



AMENDING THE STATE CONSTITUTION

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ISSUE

Describe the process for amending the state constitution.

SUMMARY

The state constitution provides for two methods by which it may be amended. One method is for the legislature to pass a proposed amendment that is subsequently ratified by the state's electors at a regular state election. To appear on the state election ballot, a proposed amendment must be approved by (1) a three-fourths majority in both chambers or (2) a simple majority in both chambers in two successive legislative terms (Conn. Const. Article Twelfth).

The other method is for a constitutional convention to pass a proposed amendment that is subsequently ratified in a statewide referendum held no later than two months after the convention adjourns. The proposals may be presented as a whole or in such parts and with such alternatives as the convention may determine (Conn. Const. Article Thirteenth).

AMENDMENTS PROPOSED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Any legislator may propose an amendment to the state constitution; a proposed amendment is introduced as a joint resolution. A resolution approved by at least three-fourths of the membership of each house of the legislature is placed on the ballot in the next regular state election. A resolution approved by a majority of the membership of each house but less than three-fourths is referred to the General Assembly session held after the next regular state election, where it must be approved by majorities in both houses before being placed on the ballot. If a majority of the electors voting on the proposed amendment vote in the affirmative, it becomes part of the state constitution.

For example, an amendment proposed during the 2016 session must be approved by three-fourths of the membership of both houses (i.e., at least 27 votes in the Senate and 114 in the House) to appear on the 2016 general election ballot. If a



proposed amendment passes in 2016 by a simple majority of the membership of both houses but less than three-fourths (i.e., between 19 and 26 votes in the Senate and 76 and 113 in the House), it would be referred to the 2017 General Assembly. If that General Assembly passes the proposed amendment by a majority of the membership in both houses, it would appear on the 2018 general election ballot.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

At least 10 years after the most recent constitutional convention, the General Assembly may, by a vote of two-thirds of the membership in each chamber (i.e., at least 24 votes in the Senate and 101 in the House), provide for the convening of a constitutional convention to amend or revise the state constitution.

Additionally, state electors must periodically be asked to vote on whether they want a constitutional convention to amend or revise the state constitution. They must be presented with this question at the general election in the even-numbered year immediately after the 20th anniversary of the last constitutional convention or the date electors were last asked the question, whichever occurs later. This question last appeared on the ballot in 2008, when electors rejected a convention. It will next appear on the ballot in 2030 unless the legislature convenes a convention before then. Connecticut last had a constitutional convention in 1965.

If the General Assembly or state electors vote to convene a convention, the convention must be convened within one year of the affirmative vote calling for it. The General Assembly must, by a two-thirds vote in each chamber, prescribe by law the manner for selecting convention delegates and the date for convening and adjourning the convention.

If, at the conclusion of the convention, there are proposed constitutional amendments, the proposals must be presented to the state's electors in a referendum no later than two months after the convention adjourns. The proposals may be presented as a whole or in such parts and with such alternatives as the convention may determine. Any proposal approved by a majority of the electors voting on the question is valid and becomes a part of the state constitution 30 days after the referendum vote unless otherwise provided in the proposal.

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