



NEW YORK STATE BALLOT QUESTION

2017

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

New York State's Constitution requires that every 20 years the ballot have a question about having a convention. If the public votes to have a convention, then the following year delegates are elected by the citizens to attend the convention. At the convention the delegates propose amendments to the constitution. Citizens then vote on the proposed amendments.

A Yes Vote:

Allows the public in 2018 to elect delegates to propose amendments to the constitution at a convention held in 2019.

Vote Yes Arguments:

- Brian Kolb (Republican District 131), Assembly Minority Leader stated: "The beauty and necessity of a Constitutional Convention lies in its ability to reform the system and empower the people of New York to facilitate needed change. Voter empowerment is part of the very fabric of who we are as a nation. There is no more effective way to engage the public than a Constitutional Convention, and there is no place that needs it more than Albany."

- Evan Davis, a lawyer who served as counsel to former Gov. Mario Cuomo (Democrat) and manager of the Committee for a Constitutional Convention, said: "There are a number of changes that need to be made to strengthen the constitution that the Legislature is never going to adopt ... so the only way to get these changes made is to get it through a convention where the people would elect delegates committed to making the changes."

A No Vote:

No convention will be held in 2019. The next time the public can vote on whether or not to have a constitutional convention will be in 2027.

Vote No Arguments:

- The United Federation of Teachers stated: "A constitutional convention is unlimited in the scope of what it could change. This would place New York State's rights and protections at risk of alteration or elimination, including the guarantee of a free public education, a prohibition against aid to non-public schools and the right to Workers' Compensation. The right to unionize and bargain collectively and state requirements regarding pensions and social welfare could also wind up on the chopping block."

- Anthony Figliola, vice president of Empire Government Strategies, said: "History has shown that a constitutional convention is nothing more than a carbon copy of a typical legislative session. In short, it's a \$335 million-plus workforce development initiative for the politically connected. There is a less costly and more effective approach to changing our constitution and that is the public referendum process, which has successfully amended the constitution more than 200 times."

