



# Strategic Memorandum

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Justin Wallin  
J. Wallin Opinion Research

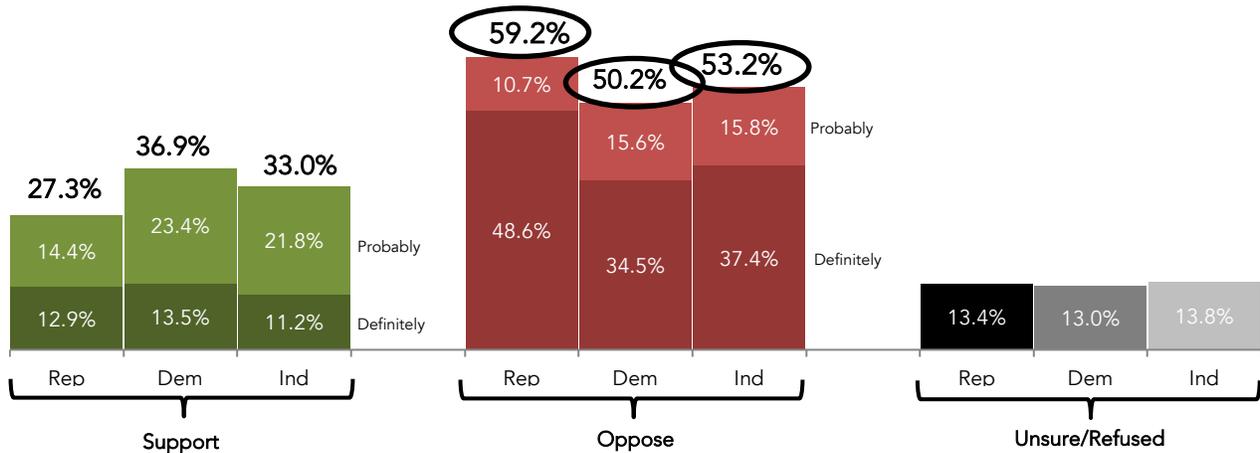
DATE: January 18, 2020

RE: Nationwide Voter Survey Results: Article V Constitutional Convention

From Saturday, December 28, 2019 through Thursday, January 9, 2020, J. Wallin Opinion Research conducted a telephone survey of voters throughout the United States.

Our research revealed majorities of both political parties and independent voters oppose changing the Constitution by calling an Article V Constitutional Convention (Republicans are especially intensely opposed).

**American Voters Oppose Changing the Constitution  
By Calling an Article V Constitutional Convention<sup>1</sup>**



Question: "There are two ways to change the US Constitution. The first way is for Congress to propose changes, which requires approval by two-thirds of both the House and the Senate. Then three fourths of the states must vote in favor of these proposed changes before they become law. The U.S. Constitution has been amended 27 times with this method. The second way is for two-thirds of the states' legislatures to call for a Constitutional Convention, with delegates sent from each state to meet and to propose changes. This also requires three-fourths of the states to vote in favor of any changes before they became law. This way of amending the Constitution has never happened. Would you support or oppose proposing changes to the Constitution by calling a Constitutional Convention? [RECORD] [IF SUPPORT OR OPPOSE>>>] And would you say that you strongly or somewhat (support/oppose) a proposal to change the Constitution by calling a Constitutional Convention?"

