

Point/Counterpoint on the 2017 Constitutional Convention

The best way to turn a “yes” or “maybe” voter into a “no” voter is by having a personal conversation with them about the constitutional convention. Having responses to the questions on what a constitutional convention can and can’t accomplish is a great way to begin.

Fiscal Conservatives

Statement — I think a constitutional convention is a great idea because it will cut our taxes!

Response — What makes you think that? The people who would meet in Albany could just as easily raise the state debt limit and allow the state to spend more money. Why chance it?

Gun Rights Advocate or Gun Control Advocate

Statement — I want to repeal/strengthen the SAFE Act, and I think holding a constitutional convention will allow us to do that.

Response — I understand what you’re saying. Gun rights are hot issues right now, but the delegates to a constitutional convention could do just the opposite of what you want. Remember, the amendments they propose could be voted on individually or all together. If they are voted on individually, how do you think the gun issue would be voted on by the entire state?

Opposition to Public Pensions

Statement — I think the pensions for public employees are too high. Most make six figures. We can cut them if we have a constitutional convention.

Response —The average teacher pension is about \$40,000 and the average state and local employee pension is about half of that. Is that really too much after a lifetime of work? Even if we have a convention, there’s no guarantee public pensions would be cut, and we would open up everything to changes. Do you want to risk the rights you value just for a slim chance to cut some retiree’s income? Do you want to force them to use social services to cost us even more?

Albany Corruption

Statement — These politicians in Albany are all criminals. We can fix that with a constitutional convention.

Response — Unless we vote “no” to a convention those same politicians will serve as delegates to the convention and could get paid for both jobs at the same time! The convention could cost taxpayers millions of dollars. What a party they’ll have in Albany on our dime.

Constitutional Amendments Are Needed

Statement — We haven’t had a rewrite of the constitution since the 1930s so we should have the constitutional convention to fix the language that’s out of date.

Response — We have been amending the constitution quite a bit in the last few years through individual amendments placed on the ballot. In 2013, we passed an amendment on casino gambling, and in 2014 we passed another amendment to allow the legislature to go paperless. If other changes are needed, why not use that process?

Changes to Education Policy

Statement — We can do something to fix education policy if we have a constitutional convention.

Response — The constitution already has strong protections for public education. What fixes do you think delegates would put in place that would make it better? I’d rather have education professionals who are teaching our students make the decisions instead of some convention delegate, wouldn’t you?

