



## How It Works - FAQs

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### 1. What is ThePeoplesConvention.org?

ThePeoplesConvention.org ("TPC") is a neutral, nonpartisan, convention organizer based in Sedona Arizona that was established after to the Conference on a Constitutional Convention held at Harvard Law School in 2011. The parent organization is The People's Convention, Inc. a nonprofit corporation licensed in the state of Arizona.

### 2. Who's behind the convention?

The Founder & Executive Director of ThePeoplesConvention.org is [Dr. Blair C. Henry](#), a former Seattle corporate and prosecuting attorney, mediator, graduate school professor, delegate to both the Democratic and Republican state conventions, and intern at both the United States Senate and Washington State Senate.

### 3. What's the goal?

The goal of TPC is to is to empower every American by providing them with a fair, honest and respectful opportunity to

- Come together with other Americans from across the political spectrum
- Align on proposals addressing their concerns with the American democratic process, and
- Draft successful amendments to their state or national constitution

### 4. Why amend a constitution?

The American people typically rely on their state and national elected representatives to protect and represent the people's interests and address their concerns. However, when the elected representatives fail to do so, the nation's founders provided the American people with the constitutional right in the First Amendment to

- Bypass their elected representatives
- Come together in their own convention
- Draft constitutional amendments addressing their concerns, and
- Submit them for approval

### 5. What the difference between amending a state constitution and the national constitution?

- Amending a state constitution is typically easier, quicker, requires the vote of the people themselves, and allows the citizens to enjoy the benefits without having to wait for other states
- Amending the national constitution typically takes longer and requires the approval of 38 state legislatures (75% of total)
- Depending on the topic, amending the national constitutional may be required--and the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment lowering the voting age to 18 in 1971 was accomplished in less than four months

## 6. Why do this?

- Trust and confidence in the American democratic process is at or near an all-time low<sup>1</sup>
- Democracies fail when they lose the trust and confidence of the people
- America ranks 21<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of being democratic<sup>2</sup>
- Most Americans are unaware of their constitutional right under the First Amendment to upgrade their democracy by amending their state and national constitutions

### Of the Americans polled:

- 93% believe members of Congress accept **bribes** and gifts that affect their vote
- 91% believe they were subjected to **false/misleading political campaigns**
- 83% are **dissatisfied** with the way the country is being governed
- 79% are **frustrated or angry** with the federal government
- 78% **disapprove** of the way Congress is handling its job
- 78% are **dissatisfied** with the nation's political system
- 65% **don't trust** members of Congress to tell the truth

In addition:

- 70% believe the media is out of touch with average Americans
- 64% no longer believe the media serves the role of checking the powers of government
- 29% believe the news organizations generally get the facts straight

There are now also at least five different reforms today supported by over 70% of Americans that Congress refuses to address (in alphabetical order):

- **Balanced Budget** - 72-74% want a balanced budget
- **Campaign Finance** - 67-83% want campaign finance reform
- **Ethics** - 64-90% want increased ethical standards for public policymakers and media
- **Greenhouse Gases** – 74-92% want the government to reduce greenhouse gases
- **Term Limits** - 75-78% want term limits for members of Congress

## 7. How does ThePeoplesConvention.org work?

There are three components

- In-person local, regional or state constitutional summits are being scheduled around the nation
- Anyone may tell us what they want and vote online at any time
- Sponsors are invited to support the first national in-person convention

TPC then supports, assists and coordinates teams in each state in passing one or more constitutional amendments in their state

## 8. What's been accomplished so far?

Six years of legal research and twenty workshops totaling over 450 Americans from across the political spectrum resulted in a single report known as [The People's Convention 2016](#). The participants drafted proposed constitutional amendments that were approved by at least 75-90% of the participants

- Removed the influence of private wealth on the political process
- Required complete honesty in the political process
- Increased the ethical standards for those in government

These are known together as The Sedona Amendments.

## 9. How is this different from the current efforts to hold an "Article V Convention"?

A convention under Article V(five) of the U.S. Constitution

- Is used exclusively by **state legislators**
- To amend the **national** constitution, and
- Has never been successful in over 225 years

ThePeoplesConvention.org relies primarily on the constitutional right of the American people to

- Hold their own convention—*free from interference by professional politicians, political parties, and other special interests*, and
- Petition their government with proposed constitutional amendments pursuant to the **First Amendment** to the U.S. Constitution.

While most proposed amendments are expected to be directed to the various state constitutions, there may be times when amendments to the national constitution may be required.

While this does not require an Article V convention, approval of proposals from a people’s convention will need to be approved by 38 state legislatures (75% of total) pursuant to Article V.

This is what makes a First Amendment Constitutional Summit by ThePeoplesConvention.org distinctly different, and much more effective, than most of the current Article V convention efforts to amend the constitution

<i>They</i>	<i>We</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Partisan</b>, predetermined agenda</li> <li>2. <b>Focus exclusively on what state legislators want</b></li> <li>3. Focus on contentious issues</li> <li>4. Rely on <b>Article V</b> of the constitution</li> <li>5. Focus on only the <b>national</b> constitution</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Neutral, nonpartisan</b></li> <li>2. <b>Focus exclusively on what the American people say they want</b></li> <li>3. Focus on what Americans <b>agree</b> on</li> <li>4. Rely primarily on the <b>First Amendment</b></li> <li>5. Focus primarily on the <b>state</b> constitutions</li> </ol>

## 10. What is the legal basis that makes the ThePeoplesConvention.org better?

While most proposed amendments from the Constitutional Summits are expected to be directed to the state constitutions, there may be times when amendments to the national constitution may be required. In that event, it is important to understand there are actually **three ways** to **PROPOSE** amendments to the U.S. Constitution

1. **CONGRESS** may propose amendments as part of the **three-step process under Article V**. All 27 amendments accomplished this way
2. **THE STATE LEGISLATORS** may hold a convention to propose amendments as part of **the four-step process also under Article V**. A convention has never been held in over 225 years
3. **THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES** may hold their own convention to propose amendments—*free from interference by professional politicians, political parties, and other special interests*—as part of the **two-step** process the First Amendment.

Regardless of which method of **PROPOSAL** is used, a proposed amendment to the national constitution must be **APPROVED** by the legislatures/conventions of 38 states (75% of total).

## 11. What can I do to support and participate?

- [TELL US what YOU want, VOTE & COMMENT](#)
- [Submit your own proposal](#)
- [Host](#) your own state “Constitutional Summit”
- [Support & Participate](#) in first national summit

WHO PROPOSES THE CHANGE(S)	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4
1. CONGRESS Article V (five) Constitution	2/3 Senate (67)	2/3 House (290)	<b>CONVENTION</b>	3/4 States Approve (38)
2. STATE LEGISLATORS Article V (five) Constitution	2/3 States call for convention (34)	Congress calls the convention	<b>CONVENTION</b>	3/4 States Approve (38)
3. THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES 1 <sup>st</sup> Amendment Constitution	<b>CONVENTION</b>	3/4 States Approve (38)		

<sup>1</sup> <http://thepeoplesconvention.org/pollings/>

<sup>2</sup> Democracy Index 2016: The Economist Intelligence Unit <http://thepeoplesconvention.org/democracy-index/>