

TESTIMONY
OF
TOM COBURN, MD
LEGISLATIVE HEARING
STATE OF KANSAS
MARCH 12, 2015

I have spent enough time in our Nation's Capital to know that the federal government will never limit its own power. That is why I am now dedicating myself to promoting a historic effort across the nation, urging state legislators to use the tool our Founding Fathers left to *you* for such a time as this.

I have joined the Convention of States Project because I believe it is our last, best hope for restoring our Republic. I cannot sit idly by as my grandchildren's future is bankrupted by an irresponsible, unaccountable and unrestrained government that was originally—and brilliantly—designed to protect their liberty.

I spent 16 years in Washington, and my goal was to restore fidelity to the US Constitution--what it said, what it intended. I have read The Federalist Papers ten times. I know what our founders intended. But today we have an out-of-control federal government that diminishes the relevance of the Constitution daily.

The size and scope of the federal government has expanded way beyond anything our founders ever intended for the federal government to be. They intended for *you* to be the purveyors of justice and the primary governing authority in your own state.

George Mason was the delegate at the Constitutional Convention who predicted that the national government would one day assume too much power and that it would not limit itself. It was because of these concerns that Mason insisted Article V give the states the ultimate constitutional power—the power to unilaterally propose amendments to the Constitution without the consent of Congress.

The very purpose of including the convention of states mechanism was to ensure that we would forever be equipped to resist federal encroachments upon states' rights and individual liberty.

Today, you have a unique opportunity before you—the opportunity to use your authority under Article V of the U.S. Constitution to rein in the power of Washington, D.C. **SCR 1603** calls for a Convention of States to propose constitutional amendments that will limit the scope, power, and jurisdiction of the federal government.

In this present day, when the courts have effectively “interpreted” the constitutional limitations on federal power out of existence, it falls to us to restore those limitations in clear, unambiguous language that definitively binds all three federal branches.

I recently read an article in which the author urged readers to ask their legislators to oppose an Article V convention. According to him, convening state-appointed delegates in a meeting to make proposals “is just too risky.”

In light of the great risks and sacrifices our forefathers made to secure our liberty and our self-governance, I give no quarter to such thinking. They pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to create the greatest form of government known to man. How can we, who have inherited these blessings, refuse to use the peaceful, constitutional procedure they have left to us to maintain it?

The risks of taking no effective action to harness our runaway government are greater, by far, than the risks of working to stop it.

The Article V naysayers disagree. They claim that liberal organizations are seeking to use the Article V process to accomplish their objectives, we who would use it for good should run from the process in fear.

I say the Constitution is for every American. Those who would use its processes to restore our nation to its founding principles can never shrink back from doing so just because our political opponents have entered the field. To do so would be to preemptively surrender—an act unfitting for any American patriot.

It is hypocritical for us to profess reverence for our Constitution while we shun the very process it provides for our protection; and it is cowardly for us to shun it out of fear.

Martin Luther once said, “For truth and duty it is ever the fitting time; who waits until circumstances completely favor his undertaking, will never accomplish anything.”

My friends, the time is fitting for us to reclaim our power.

With your authority comes responsibility. I urge you to exercise your constitutional authority to save our nation by voting in favor of SCR 1603 today. History will show that this is the most important vote you ever will make.