



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The League of Women Voters of California Denounces Governor Newsom's Call for a Constitutional Convention

Sacramento, CA, August 24, 2023 — The League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) strongly opposes Governor Newsom's recent decision to seek an Article V constitutional convention. The proposal, encapsulated in [SJR 7](#), seeks to add California to the states aiming to alter the U.S. Constitution, a move that comes without a clear structure or guidelines.

The Constitution is a living document, representing the fundamental tenets on which our democracy rests. The LWVC supports targeted and focused policy action to address gun violence and the damage it is doing to our children and our communities, and a constitutional convention is not the right approach.

“Opening a Constitutional Convention puts every right, civil liberty, and underlying value of our country at risk. There are no limits or guardrails to what can be changed during a Constitutional Convention and it opens the door to well-funded special interests buying access to change the Constitution to serve their purposes” said Chris Carson, President of the League of Women Voters of California.

The uncertainty surrounding the nature of a Constitutional Convention cannot be understated. Former Chief Justice Warren Burger once expressed concerns about the ambiguity and danger, noting, “[T]here is no way to effectively limit or muzzle the actions of a Constitutional Convention. The Convention could make its own rules and set its own agenda. Congress might try to limit the Convention to one amendment or one issue, but there is no way to assure that the Convention would obey. After a Convention is convened, it will be too late to stop the Convention if we don’t like its agenda.”

Key concerns articulated by the LWVC include:

- **Threat to National Stability:** Advocating for a Constitutional Convention plunges the nation into an era of unparalleled tension, uncertainty, and protracted legal battles that might irreversibly alter America's trajectory.
- **Shift of Power from the People:** An Article V Convention would elevate the voices of politicians and special interests above those of ordinary people. Such a development could result in an unprecedented opportunity for the few to reshape the core principles of the country for the many.
- **Unbridled Convention Agendas:** Historical precedents caution that a Constitutional Convention might not restrict itself to its original mandate and every right that we have as Californians and Americans would be placed at risk.

The LWVC calls on the legislature to reject this dangerous path forward. “California should not take this enormous risk with the rights of every person who lives in our state. We implore the legislature and every Californian to reject SJR 7 and continue working with communities to find



solutions to our challenges that do not put the very foundations of our state in peril," added Stephanie Doute, Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of California.

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