

Alaskans form “Defend Our Constitution” to Oppose Constitutional Convention

For Immediate Release

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Every ten years the Lt. Governor is required to place on the **general election ballot the following question: “Shall there be a constitutional convention?”** It will appear on the November 1, 2022 ballot. Today a statewide gathering of **Alaskans representing a broad spectrum** of political views came together to form “Defend our Constitution”. This group has filed with the Alaska Public Offices Commission as a ballot measure group **opposing the ballot question.**

Legal scholars have long regarded **Alaska’s Constitution to be a model constitution** that is at once innovative and concise in defining the role of government in our society. In short, our Alaska Constitution isn’t broken and **remains a stabilizing guide through these politically turbulent times.** A constitutional convention would be chaotic, expensive, and create the opportunity for outside special interest groups and dark money to change Alaska’s laws to promote their agenda over the interest of Alaskans.

The group also announced eight campaign Co-Chairs:

Cathy Giessel – Anchorage
John Coghill – Fairbanks
Bruce Botelho – Juneau
Representative Bryce Edgmon – Dillingham
Gail Schubert – Bering Straits
Joelle Hall – Anchorage
Bill Corbus – Juneau
Luke Hopkins – Fairbanks

Statements from the Co-Chairs as well as press contact information are included below.

“Our political system is broken, but our Constitution is not broken. Alaska’s Constitution provides the foundation needed for economic and social stability. This is not the time to emotionally shred our guiding document. A Constitutional Convention would risk special interests and big money lobbyists rewriting it to suit their goals, not to the benefit of Alaskans. Alaska’s Constitution is not broken – don’t mess with it.”

Cathy Giessel, Anchorage
cgiessel@me.com
907.242.5450

This communication was paid for by Defend Our Constitution, 721 Depot Dr, Suite 100, Anchorage, AK 99501. Bruce Botelho, Chair, approved this communication. Top contributor is Paula DeLaiarro, Anchorage, AK.

"Think long and hard before we open our constitution for wholesale rewrite in these politically polarized times. Noble and civil discourse is required for such an undertaking."

John Coghill, Fairbanks
johncoghilljr@gmail.com
907.687.6091

"The Alaska Constitution was carefully crafted in 1955 based on the benefit of lessons learned from the other 48 states that had come before Alaska. As a living breathing document, it should be subject to the scrutiny of voters through the statewide election process. But there is no compelling reason to scrap the entire document and start from from scratch. To do so would engender chaos and disruption for Alaskans of all walks of life."

Representative Bryce Edgmon, Dillingham
Edgmon@hotmail.com
907.632.3001

"Alaska's Constitution is a model of simplicity, brevity and clarity in allocating the powers of government and protecting the rights of citizens. When circumstances have dictated the need for change, this has been readily accomplished through a rigorous amendment process that requires a 2/3 vote of each house and an affirmative vote of the people. A constitutional convention has the power to start from scratch, with all of the trade-offs and license to abandon the very institutions that have served the people of Alaska well since statehood."

Bruce Botelho, Juneau
brucembotelho@gmail.com
907.723.9999

"The Alaska Constitution is a document all Alaskans should be proud of. Written in a time when people could reasonably debate issues, the delegates built a framework to grow our new state. This framework remains sound today. There is no doubt Alaska has issues that we need to resolve, but opening the Constitution for a rewrite is the wrong way to solve these issues. Working families and retirees depend on the Constitution to protect their rights and the benefits they have earned over a lifetime."

Joelle Hall, Anchorage
defendakconstitution@gmail.com
907.229.3445

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“The legislative process used by our representatives to consider individual changes to our constitution has been the orderly method for our citizens to modify our constitution. Voters have repeatedly chosen this method over the last four decades rather than open our whole constitution to change.”

Luke Hopkins, Fairbanks
lukethopkins@gmail.com
907.347.0066

“I oppose holding a Constitutional Convention because the Alaska Permanent Fund and its original intended use will be adversely changed. I believe that the annual payout will be increased to unsustainable levels, to the detriment of future generations. Furthermore, the dividend will be anchored and set at so high a payout rate that insufficient monies will be available to help fund the cost of government.”

Bill Corbus, Juneau
bill.corbus@gmail.com

“I am blessed to serve with other Alaskans discussing the issue of whether a state Constitutional convention should be held in 2022, a question that has arisen and been voted down by Alaskans every ten years since 1972. The state Constitution currently in place has worked for many decades to ensure that the rights of all Alaskans are preserved.”

Gail Schubert, CEO, Bering Straits Native Corporation
907.830.2946

Further information is available through any of the eight co-chairs.

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