



Written by [Kelly Holt](#) on August 15, 2017

Republican Party of Texas in State of Confusion on Article V Convention

A Republican Party of Texas webpage wrongly informed voters that an application for an Article V convention — a convention to amend the U.S. Constitution — will be on the November ballot in Texas, but it won't.

The discrepancy came about when the State Republican Executive Committee (SREC — comprised of Republican leaders in each district) created a webinar to update Texans on actions that had been taken in the biennial legislative session, and what actions would be happening in an impending Special Session. As part of the presentation, the webinar included a slide that not only explained that bill SJR2 passed the legislature — which would apply to the “Congress of the United States to call a convention under Article V of the United States Constitution for the limited purpose of proposing one or more amendments to the constitution to impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, to limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and to limit the terms of office of federal officials and members of Congress” — but also that the bill “Will be on the ballot for Constitutional Amendment Election.”



There's two obvious problems here: One, the Texas legislature makes Texas' laws (they aren't made through citizen referendums) and so a vote by Texan citizens wouldn't invalidate the new bill; and, two, under the U.S. Constitution, to invoke an Article V convention, state legislatures must petition the U.S. Congress, not state citizens.

Any serious student of the Article V debate knows that a convention will never be put forth to a popular vote, but the misinformation on the website states that folks will get to voice an opinion. That Texas' Party leaders permitted such an error reveals either a lack of oversight about information disseminated to the public, or a gross misunderstanding of the issue. Either way, the consequence is that rank-and-file Republicans in Texas, and other interested folks, are incredibly confused.

At issue is Texas' application for an Article V convention under Article V of the U.S. Constitution. Proponents claim it's the last, best hope for a return to small government. They also contend that a convention can be limited to amendments as noted in the slide. Of course, the U.S. Constitution doesn't



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recognize any limits as to the lengths that an Article V convention can go in remaking the governing method in the United States, so such claims and attempts to limit a convention are pretty much mute (the only convention we've ever had previously remade the Articles of Confederation into the U.S. Constitution, if that tells you anything).

Too, if the Constitution isn't currently being obeyed, shouldn't we question whether changing the document will make the errant lawmakers less errant? And there's the important point that the 10th Amendment already imparts to the states all the authority they need to simply not comply with illegal federal actions.

Making the issue even more confusing for Texas Republicans is the fact that Texas' Republican Governor Greg Abbott made an Article V convention application one of his "Top Ten Priorities" this year. Many of the governor's backers told *The New American* they trust that the governor won't lead them astray, so they're willing to go along with a convention application even if they don't understand how such a convention would work or what the ramifications could be.

We should be ashamed.

It's not clear if the SREC is intentionally trying to confuse constituents or whether the Texas Convention of States Project (CoS) had any part to play in the misinformation. CoS has spearheaded the national effort to promote an Article V convention, and routinely claims to be the final authority on the issue, in spite of Constitution's words to the contrary. But Paul Hodson, co-director of the Texas CoS said in a Facebook post on Saturday about the mistake, "I've known this for three months, and I just haven't taken the time to properly raise attention."

District 14 SREC Committeewoman Jan Duncan told *The New American*, "I don't understand the idea, either, that the Article V issue will be on the November ballot in Texas. I can't say I'm in favor of a convention, but Texans need to be more educated and have a better understanding of this issue on both sides."

Barbara Harless, founder of North Texas Citizens Lobby and TNA reader, originally discovered the webpage mistake and questioned her own district SREC leader about it. She was shocked when he responded, "I don't know, I didn't read the bill." Considering the convention application is one of Governor Abbott's pet issues, one would think party leaders would also make it one of their own.

Duncan said that the inclusion of the slide indicating that the issue would be put to a popular vote was confusing. We agree, as this issue could have dire consequences. If Texans go to the polls believing they are going to vote for or against an Article V convention, and only then learn that the application has already been made, it could be cause for some well-deserved anger. It underscores Duncan's point that people do not understand this issue.

And even though the push for a convention is almost frantic, many Texans buy into the idea that it will take forever to come about. T.J. Scott, of the Central Texas Republican Assembly, believes it won't happen in his lifetime. "I'm staunchly against Article V, but even though Texas has passed a bill to apply for a convention, I believe it will be a long time before we send delegates anywhere." If only.

There's no indication that any Lone Star Republicans moved to correct this error until Harless pointed it out, including top party officials, state legislators, or authors of the bills in question. But the final revelation about this error is this: If the RPT (the party of the governor) can get this issue this wrong, we can be fairly certain that regular Texans are not properly educated enough about the issue — an event that proposes to change our Constitution.



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As of this writing, the webpage in question has been altered from its original form, but still incorrectly states that the topic will be on the November ballot.

Image: Screenshot from the [Republican Party of Texas website](#)



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