

Senator Mike Folmer
Chairman of the Committee on State Government
337 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120
717-787-5708 Fax 717-787-3455

Dear Senator Folmer:

I am requesting that the contents of this letter be provided to the members of the committee prior to the hearing scheduled for Wednesday, 17 October.

I wish to emphasize the following points of information:

Notwithstanding the exemplary results which emerged from the Convention of 1787, the means of their achievement were anything but, furthermore, those favorable results are unlikely to ever be duplicated. The call for a Constitutional Convention which was issued by the Continental Congress in February of 1787 specified that the ensuing convention was empowered only "for the sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation", not for writing an entirely new document.

The call also declared that the revised Articles of Confederation must be approved by the Continental Congress and by the several states. There was no authorization to abolish the Congress and by so doing bypass Congressional approval of the changes.¹ Nonetheless, that is what happened. It was a "runaway" convention.

All but about five nations of the world have written constitutions and nearly all of these used ours as a model at one time or another, at least in part. It would be foolish to risk the abandonment of a framework which enjoys such widespread approbation and such frequent emulation.

The desire of some to make modifications to the Constitution for narrow policy considerations in the interests of Equal Rights or a Balanced Budget are not hindered from amending it as it has been in the past. If a specific policy is being advanced, that is better served by action in Congress, not by mistakenly passing another silly amendment like Prohibition. Article VI of the Constitution empowers the States to redress deficiencies in the actions of officials in the National Government if they are not doing their job.

When members of the Pennsylvania legislature assume office they are placed under oath to preserve, protect, and defend the U. S. Constitution during the period of their service. I implore the members of the Senate's Committee on State Government to honor that oath and rescind any outstanding calls for a Constitutional Convention.

¹ *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution Digital Edition*, ed. John P. Kaminski, Gaspare J. Saladino, Richard Leffler, Charles H. Schoenleber and Margaret A. Hogan, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009

Given the general lack of moral virtue prevailing in our country, I fear that any assembly of politicians or even academics today would be totally unequipped to improve on that which we already possess. Only the chains of the Constitution restrain the venal and unprincipled tendencies of human nature, and thereby preserve the liberties we enjoy in America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Crider". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being more prominent than the last name "Crider".

John Crider
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