



MTA Board urges ‘no’ vote on Con-Con on November ballot

Our great state, much like our federal government, is governed by a constitution. The Michigan Constitution is the state’s supreme law, providing the framework of our entire system of government and laws. It establishes fundamental principles governing the Legislature, taxation, local government and many other aspects of state governance. Our Michigan Constitution defines the relationship between state government, its citizens and local governments by establishing the broad principles that guide policymaking. As a result, constitutional provisions are often written broadly, requiring the Legislature to adopt additional laws that implement and clarify those constitutional principles.

Our constitution is very difficult to amend—and for good reason. Parts of our constitution outline fundamental rights or protect our citizens from excessive taxation. Besides having a portion of our constitution dismissed by a federal court ruling, there are only three ways to amend it. First, the Michigan Legislature may, by two-thirds majority in both the House and Senate, place a constitutional amendment on the ballot for voters to decide. If the voters approve this measure, then the constitution is amended.

Similarly, voters—with the assistance of a ballot committee—may amend the constitution by gathering sufficient valid signatures and placing a proposal on the ballot. A proposal must have signatures equal to 10% of the votes cast for governor in the most recent gubernatorial election—for 2026, this equates to 446,198 signatures.

The last way our constitution can be amended is by a constitutional convention. Michigan’s last constitutional convention, held in 1961-1962 resulted in the Michigan Constitution we live with today, which was established in 1963. Under the 1963 constitution, every 16 years, beginning in 1978, the question of opening a new “Con-Con” automatically appears on the statewide ballot. This issue will be on the ballot this November. If approved, an election would be held within 90 days to select delegates to the convention; one delegate for each of Michigan’s House and Senate districts. The delegates would then elect their own leadership and begin the convention process. At this point, every item in the Michigan Constitution would be open for discussion, change or elimination.

At its April meeting, the MTA Board of Directors voted unanimously to oppose the 2026 constitutional convention ballot issue. A quick look back in history shows that MTA also opposed this issue back in 2010, joining a myriad of local government and business associations, unions and others in opposition. Currently, a diverse groups of organizations have lined up in opposition to the 2026 ballot proposal, ranging from the Michigan Chamber of Commerce on the right to the AFL-CIO on the left, along with many more statewide associations, like MTA, joining the “vote no” side.

For those of us too young to remember the 1960s Con-Con, a look back at the minutes of those proceedings gives MTA a great reason to encourage a “no” vote from our membership. During that Con-Con, townships were under great scrutiny and debate. In fact, a vote was held on the dissolution of township government in Michigan. Thankfully, the amendment was defeated by a 2-1 margin! With that said, holding a constitutional convention would allow anything that is currently constitutionally protected to potentially be eliminated—including township government—or to provide the Michigan Legislature with the tools to do so.

Protecting townships and their ability to govern, and serving our members is the reason MTA exists. If something threatens townships, we will stand up to fight. A constitutional convention opens townships to unnecessary risk, not only existentially but also through possible tax reforms and other unforeseen mechanisms that impact our state and local governments. It is for these reasons that the MTA Board of Directors, and I, urge you to vote “no” on this ballot proposal in November.

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