



SENATOR FRED DYSON

Sponsor Statement

Senate Joint Resolution 18

“Requesting the United States Congress to call a convention of the states to propose amendments to the Constitution of the United States that impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limit the terms of office of federal government officials; and urging the legislatures of the other 49 states to request the United States Congress to call a convention of the states.”

Our Founding Fathers were adamantly opposed to an excessively strong central government. Based on experience, they believed that tyranny would be the likely result of a governing entity whose power and control extended deep into the subjects whom it presided over. In hopes to prevent even the mere possibility of such tyranny, our founding fathers solidified several checks and balances to protect the rights of states and citizens from encroachment by the federal government. One such feature granted to the states is in Article V of the Constitution.

Article V of the United States Constitution states:

“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 this 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 its equal suffrage in the Senate.”

The state application and convention process was not inserted in the Constitution merely to lengthen text. It was an immensely important component in the federal balance between states and central government. In the words of James Madison, the process was the ultimate constitutional way for curbing an abusive or out of control federal government and a way to stave off the darkness of tyranny.

Senate Joint Resolution 18 calls for Alaska to make application to exercise its right granted in Article V of the Constitution. SJR18 is Alaska’s formal application calling for a state convention to address the topic of “imposing fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limit the terms of office of federal government officials” which are the contemporary issues of a governing entity extending power and control deep into those whom it presides over. Further, the resolution urges the other states of our fine union to embark upon the same processional.

It is the duty and the right of the states to maintain the liberty and freedom to which our nation has become accustomed to. When there is a threat to our liberty and freedoms, it is the duty of the state to act accordingly within the realm of the Constitution. This resolution is a calling, a calling for a great solution to a great problem.

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