



National Association of Social Workers

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To: Bipartisan Preparatory Commission to Assemble Information on Constitutional Convention Questions

Re: Testimony in Opposition to Holding a State Constitutional Convention

The National Association of Social Workers - Rhode Island Chapter opposes holding a state Constitutional Convention for the following reasons:

- We believe that this process is not truly representative of the majority of Rhode Islanders, nor do the results represent the values, thoughts and philosophy of Rhode Islanders. The process lends itself to special interests where the most money has the greatest influence. This can be exercised at the two times when voters partake, the selection of participants and the amendments themselves. The relatively small number of voters who may partake in a special election could decide key issues for the whole state without proper vetting such as takes place in the General Assembly.
- We are particularly concerned in Constitutional Convention items that may pertain to civil rights where a small group can change the course of the rights of minorities living in our community. As a general rule, the Majority should not be in a position to determine the rights of the Minority.
- We are also concerned with the high cost associated with the Constitutional Convention process.

Respectively Submitted,

Richard Harris, LICSW  
Executive Director