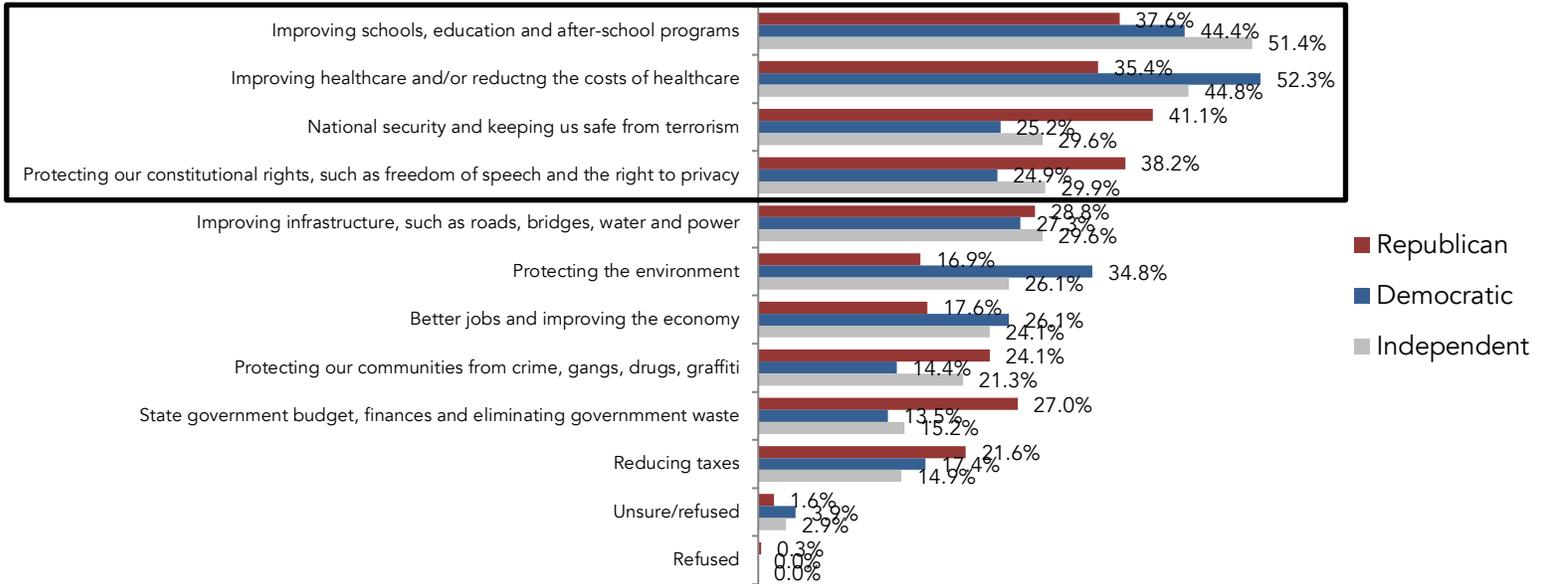
This is unsurprising given that protecting and preserving the rights guaranteed by the Constitution is one of the top four priorities for American voters (joined by education, healthcare and national security). Especially interesting





is that Republicans regard this issue as significantly more important than traditional conservative totems such as reducing taxes and government finances:

**Protecting Our Constitutional Rights is One of the Top Four Issues That American Voters Want Their State's Leaders to Prioritize**



Question: "Now I am going to read a list of issues that may be facing your state. Please listen to each and then tell me which THREE should be the top priorities of your state's elected leaders? Choose three."

**Skepticism is Rooted in Key Concerns:**

- Nearly **nine out of ten** (87.6%) are concerned about political partisanship impacting the decisions made by our nation's elected leaders
- Nearly **¾** (73.6%) are concerned about billionaires and other wealthy special interests impacting the decisions made by our nation's elected leaders
- Eight **out of ten** (80.6%) are concerned about privileged elites and other secretive interests impacting the decisions made by our nation's elected leaders

**Messages Used By Supporters Are Ineffective:**

The standard that defines an effective message is one that causes at least 60% of a population to become more or less likely to feel a particular way.

We tested a variety of messages used by those who support proposing changes to the Constitution by calling an Article V Constitutional Convention. However, none of those messages was successful at persuading more than ½ (50%) of American voters to become more likely to support the idea:

- **50.9% became more likely to support knowing:** "The Supreme Court's Citizens United decision opened the floodgates of political spending, allowing special interests and corporations to spend unlimited





amounts of money on political campaigns with no transparency of who spends what and how. The only way to fix this is for us to amend the Constitution and return power over our elected representatives and the laws they make to American voters, NOT money. But politicians in Congress will never vote against their financial interest by passing such an amendment. A Constitutional Convention is the only way to overturn secret, massive special-interest contributions and give power over our government back to the American people.”

- 43.8% became more likely to support knowing: “Our country was founded on the notion of limited federal government, keeping power in the hands of the states. But today, the federal government is more powerful than any other time in our history. We need to change our Constitution to return power to the states and to protect our freedoms, but Congress will never pass an amendment that limits their own power. We need a Constitutional Convention to restore balance to our government and save the ideas of the Founding Fathers by reducing the influence of the federal government and returning power to the states.”
- 42.6% became more likely to support knowing: “It’s our responsibility to give our children the best shot at success. But today, the national debt has ballooned to over 20 trillion dollars, and grows every second. If this debt isn’t paid by us, then it will be paid by our kids...and by their kids. If families have to balance their checkbooks, the federal government should also have to balance the US budget every year. Both Republicans and Democrats in Congress have failed to act for decades. The only way to balance the budget now is by passing a balanced budget amendment through a Constitutional Convention.”
- 42.2% became more likely to support knowing: “Calling a Constitutional Convention triggers a gathering of delegates from each state to consider proposals, such as imposing fiscal restraints on Washington, limit its power and jurisdiction, and set term limits for federal officials to finally reign in the pattern of federal overreach that not only threatens America’s economic survival, but undermines our country’s very integrity as a Constitutional republic.”

