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TESTIMONY: H. 3205 BEFORE THE CONSTITUTIONAL LAWS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

March 18, 2021

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina opposes H. 3205. It is not, as some suppose, just another “small government” proposal. It puts our nation and our state at grave risk because it puts the United States Constitution at extreme risk.¹ Article V of our Constitution would allow the convention called under its authority to fundamentally alter our nation.

This resolution is promoted by wealthy special interests, people who want the power to do as they please without federal intervention to protect our environment, consumers, employees, or the basic civil rights that our Constitution guarantees. It gains grassroots support from people who believe that the resulting constitutional changes would only alter the things about government that they don't like, without acknowledging the very real danger to federal protections and programs that they rely on every day.

“Fiscal restraint” doesn't just mean ending assistance to those in poverty, as some like to think. Fiscal restraint at the levels sought by supporters of this resolution would end or severely cut agricultural subsidies, funds for dredging Charleston Harbor or renourishing beaches, and Social Security and Medicare. South Carolina receives far more money from the federal government than we send to Washington, and there is no way that our state could replace what we now receive. Our state would face an economic crisis of massive proportions.

“Reining in the federal government” doesn't just mean, as some would like to think, an end to federal protection of social justice rights supported by progressives. It would put free speech and gun rights and religious freedom at risk. It would endanger the orderly conduct of business between states and with other countries. It could expose us to uncontrolled release of toxins into our air and water by those who value their own profits above not just our quality of life, but above our lives. It could permit the sale of vehicles or medicine or children's toys that are unsafe and would endanger us and our families.

Supporters of these resolutions argue that the need to submit amendments proposed by a convention to the states for approval is adequate protection. It isn't. Amendments generated by a convention would be sold to the public and to state legislators with vast amounts of dark money advertising and lobbying. The slogans to sell those amendments would be as seductive as those used to sell this dangerous resolution.

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina implores this subcommittee to vote down H. 3205.

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¹ https://my.lwv.org/sites/default/files/constitutional_convention_resolutions.pdf