

DRAFT MINUTES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Meeting Jointly

Wednesday, October 1, 2014

The Senate and House Committees on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs met jointly on Wednesday, October 1, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. in Room A of the MAC Building.

Members in Attendance

The following committee members attended: Senator Bobby Pierce. Representatives Andrea Lea, Chair; Butch Wilkins, Vice Chair; Bob Ballinger, Nate Bell, Jim Dotson, Mary Hickerson, Karen Hopper, Allen Kerr, Jim Nickels, John Walker, and Richard Womack.

Other legislators in attendance were: Senators Linda Chesterfield, Jonathan Dismang, Joyce Elliott, and Michael Lamoureux. Representatives Randy Alexander, Charles Armstrong, Scott Baltz, Robert Dale, Jeremy Gillam, Douglas House, Stephanie Malone, Mark McElroy, Stephen Meeks, Micah Neal, Mary Slinkard, Frederick Smith, and James Word.

The meeting was called to order by Representative Lea.

Comments

Mr. Mark Alspaugh, Arkansas State Director, Convention of States Project, stated Article V of the Constitution allows the states to call a Convention of States to propose constitutional amendments. He introduced Mr. Michael Farris, the National Director for the Convention of States Project.

Presentation of the History of Article V and the Movement towards an Amending Convention

Mr. Michael Farris, National Director, Convention of States Project, stated Article V provides the states with the opportunity to propose constitutional amendments through a process called Convention of States. He discussed the Convention of States project aims for an Article V Convention for the purpose of proposing amendments that impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, limiting the power and jurisdiction of the federal government. An Article V Convention is convened when 34 state legislatures pass resolutions on a topic or set of topics and is limited to considering amendments on the specified topics. There have been 400 applications for a Convention of States in the history of the United States, Arkansas had 15 applications, but none has ever been passed.

Mr. Farris stated the movement is not seeking to undo the basic principles of liberty or equality. The Article V process seeks to reorder who decides on substantive policies but not amend the policies. He also mentioned the Convention of States is different from the balanced budget amendment applications by some states.

In response to a question by Senator Chesterfield, Representative Lea mentioned Senate Rule 14.15(c), which states a joint resolution shall be used to submit proposed constitutional amendments and to ratify proposed amendments to United States Constitution and shall be adopted only upon receiving the majority vote of the membership of both houses.

Comments on Article V Reforms

Mr. Dan Greenberg, Director, Advance Arkansas Institute, discussed state legislators' vital role under the constitution is to control the size and scope of the federal government, to ensure that congress' powers would respect the principles of limited government. Mr. Greenberg mentioned constitutional amendments worth considering such as the Regulation Freedom Act. This is a measure introduced by Senator Dismang aimed at changing the influence of out of control regulators.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.