Sunshine State.

After securing a venue at Bell Shoal's Baptist Church, we extended an invitation to everyone on our Florida team as well as to all District Captains and state leaders across the nation. Our Board members included Mark Gotz (Chair), Spencer Reeves (Parliamentarian), and Vickie Deppe (Secretary). Thirty-four patriots from across the nation signed up to be "commissioners" for the first ever Convention of States Florida Simulation.

They received their commissions from the state they were to represent. (I think I made this too realistic, as several contacted me to say that they had a letter "from the Governor"!) But it did set the tone for a realistic Convention of States.

From the very first night, when we gathered in a small room to share where we were from and why we had come, there was an atmosphere of mutual patriotism and respect. That feeling built over the weekend as we could see that each one had a passion for freedom, liberty and the next generation.

Upon arrival at the simulation, the commissioners either submitted their commission, or were issued one at the desk and were ushered to their state table. Each table had their state flags and for each commissioner, his "Delegation Packet," a COS Simulation bag with his name badge, a COS coffee mug, COS pens and the official 2015 COS FL Simulation T-shirt.

We opened with the "[First Prayer of the Continental Congress of 1774](#)" and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, then instructions from the Chair, Parliamentarian and the Secretary.



Stewart Collins, 28, was the first on the floor to propose several amendments. He was followed closely by another commissioner and another. All the ideas were well articulated. At the end of a fast few hours, we had 75 proposals for amendments! (We expected about 12...)

Following the amendment proposals we broke into super-committees based on which branch of government was affected by the proposals.

It was a joy to see how seriously everyone took this opportunity. Several commissioners had fresh, out-of-the-box ideas, and everyone's thoughts were respected and given a place at the table. After the next day's morning session, we had several official drafts that emerged out of sometimes heated debates.

By the afternoon of the second day, 18 amendment drafts came from the super committees to the full house for further debate. These debates were also heated at times, but the Constitutional discussions were exhilarating. If this simulation proved one thing, it was this: there are Madison's and Jefferson's in America today!

At the end of that third day, we produced 12 amendments that were submitted to the states delegations for consideration and a vote. Each state had to caucus intra-state and then inter-state. In the end, six amendments were ready to "send back to the states":

- An Amendment to Limit the Power of the Supreme Court
- An Amendment to Re-impose the Separation of Powers
- An Amendment to Secure the Integrity of Elections
- An Amendment Regarding Taxation (Repeals the 16th Amendment)
- An Amendment to Establish Congressional Term Limits
- An Amendment to Repeal the 17th Amendment

Though the exercise was a simulation, the impression it left on the commissioners was real. The republican form of government – where “We the people” can make a difference – is worth working toward and risking everything for. Most encouraging to me were the three passionate, constitutionally articulate seventeen-year-olds, who participated in the simulation with energy and wisdom. These young people proved that if we can preserve liberty through a Convention of States, the next generation is ready to pick it up and continue the fight.

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