"Article V was put there for a reason– The founders "intended" for you to use it. "Ignoring" it is foolish and will lead to a "catastrophic" ending! If you don't support calls for a convention– you don't support or "follow" the Constitution!" "The Constitution hasn't failed us; Our failure to follow it (by calling a convention) has!"

Falsehood– Deception– Emotionalism– Bullying–

# The Truth You Deserve to Know:
# Why We Really Have A "Convention" in Article V

After four months of intense deliberation, on **September 15, 1787**, the Founders were engaged in a final review of the draft Constitution. The stakes were extraordinarily high. Consensus was critical to prevent the fledgling nation from collapsing into political chaos.

According to James Madison's notes, **Article V** of the draft at that time read:

> "The **Congress**, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem necessary, or on the application of two thirds of the Legislatures of the several States **shall propose amendments** to this Constitution . . ."

During the final review of Article V, **Colonel George Mason** and **Elbridge Gerry**–both staunch Anti-Federalists–raised objections. Consistent opponents of centralized federal power, they sought to limit federal authority wherever possible. (Ultimately, neither would sign the new Constitution.) Mason argued that granting Congress exclusive power to propose amendments was unwise, that an "oppressive government" might refuse to act.

## Misrepresenting the Convention Clause

Modern advocates of an Article V convention **distort Mason's comment**, using it to claim that the convention mechanism was designed as a remedy for federal tyranny. The historical record does not support this claim. Mason's comment was narrowly focused on Congress's potential unwillingness to propose amendments–not on creating a general safeguard against governmental abuse. The Founders relied on **elections, impeachment, and Constitutional checks and balances** to address overreach, not amendment conventions.

Following Mason's objection, **Gerry and Gouverneur Morris** proposed adding language to Article V to require Congress to **"call a convention to propose amendments"** upon application by the states. **Madison** expressed mild reservations, questioning why Congress would be trusted to call a convention but not to propose amendments itself. Nevertheless, he stated he had **"No objection"** to providing for a convention, **while explicitly noting practical concerns that difficulties might arise regarding the form, the quorum, etc.**

The record of the 1787 convention makes it clear that the Article V convention mechanism was **NOT a centerpiece of constitutional design** or an intentional safeguard against federal abuse. It was **a last-minute compromise** suggested by an opponent of the Constitution and **accepted**

**with minimal debate** in an environment where concerns were noted, but overshadowed by a broader desire to build consensus at a critical moment in time.

## The Founders' View on Conventions

Crucially, context from the same day's debates is often ignored. Having just influenced the addition of the convention mechanism, Mason and Gerry **immediately proposed calling another full Constitutional Convention**. Mason warned of an impending monarchy or aristocracy and insisted that a second convention, informed by the people's will, would produce a superior system. He objected to presenting the Constitution as a "take it or leave it" choice.

This idea was **swiftly and forcefully rejected**. **Thomas Pinckney** warned that calling another convention would lead to **confusion and discord**, with delegates advancing competing state interests rather than reaching consensus. ***"Conventions are serious matters and should not be repeated,"*** he emphasized. Though he personally objected to some provisions in the present draft, he preferred acceptance to risking **"the sword"**—a clear reference to national instability and conflict.

Madison recorded a **unanimous vote against a second convention**—with Mason and Gerry apparently outvoted even within their own state delegations. Over the next two days, as the remaining delegates signed the Constitution, they emphasized the **urgent need for unity** and the **danger of reopening fundamental debates**. Their sound judgment has now blessed Americans for nearly **a quarter of a millennium,** providing the Constitution which has proved to be a wise and sound foundation for the most prosperous, free society in history.

## The Danger of Misrepresenting the Founders' Intent

Claims that the Founders *intended* Article V conventions as a safeguard against "out-of-control" federal government represent an **egregious distortion of history.** While the convention method was included as a compromise to address perceived "defects," the record plainly shows that **the primary advocates of the convention mechanism were men opposed to the Constitution itself**—while the vast majority of delegates **recognized the risks inherent in conventions and sought to avoid them**.

Having risked their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor to secure independence and unity, **the Founders knew the extraordinary cost of constitutional failure.** They approached the question of conventions with great caution–and would expect **no less caution from us.** Rather than gamble on a false narrative, **we should safeguard and enforce the Constitution they sacrificed so much to give us.**

Source: *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, Volume 2 *(Scroll to Madison's notes from September 15, 1787.)*