

Sample Letter to the Editor on Constitutional Convention

In November 2017, a simple question will be asked of the citizens of New York state: “*Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend same?*”

The answer we give to this 12-word question will have a huge impact on every person living in the Empire State and generations of citizens to come.

We, as citizens and voters, need to ask ourselves a few questions before we decide which way to vote on this important issue:

Do we want the same politicians who are sitting in Albany to rewrite the legal document that governs every other law currently on the books and any law that will come after? It could happen, as the rules for holding a constitutional convention allow sitting elected officials to be delegates to the convention at the same time. Put simply: The foxes will guard the hen house and get paid double for it.

Do we trust these delegates-politicians to protect things important to all New Yorkers?

Will these delegates-politicians protect environmentally sensitive areas, like the Adirondack and Catskill parks, which are currently protected under the state New Constitution, or let out-of-state or foreign companies come in and “develop” them?

Would we support changes to education policy that would affect all our public schools? What if the delegates-politicians called for more unnecessary testing of our school kids or weakened the protections for a “sound and basic education” for all students?

Would you, as a taxpayer, vote to allow the state’s debt limit to be increased? If you vote for a constitutional convention, you could be doing just that if the delegate-politicians in Albany go that way.

Just how much would this convention in Albany cost the taxpayers anyway? No one seems to have a clear answer.

Do you support giving more power to the state government and less to the local government? In other words, less local control and more power centralized in Albany? Or would you be in favor of giving more power to one branch of government, say the governor, to decide what’s best for your community instead of your local town board, city council or county officials? A vote to hold a constitutional convention could lead to that outcome.

Hard questions for sure, but it will be up to all of us to ask ourselves these and many other questions before we decide how to vote in November 2017 on a constitutional convention. We must start thinking and talking about the answer we will give, **now!**

