



Michigan Nonprofit Association

Michigan 2010 – Statewide Ballot Proposal Constitutional Convention

On November 2, 2010, Michigan voters will be asked to decide if a constitutional convention will be held to rewrite Michigan's Constitution (Proposal 1). The current constitution requires the question of a constitutional convention automatically appears on the ballot every 16 years.

If Proposal 1 is passed, a special primary and an election will be held within six (6) months to select convention delegates. A required 148 delegates will be elected, one from each representative district (110) and senatorial district (38). State legislators currently in office during the convention are prohibited from serving as delegates.

As the current constitution requires, selected delegates would convene in Lansing on October 4, 2011. The length of the convention is not limited. Constitutional conventions in Michigan are unlimited in their scope: they could propose a completely new constitution, revise the current constitution, or do nothing. With approval from a majority of the delegates, any proposed revisions would be brought before Michigan residents for a vote. If passed, the new constitution is adopted.

If Proposal 1 does not pass in November, the current Michigan Constitution will remain in effect and the question of a constitutional convention will appear again on the 2026 ballot.

On the Ballot

Automatically putting the question of a constitutional convention on the ballot every 16 years offers Michigan residents an opportunity to assess how well the current Constitution is working and whether revisions are necessary.

Roles of the Convention

A state constitutional convention is free to draft any kind of document it wishes, subject only to the restraint imposed by the United States Constitution. While Michigan's history with constitutional revisions has tended to build off existing constitutions, nothing would bind a convention to do so. At the end of the day, it is up to Michigan voters to approve or oppose the draft constitution presented by the convention.

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Michigan Nonprofit Association increases the capacity of Michigan's nonprofits to serve, strengthen and transform communities.

Michigan Nonprofit Association is affiliated with Michigan Campus Compact and Volunteer Centers of Michigan.



Constitutional Conventions Continued...

Constitutional Conventions in Michigan

Michigan's current constitution was adopted in 1963, only the fourth constitution Michigan has ever adopted. Previous constitutions were adopted in 1835, 1850 and 1908.

The 1963 Constitution has been amended 31 times since it went into effect, nearly doubling in length. The last time the constitutional convention was on the ballot was in 1994, where it failed to pass with more than 70 percent of voters opposing. Only 10 states have revised and adopted a greater number of constitutions, and only two (2) states have revised and adopted a new constitution since 1975.

Potential Areas of Interest

A constitutional convention would require the selected delegates to review the current Michigan Constitution in its entirety. That means anything in the constitution could be subject to revisions. Due to the current legislative and economic environment, there are a few areas in particular that may be of interest. Those areas may include, but are not limited to:

- Legislative term limits
- Part-time or unicameral legislature
- Powers of the Executive branch
- Budget processes
- Taxation and finance

The Cost of a Convention

There are varying reports of the cost of a constitutional convention, ranging from \$10M to \$45M. Costs incurred from a convention include, but are not limited to, compensation for the elected delegates, appointment of additional employees or assistants, printing and distribution costs, information dissemination, etc.

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Michigan Nonprofit Association (MNA) is providing this information to help nonprofit leaders make informed decisions before the vote on November 2. MNA does not take a position on the constitutional convention. Please visit www.MNAonline.org for more information.

Thank you to the Citizens Research Council of Michigan (CRC) for contributing information to this overview. The CRC does not take a position on the constitutional convention, but does provide more in-depth information in its series of reports at <http://crcmich.org/election/index.html>.