



Steve Ahlquist
President, Humanists of Rhode Island,
a coalition partner with
Citizens for Responsible Government

26 Ogden St
Providence RI 02906
401-474-9266
atomicsteve@gmail.com

My name is Steve Ahlquist, I am the president of the Humanists of Rhode Island.

My group voted overwhelmingly to be a part of Citizens for Responsible Government, a coalition opposed to holding a Constitutional Convention, because we are dedicated to preserving and expanding human rights. In studying the effects of past constitutional conventions, both here in Rhode Island and in other states, we see little in the way of positive outcomes and much that gives us pause.

In our view constitutional conventions become the tool by which legislation is advanced that seeks to curb or reverse hard won civil rights. It opens up battlegrounds on contentious issues, to the benefit of no one save for the advertising companies that stand to rake in millions of dollars as various PACs flood our state with flyers and television ads about the pros and cons of issues our state has already deliberated on and decided.

Right now one of the single biggest issues facing our democracy is the power of big money to influence elections. Holding a constitutional convention is tantamount to putting a "For Sale" sign on the Rhode Island State Constitution. The battles engendered will be costly, not only in terms of money, but in terms of the quality of discourse. Do we really need to re-litigate marriage equality? Should we be putting basic human rights up to a vote? Do we want to be spending the next ten years in court, untangling the mess that certain legislation is bound to create?

Thank you for your time and attention.

Steve Ahlquist