

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 809

By Keisling

A RESOLUTION to make application to the Congress of the United States pursuant to Article V of the United States Constitution to call an Article V convention for the sole purpose of proposing an amendment to the United States Constitution to restore transparency and integrity to the current system of special interests influencing our elections in the United States.

WHEREAS, the framers of the Constitution of the United States of America intended that the Congress of the United States of America should be "dependent on the people alone" (James Madison, Federalist 52); and

WHEREAS, that dependency has evolved from a dependency on the people alone to a dependency on powerful special interests, through campaigns or third-party groups, that has created a fundamental imbalance in our representative democracy; and

WHEREAS, Americans across the political spectrum agree that elections in the United States of America should be free from the disproportional influence of special interests; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the State of Tennessee states that "all power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority," that the people have at all times an unalienable and indefeasible right to alter or reform their government, and that all elections "shall be free and equal" (Article I, §§ 1 and 5); and

WHEREAS, Article V of the United States Constitution requires Congress to call a convention for proposing amendments to the Constitution on the application of two-thirds of the legislatures of the several states; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee General Assembly perceives the need for an amendment convention in order to restore the public's trust in our representative form of government by reforming our campaign finance system to address the undue influence of special interests and

out-of-state spending in our elections, often without transparency, as soon as two-thirds of the several states have applied for a convention for a similar purpose; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly desires that the delegates to said convention shall be comprised equally of individuals currently elected to state and local office, or be selected by election, in each Congressional district for the purpose of serving as delegates, though all individuals elected or appointed to federal office, now or in the past, be prohibited from serving as delegates to the convention; and the General Assembly intends to retain the ability to restrict or expand the power of its delegates within the limits expressed herein; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly intends that this be a continuing application considered together with applications calling for a convention passed in the 98th Illinois General Assembly as SJR 42, the 2014-2015 New Jersey legislature as SCR 132, the 2015-2016 Rhode Island legislature as HR 7670 and SR 2589, the 2013-2014 California legislature as Resolution Chapter 77, the 2013-2014 Vermont legislature as R454, and all other passed, pending, and future applications until such time as two-thirds of the several states have applied for a convention for a similar purpose and said convention is convened by Congress; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that the people of the State of Tennessee, speaking through the General Assembly, and pursuant to Article V of the United States Constitution, hereby apply to the United States Congress to call a convention for the exclusive purpose of proposing an amendment to the United States Constitution that would restore the public's trust in our representative form of government by reforming our campaign finance system to address the undue influence of special interest and out-of-state spending in our elections as herein described, as soon as two-thirds of the several states have applied for a convention for a similar purpose.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chief Clerk of the Tennessee House of Representatives or Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the United States; the Vice President of the United States in his capacity as presiding officer of the United

States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, to each Senator and Representative from Tennessee in the Congress of the United States with the respectful request that the full and complete text of this resolution be printed in the Congressional Record, and to the presiding officers of each legislative body of each of the several states, requesting the cooperation of the states in issuing an application compelling Congress to call a convention for proposing amendments pursuant to Article V of the U.S. Constitution.