

# HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 8

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By: **Delegates Smith, Barve, Chang, Dumais, Hixson, Moon, Reznik, Stein,  
A. Washington, and M. Washington**

Introduced and read first time: February 12, 2016

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **United States Constitution – Amendments Convention – Democracy Amendment**

3 FOR the purpose of applying to the U.S. Congress for an amendments convention called  
4 under Article V of the U.S. Constitution, on the application of the legislatures of  
5 two–thirds of the several states, to propose an amendment to the U.S. Constitution  
6 that affirms every citizen’s individual right to vote, reserves inalienable political  
7 rights to natural persons, and authorizes regulation of contributions and  
8 expenditures intended to influence elections; and generally relating to an application  
9 to Congress for a convention to propose an amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

10 WHEREAS, The American people have built our representative democracy on the  
11 principle that every citizen has the individual right to vote and the guarantee that every  
12 vote cast is counted; and

13 WHEREAS, Elections should be free of the influence of excessive campaign spending  
14 by outside interests and fair enough that any citizen is able to run for public office; and

15 WHEREAS, It was the stated intention of the framers of the U.S. Constitution that  
16 the Congress of the United States of America should be “dependent on the people alone”  
17 (James Madison, Federalist No. 52, in the Federalist Papers); and

18 WHEREAS, The U.S. Supreme Court has removed the wall of separation between  
19 private wealth and democratic elections by removing prohibitions against unlimited  
20 electoral expenditures in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, McCutcheon v.  
21 Federal Election Commission, and related cases; and

22 WHEREAS, The U.S. Congress has failed to propose a constitutional amendment to  
23 protect the individual right to vote and to restore confidence in the integrity of our elections  
24 and government; and



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1 WHEREAS, The people have the right to choose the leaders who write our laws, but  
2 decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court and corresponding inaction by the U.S. Congress have  
3 undermined the American principle of self-government, necessitating that Americans take  
4 action to defend the republic and strengthen our democracy; and

5 WHEREAS, Article V of the U.S. Constitution states that “on the Application of the  
6 Legislatures of two-thirds of the several States,” Congress “shall call a Convention for  
7 proposing Amendments”; and

8 WHEREAS, The Bill of Rights and four of the last ten amendments to the U.S.  
9 Constitution were added to the U.S. Constitution at least partly in response to pressure  
10 from state legislatures calling for a convention of the states to propose an amendment; and

11 WHEREAS, Most prior constitutional amendments have been added to create a more  
12 perfect union by making America more democratic, more inclusive, and more accountable  
13 to the people; and

14 WHEREAS, The General Assembly of Maryland desires that the delegates from the  
15 State to the convention be composed of citizens, in numbers equal to the number of  
16 presidential electors in the State, half of whom are elected by the people voting at large and  
17 half of whom are selected by the General Assembly from among State and local officials;  
18 and

19 WHEREAS, The General Assembly of Maryland desires that the delegates from the  
20 State be composed of an equal number of men and women and be reflective of the voter  
21 registration in the State; and

22 WHEREAS, The General Assembly of Maryland desires that the delegates selected  
23 by the General Assembly be selected after the other half of the delegates are elected by the  
24 people and be selected in such a manner that results in the full delegation from the State  
25 being composed of an equal number of men and women and being reflective of the voter  
26 registration in the State; and

27 WHEREAS, The General Assembly of Maryland desires that all individuals elected  
28 to federal offices shall be prohibited from serving as delegates to the convention; and

29 WHEREAS, The State of Maryland intends to retain the ability to restrict or expand  
30 the power of its delegates within the limits expressed above; and

31 WHEREAS, The State of Maryland intends that this application for an amendments  
32 convention be considered in keeping with the applications already submitted by Vermont,  
33 California, New Jersey, and Illinois; now, therefore, be it

34 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That, as provided  
35 in Article V of the U.S. Constitution, the General Assembly of Maryland respectfully applies  
36 to the U.S. Congress for an amendments convention to be called, as soon as two-thirds of  
37 the several states have applied for a convention, for the purpose of proposing an

1 amendment or amendments to the U.S. Constitution limited to one or more of the following:  
2 affirming every citizen's individual right to vote; reserving inalienable political rights to  
3 natural persons; or authorizing the regulation of contributions and expenditures intended  
4 to influence elections; and be it further

5       RESOLVED, That delegates to the convention from Maryland may not propose  
6 amendments that do not have the primary goals of addressing the purpose for which the  
7 amendments convention is called; and be it further

8       RESOLVED, That this application constitutes a continuing application in  
9 accordance with Article V of the U.S. Constitution until at least two-thirds of the  
10 legislatures of the several states have made application for an equivalently limited  
11 amendments convention; and be it further

12       RESOLVED, That certified copies of this Joint Resolution be sent by the Secretary  
13 of State to:

14       (1) the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice President of the United States,  
15 President of the United States Senate, Suite S-212, United States Capitol Building,  
16 Washington, D.C. 20510; the Honorable Orrin Hatch, President Pro Tempore of the United  
17 States Senate, 104 Hart Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; and the Honorable Paul  
18 D. Ryan, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, 1233 Longworth House  
19 Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; and

20       (2) the Maryland Congressional Delegation: Senators Barbara A. Mikulski  
21 and Benjamin L. Cardin, Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; and  
22 Representatives Andrew P. Harris, C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger III, John P. Sarbanes,  
23 Donna Edwards, Steny Hamilton Hoyer, John Delaney, Elijah E. Cummings, and  
24 Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; and

25       (3) the Honorable David S. Ferriero, Archivist of the United States,  
26 National Archives and Records Administration, 709 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.,  
27 Washington, D.C. 20408; and

28       (4) the Honorable Julie E. Adams, Secretary of the United States Senate,  
29 United States Capitol Building, Suite S-312, Washington, D.C. 20510; the Honorable  
30 Elizabeth MacDonough, Parliamentarian of the United States Senate, United States  
31 Capitol Building, Suite S-133, Washington, D.C. 20510; the Honorable Karen L. Haas,  
32 Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, Suite H-154, United States Capitol  
33 Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; and the Honorable Thomas J. Wickham, Jr.,  
34 Parliamentarian of the United States House of Representatives, Room H-209, United  
35 States Capitol Building, Washington, D.C. 20515, requesting that they publish this Joint  
36 Resolution in the Congressional Record and list this application in the official tally of state  
37 legislative applications for a convention of the states under Article V of the U.S.  
38 Constitution; and be it further

**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 8**

1           RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State is directed to send copies of this Joint  
2 Resolution to the presiding officers of both Houses of the legislature of each of the several  
3 states, with the request that it be circulated among leaders in the legislative branch of the  
4 state governments; and with the further request that each of the states join in requesting  
5 the U.S. Congress to call a convention for the purpose of initiating a proposal to amend the  
6 U.S. Constitution as described in this Joint Resolution.