#### **Messages in Opposition Are Effective:**

We tested a variety of messages used by those who oppose proposing changes to the Constitution by calling an Article V Constitutional Convention. Several effectively persuaded 60% or more of American voters to become less likely to support the idea:

- 63.2% became less likely to support knowing: “The US Constitution is one of the most important documents in the history of the world. But some supporters of a Constitutional Convention have openly said that they want to use the convention to put every part of the document up for discussion. This could include changing our rights to free speech, freedom of religion, the right to bear arms and even our right to vote. Everything in the Constitution would be vulnerable to being changed forever.”
- 61.0% became less likely to support knowing: “A Constitutional Convention may sound good in theory, but the problem is that there just aren’t enough rules to protect us if one took place. There aren’t even any rules about who can be appointed by the states to vote on these changes – it can be anyone. There

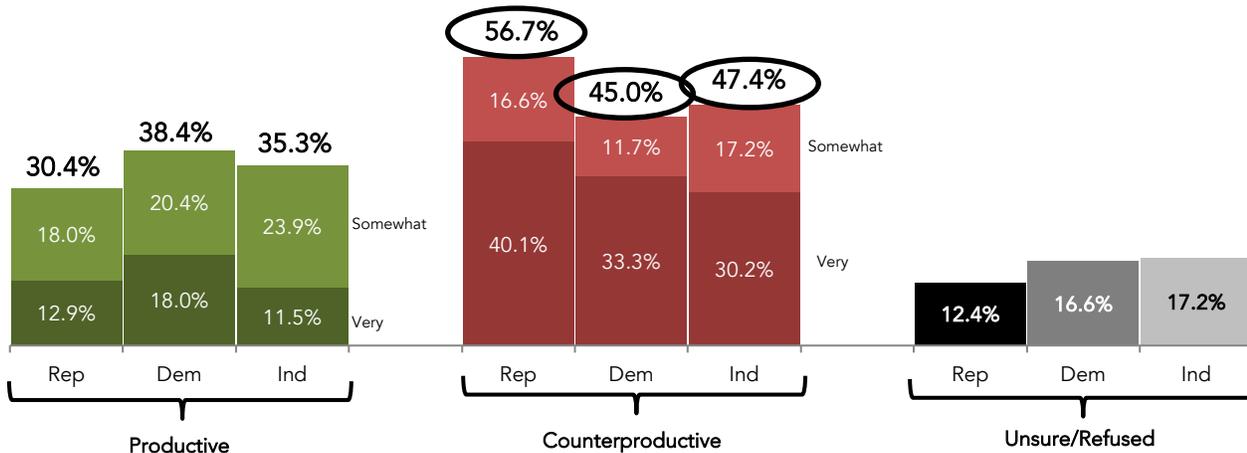




is absolutely no limit on the scope of changes that can be made and there is no guarantee the convention's outcomes will actually be representative of the beliefs, goals and trust of American voters. Constitutional changes are massive, permanent changes. We can't trust this risky un-tested system because it's just too easy to rig the rules with shady back-room deals that only benefit politicians, big government and special interests."

Ultimately, our research revealed voters feel that calling an Article V Constitutional Convention is counterproductive towards the goal of protecting American interests and ensuring the safety of our nation:

**Voters Feel an Article V Constitutional Convention is Counterproductive**



Question: "Do you feel the proposal to make changes to the Constitution by calling a Constitutional Convention is productive towards the goal of protecting American interests and ensuring the safety of our nation, or is it counterproductive? [RECORD] [IF PRODUCTIVE OR COUNTERPRODUCTIVE>>>] And would you say that it is very (productive/ counterproductive) or somewhat productive/ counterproductive?"

**Methodology**

We interviewed 1,000 respondents using live, professional interviewers, speaking Spanish and English languages and calling both mobile and landlines (93.4% of this survey was completed on mobile phones). A survey of this size yields a margin of error of +/-3.1% (95% confidence interval). Our sample is stratified, meaning that the demographic composition of our results matches the demographic composition of the region and turnout model that we surveyed.

**About the Firm**

J. Wallin Opinion Research specializes in opinion research on behalf of business, government, media and political clients. Company CEO Justin Wallin is a regular guest on Fox News, CNN and BBC. His research, commentary and analysis can be found in RealClearPolitics, Politico, Roll Call, Campaigns & Elections, Public CEO and Inside Politics with Nathan Gonzales. He is a featured speaker throughout the nation on matters of strategy, marketing and messaging.

<sup>1</sup> After hearing arguments both in favor and against.

