



## **SEIU MARYLAND & DC STATE COUNCIL**

### **Testimony in OPPOSITION to SJ2**

#### ***United States Constitution -Amendments Convention***

#### **Senate Education, Health, and Environment Committee**

**March 5, 2020, 1:00 PM**

Submitted by Terrence Cavanagh, Executive Director

Service Employees International Union, Maryland & DC State Council, urges you to oppose SJ 2, also known as an **Article V Convention** of the US Constitution.

With over two million members, the SEIU is the largest union in North America. We are focused on uniting workers in the health care, public services, and property services sectors to improve lives and the services we provide. We represent over 45,000 workers in Maryland and Washington, DC.

Advocates of SJ 2 say this is the best course to change the Constitution and protect against the unlimited corporate contributions that are threatening our democracy allowed by the U.S. Supreme Court in the ***Citizens United*** decision. They also say that the threat of a Constitutional Convention is the best way to get Congress to pass an amendment limiting campaign contributions.

We believe *Citizens United*, a 5-4 decision, was badly decided and should be overturned. Although our union has spent very significant sums on campaigns over the years, and is continuing to do so, we also support public financing of federal, state and local elections.

Although we have many allies who support this approach, including the sponsor and several co-sponsors, we respectfully disagree that this is a wise option. The only precedent for a Constitutional Convention was the one that rewrote the Articles of Confederation in 1787 in Philadelphia. Once the delegates to that convention gathered, there was no restriction on what changes they could make. We believe there is a significant risk of a new convention doing likewise – although with results that may not be as fruitful. Who is to limit what delegates to a convention may do?

We believe that a more practical approach to the issue of concern, is for the Congress to take action and a President to appoint judges with a better understanding of the affects money has on politics.

We ask you to give a **unfavorable** report to **SJ 2**.

Thank you.

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