

Question 3:

3. CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

(Section 2 of Article XIV of the Constitution)

Shall there be a convention to amend or revise the Constitution?

APPROVE ←

REJECT ←

Explanation for Question 3:

Constitutional Convention

Purpose and Explanation: What would approval of this question do?

The General Assembly has submitted the following question to the State's electors:

Shall there be a convention to amend or revise the Constitution?

A Constitutional Convention is an assembly of delegates or representatives of the people of the State for the purpose of amending or revising the Rhode Island Constitution. A Constitutional Convention, if held, could propose an entirely new Constitution for adoption or rejection by the State's electors; it could propose individual amendments to the Constitution; or it could re-write the basic document while presenting what appears to be the most controversial issues to the electors in the form of supplemental amendments, thus allowing individual decisions on each.

No amendment or revision to the Constitution agreed upon by a Constitutional Convention shall take effect until the amendments or revisions have been submitted to the electors of the State and approved by a majority of those electors voting.

In accordance with Section 2 of Article XIV of the Rhode Island Constitution, a bi-partisan preparatory commission has been created by the General Assembly to assemble information on constitutional questions for the electors of the State. The preparatory commission made use of such sources and gathered information pertinent to the fulfillment of its charge as it deemed appropriate. The preparatory commission, after gathering information on particular issues that the State's electors may consider, reported its findings to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and to the public, through the news media.

If a majority of the State's electors vote to hold a Constitutional Convention, then it will be the responsibility of the 2015 General Assembly to enact legislation determining the method of election of delegates, setting forth an election schedule, and appropriating funds. The number of delegates shall be equal to the number of members of the House of Representatives and shall be apportioned in the same manner as the members of the House of Representatives. The parameters of a Constitutional Convention would be decided by the General Assembly and the elected delegates to the Convention. The last Constitutional Convention was held in 1986.

The actual cost to the taxpayers of conducting a Convention in 2016 is unknown. However, the bi-partisan preparatory commission for the proposed Constitutional Convention that met in July and August 2014, reported

that the projected cost to the taxpayers of holding a Constitutional Convention in 2016 would be approximately Two and One-half Million Dollars, (\$2.5M), after adjusting 1986 costs for inflation and in anticipation of numerous factors that could increase the cost of a convention to include the total number and location of convention meetings, the expense of hired experts, as well as the cost of a staff necessary to assist delegates in carrying out their duties.

A copy of the complete report issued by the bi-partisan preparatory commission presenting its findings, including information on issues that may be considered by the Constitutional Convention and the projected costs to taxpayers of holding a Constitutional Convention in 2016, may be viewed on the website of the Rhode Island General Assembly (www.rilin.state.ri.us) or a copy of the report may be obtained from the Rhode Island Library, State House Room 208, Providence, RI 02903.

This question has been proposed by the General Assembly of the State pursuant to Section 2 of Article XIV of the Rhode Island Constitution, which gives the General Assembly the right to submit to the electors at any election the question, "Shall there be a convention to amend or revise the Constitution?" If the General Assembly fails to submit the question to the electors of the State during any ten year period, then the Secretary of State shall submit it at the next general election following such period.

A vote to "Approve" means you would like to see a Constitutional Convention called to amend or revise the Constitution.

A vote to "Reject" means that you are opposed to a Constitutional Convention called to amend or revise the Constitution at this time.

How much money will be borrowed?

The referendum would not authorize any borrowing.