



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on April 25, 2024

Newsom's Call for a Constitutional Convention to Ratify Radical Gun Control Laws Falls Flat

If anti-gun, anti-freedom California Governor Gavin Newsom (D) had any expectation that his call for a constitutional convention to put his state's radical gun control laws into the U.S. Constitution would gin up enthusiasm among his supporters, [it has all but disappeared](#). Said liberal college professor John Pitney: "For the foreseeable future, there is zero chance of a constitutional convention that would draft a gun control amendment."

The reverse could happen, said Pitney. With nearly 60 percent of state legislatures being presently controlled by the Republican Party, their "purpose would be to expand gun rights," not limit them further. A Yale-trained professor now teaching political science at Claremont McKenna College, Pitney said such a convention might even be worse: "It might try to rewrite the whole Constitution and do things such as declaring Christianity the national religion."

Not a single blue state with a Democrat-controlled legislature has answered Newsom's call. It's because the risk of a runaway constitutional convention is real. As Oregon state Senator Floyd Prozanski, a Democrat who chairs his state's Senate Judiciary Committee, warned: "The last thing I'd want is to open up something where we can't put the lid back on the can."

There was precious little support last June when Governor Newsom announced his proposal to add a 28th amendment to the U.S. Constitution. [At the time](#), he said that his proposal would "guarantee common sense constitutional protections and gun safety measures that Democrats, Republicans, independent voters, and gun owners overwhelmingly support — including universal background checks, raising the firearm purchase age to 21, instituting a firearm purchase waiting period, and barring the civilian purchase of assault weapons."

He promised to "work with grassroots supporters, elected and civic leaders, and broad and diverse coalitions across the nation ... to ensure the convening of a constitutional convention limited to this subject." Even after California's Democrat-controlled Legislature approved of Newsom's call, liberals warned of the dangers. [Said Robert Schapiro](#), dean of the University of San Diego School of Law:

It is a valid concern that if a constitutional convention were called, the scope of the convention could not be limited, and so in theory, the convention could propose any kind of Amendment to the United States Constitution, eliminating the First Amendment right to free



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speech or any other kind of provision.

I view Gov. Newsom's proposal as perhaps having more symbolic value.

Those [concerns were shared](#) by California state Senator Scott Wiener, who proudly boasts of his "0% rating from the National Rifle Assn.": "My concern is that we cannot have any assurance that calling for a constitutional convention will lead to a limited constitutional convention."

Mike Madrid, a Republican political consultant, [agreed](#) that Newsom's call is dead on arrival: "The likelihood of this happening is basically nil. Serious constitutional scholars and historians realize that it's dangerous."

So, why did Newsom offer his proposal? Said Madrid: "As a crass political tool, it makes all the sense in the world." After all, Newsom said he's not running for president, while at the same time traveling the country pushing his candidacy based on his anti-gun, anti-freedom agenda.

The silence from gun control groups and Democrat-controlled states over Newsom's move makes it clear where it's headed. [Said](#) constitutional attorney Cody Wisniewski: "There isn't currently much appetite for Newsom's particular brand of gun control across the country."

Indeed, 29 states have passed laws allowing constitutional carry. And the *Bruen* decision continues to neuter and toss gun control measures from the past that infringed on the Second Amendment's guarantee of the right to keep and bear arms.

Much of the resistance must be attributed to The John Birch Society's [decades-long exposure of the risks of a runaway constitutional convention](#). As Christian Gomez, the Society's research project manager, writes:

An Article V convention has the inherent power to become a "runaway" convention. This is possible considering that the sovereign people have the right to "alter or abolish" their form of government whenever it fails to secure their rights.

This is clearly stated in the Declaration of Independence. Consider the Constitutional Convention of 1787. It did not stop at revising the Articles of Confederation. It completely rewrote them, including creating a new procedure for ratifying the new Constitution....

An Article V convention represents the sovereign will of the people ... and as such has the inherent power to become a "runaway" convention.

Such a convention may greatly alter any proposed single amendment, propose an unlimited number of additional amendments, or (following the precedent of the Constitutional Convention of 1787) draft a totally new constitution with a new ratification procedure.

That's why it would be so dangerous and unwise to hold an Article V constitutional convention at this time of great political turmoil.

As Bill Hahn, CEO of The John Birch Society, put it: "If the Constitution is being ignored now, then why would a new amendment suddenly be obeyed?"

That's why Newsom's proposal is going nowhere. He's swimming upstream against the current, for political purposes. As one political wag expressed it, Newsom's move is more "aspirational" than rational. It deserves to be ignored.



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