

Convening a State Constitutional Convention

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Issue

Summarize the process for calling a constitutional convention in Connecticut.

Convening a Constitutional Convention

A constitutional convention is a meeting of a select group of people, called delegates, to review a state's constitution for possible modifications or revisions, including the adoption of an entirely new constitution. There are no restrictions on the issues that may be discussed at a constitutional convention.

In Connecticut, there are two ways to call a constitutional convention. The General Assembly may, by a two-thirds vote of the total membership in each chamber, call for a convention to amend the constitution at least 10 years after the most recent convention ([Conn. Const. art. XIII, § 1](#)). Additionally, a convention must be held if approved by voters pursuant to a ballot question that must appear at specified times. Voters are asked, “Shall there be a Constitutional Convention to amend or revise the Constitution of the State?” 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. If a majority of voters voting on the question approves the measure, the General Assembly follows the constitutional process for convening the convention ([Conn. Const. art. XIII, § 2](#)).

Connecticut's last constitutional convention was held in 1965. Voters were asked at the general elections in 1986 and 2008 if they approved calling a constitutional convention. A majority of those voting voted “no” so a convention was not convened. The next time voters will be asked whether they approve calling a constitutional convention will be in 2030.

Conducting a Convention

If the General Assembly or state electors vote to convene a convention, the convention must be convened within one year. With a favorable vote of at least two-thirds of the total membership of each house, the General Assembly then stipulates the (1) manner of selecting the convention's membership, (2) date of convening, and (3) date of its final adjournment ([Conn. Const. art. XIII, § 3](#)).

If, at the conclusion of the convention, there are proposed constitutional amendments, the proposals must be presented to the voters 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, unless otherwise provided in the proposal ([Conn. Const., art. XIII, § 4](#)).

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