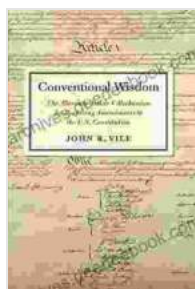


# Conventional Wisdom: The Alternate Article V Mechanism For Proposing Amendments To The U S Constitution

The United States Constitution is a remarkable document that has served as the foundation of American government for over two centuries. It is a living document that has been amended 27 times since its ratification in 1788. The process for amending the Constitution is outlined in Article V, which provides two methods for proposing amendments: by a two-thirds vote of both houses of Congress or by a national convention called by Congress at the request of two-thirds of the states.

The vast majority of amendments to the Constitution have been proposed by Congress. However, there have been a few instances in which the national convention method has been used. The most notable example is the Twenty-first Amendment, which repealed the Eighteenth Amendment and ended Prohibition.



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**Constitution** by John R. Vile

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the alternate article mechanism for proposing amendments to the Constitution. This mechanism is outlined in Article V and provides for a national convention to be called by Congress at the request of two-thirds of the states. The convention would then propose amendments to the Constitution, which would be ratified by three-fourths of the states.

The alternate article mechanism has been criticized by some as being too easy to trigger and for potentially leading to radical changes to the Constitution. However, supporters of the mechanism argue that it is a necessary safeguard against a tyrannical Congress.

### **The Alternate Article Mechanism: A Brief History**

The alternate article mechanism was first proposed by James Madison at the Constitutional Convention in 1787. Madison believed that the national convention method would be a more deliberative and less partisan way to amend the Constitution than the congressional method. He also feared that a two-thirds vote of Congress could be too easily obtained by special interests.

The alternate article mechanism was included in the final draft of the Constitution, but it was not used until 1861, when the Civil War broke out. In 1861, Congress passed a resolution calling for a national convention to consider amendments to the Constitution that would abolish slavery. The convention met in Washington, D.C., in 1861 and proposed the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery.

The alternate article mechanism was used again in 1933, when Congress passed a resolution calling for a national convention to consider amendments to the Constitution that would repeal Prohibition. The convention met in Washington, D.C., in 1933 and proposed the Twenty-first Amendment, which repealed Prohibition.

Since 1933, there have been several attempts to use the alternate article mechanism to propose amendments to the Constitution. However, none of these attempts have been successful.

### **The Alternate Article Mechanism: How It Works**

The alternate article mechanism is outlined in Article V of the Constitution. It provides for a national convention to be called by Congress at the request of two-thirds of the states. The convention would then propose amendments to the Constitution, which would be ratified by three-fourths of the states.

The process for calling a national convention is relatively simple. Two-thirds of the states must pass resolutions calling for a convention. The resolutions must be sent to Congress, which then has the option of calling a convention.

If Congress decides to call a convention, it must set a date and place for the convention. The convention would then meet and propose amendments to the Constitution. The amendments would then be sent to the states for ratification.

Three-fourths of the states must ratify an amendment before it can become part of the Constitution. The ratification process can take several years.

## **The Alternate Article Mechanism: Pros and Cons**

The alternate article mechanism has been praised by some for being a more deliberative and less partisan way to amend the Constitution.

Supporters of the mechanism argue that it is a necessary safeguard against a tyrannical Congress.

However, the alternate article mechanism has also been criticized by some as being too easy to trigger and for potentially leading to radical changes to the Constitution. Critics of the mechanism argue that it could be used by special interests to push through amendments that would benefit them at the expense of the general public.

Ultimately, the decision of whether or not to use the alternate article mechanism is a political one. There are valid arguments to be made on both sides of the issue.

The alternate article mechanism is a powerful tool that has the potential to be used for good or for ill. It is important to be aware of the potential risks and benefits of the mechanism before making a decision about whether or not to support it.

If you are concerned about the potential risks of the alternate article mechanism, you should contact your elected officials and let them know your concerns. You can also support organizations that are working to educate the public about the mechanism and its potential impact.

If you believe that the alternate article mechanism is a necessary safeguard against a tyrannical Congress, you should also contact your elected

officials and let them know your support. You can also support organizations that are working to promote the use of the mechanism.

The alternate article mechanism is a complex and controversial issue. However, it is an important issue that deserves to be discussed and debated. By understanding the mechanism and its potential impact, you can make an informed decision about whether or not to support it.



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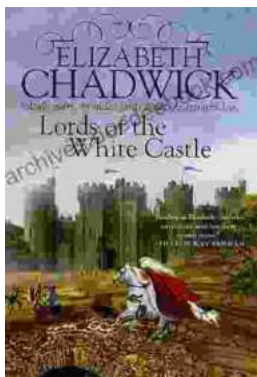
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