

# Convention Of States Project and HJR 22/SJR 18

Don Brand  
Alaska Legislative Liaison  
COS Project



CONVENTION OF STATES

A PROJECT OF CITIZENS FOR SELF-GOVERNANCE

*Public Testimony*

# What is COS?

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- A Project of the Citizens for Self-Governance
  - Mark Meckler and Michael Ferris
  - Sen. David Long, Indiana, active in planning process
- Founded to stop the Federal Government from spending money it does not have, denying the rights of the states and threatening the liberty of the people.
- Our goal: to urge and empower state legislators to call a Convention of States to propose amendments to the Constitution to limit the power of the Federal government.
- Washington, D.C., is broken and will not fix itself.



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# Four Issues Today are of Increasing Concern

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- The Spending and Debt Crisis
- The Regulatory Crisis
- Congressional Attacks on State Sovereignty
- Federal Takeover of the Decision Making Process



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# Calling a Convention of States Provides a Means to Create Solutions

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The Founders knew the federal government might one day exceed the limits of their delegated powers

**The most important check to this power is Article V**

Article V gives states the power to call a convention for the purpose of proposing amendments to the Constitution



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## Article V

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The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, *or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States*, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of the Constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of it's equal Suffrage in the Senate.



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## The Process for Method #2

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- 34 states submit applications for the same issue
- Congress is required to call the convention
- Commissioners debate, propose, and vote upon possible amendments
- Proposed amendments are sent to the states for ratification
- If 38 states ratify, the proposed amendments become part of the Constitution



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# The COS Approach is Different from Past Calls for a Convention

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- Calls for a convention for a particular subject rather than a particular amendment
- For the purpose of **limiting the power and jurisdiction of the federal government**
- Creating a complete package of restraints



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# HJR 22/SJR 18 Follows Approach #2 and The COS Roadmap

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- Call For A Convention of States
- Call for a Convention by Subject, rather than specific amendments
- Limited to :
  - Imposing Fiscal Restraints on the Federal Government
  - Limiting the Power and Jurisdiction of the Federal Government
  - Limiting Terms of Office for Federal Officials
- Leaving it to the Convention to propose and debate solutions.



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# Past Attempts have Failed for Various Reasons

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- Over 400 Calls for a Convention in the History of the US
  - None have achieved the 34 state threshold to proceed
- Too specific or complex to encourage agreement
  - 34 States must make substantially the same request to proceed
  - Far more difficult to achieve agreement without the benefit of a convention to resolve differences
- COS believes a simple call for a working convention to address the general issue has a much better opportunity to succeed



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# COS is Gathering Momentum

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- Grassroots organizations are building in 40 states
  - Alaska has a State Director, Coalitions Director, Legislative Liaison, 57 other signed up volunteers, and hundreds of supporters
- Ten states have filed or pre-filed a COS application
- GA Senate passed the COS application this week



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