



Written by [Kelly Holt](#) on March 29, 2011

## Phoenix John Birch Society Members Defeat “Con-Con” in Arizona

Successes in states around the nation in defeating a “con-con,” or Article V convention to change the Constitution, are playing out in Arizona, too. Last week, constitutionalists in the Grand Canyon State prevailed upon their state senators to kill the measure in the upper chamber, although two House bills — HCR 2015 and HCR 2022 — remain in committee.

[SCR 1016](#) was defeated in the Senate by way of a tie, because Arizona requires a majority vote in order for passage. According to Bryan Turner, Field Coordinator for The John Birch Society, the remarkable debate caused votes to be switched back and forth, depending upon which camp the senators were listening to — indicating that the lawmakers did not understand the consequences of a con-con. But Turner noted that only a small group of local members of The John Birch Society turned out in opposition. Eagle Forum, usually active in opposing con-con measures, was not represented in the hearings, nor was the expected Tea Party. In fact, the Tea Party in Arizona favors the idea of a con-con. And across the nation, Tea Partiers have proven to be [less educated than JBS members had hoped](#) on matters of the Constitution.



The small band of Birchers was solely responsible for mounting the opposition. Turner continued:

Persistence made the difference. The local Birch members were at the capitol three times a week making visits to the Senate and educating them on the dangers of a con-con. And we didn't even see any results in the committee meetings. The members weren't able to see the results of their efforts until the bill got to the floor for a vote.

Since the Arizona House is what we now need to watch, we need to keep up the pressure.

Turner also recounted that one pro-con-con senator actually voted no when she realized that the bill would be defeated, which allowed her the procedural tactic of calling for “reconsideration” the following Monday. Because the reconsideration vote was not announced in advance, opponents had no



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opportunity to prepare for it; however, they continued working over the weekend to educate legislators about the deceptive nature of an Article V convention. When Monday's vote rolled around, their persistence paid off with a Senate rejection of the bill.

It turns out persistence is important. The Arizona-based Goldwater Institute spent a large amount of time, effort, and money promoting a con-con. [The Institute's](#) website states that it is "an independent government watchdog ... which enforces constitutionally limited government through litigation." Yet the Article V convention it promotes will threaten the very Constitution it hopes to defend, by providing an unprecedented opportunity to virtually rewrite the Constitution.

*The New American* has published numerous articles regarding the [dangers](#) of a con-con and its association with a balanced budget amendment. In a [May 26, 2010 article](#) in the magazine, Gregory Hession, J.D., observed: "This means of amending the Constitution ... opens up the entire document to potentially radical changes. This danger exists not only because a constitutional convention cannot be limited in its scope, but also because it could be influenced and populated not just by those with whom we may agree, but by the political elites who favor a substantial expansion of the powers of government, and a limitation on the rights of citizens."

A similar scenario to that in Arizona was recently played out in the Lone Star State, and it appears now that Texas legislators will not pass the con-con bill. As demonstrated most recently in Arizona, freedom must be continually defended, inch by inch, and then re-defended. While con-con opponents were few in Phoenix, the effect of their patriotic activism on the state legislature is unquestionably the sort that will prove effective in other states attempting to fend off a con-con.

*Photo: Arizona State Capitol, Phoenix*



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