

NYS CON-CON: SUPPORTERS & OPPOSITION

Support

The **NY People's Convention** and **Committee for a Constitutional Convention**, also known as **New York Says Yes**, are leading the campaign in support of the ballot question.^{[10][11][12]} The organization **Restrict & Regulate in NY State 2019**, which seeks to approve the convention question and then campaign for a marijuana legalization amendment, also formed a [political action committee](#).^[13]



Supporters

Officials

- Rep. Brian Kolb (R-131)^[14]

Organizations

- New York State Bar Association^[3]
- New York City Bar Association^[3]
- Citizens Union^[4]
- League of Women Voters of New York State^[5]
- Forward March New York^[15]
- New Kings Democrats^[16]
- Restrict & Regulate in NY State 2019^[13]
- Divide NYS Caucus^[17]

Arguments

The **Committee for a Constitutional Convention**, one of the groups registered to support the question, stated:^[18]

“ A constitutional convention, designed to enable the public to overcome entrenched interests, will in all likelihood be opposed by those entrenched interests, including the Legislature. That’s precisely the situation that the Constitution anticipates by giving the public every 20 years the right to convene a constitutional convention. All the entrenched interests will fight hard against a convention to preserve their prerogatives. If a convention is ultimately called, they will also fight to elect Delegates willing to protect those prerogatives. But for all of us a constitutional convention is a unique opportunity to secure needed change, and the election of Delegates committed to needed change has happened before and can be achieved again.^[9] ”

Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb (R-131) said the state is long overdue for a constitutional convention. He stated:^[14]

“ The beauty and necessity of a Constitutional Convention lies in its ability to reform the system and empower the people of New York to facilitate needed change. Voter empowerment is part of the very fabric of who we are as a nation. There is no more effective way to engage the public than a Constitutional Convention, and there is no place that needs it more than Albany. ... It took seven years for the Legislature to act on a bill that strips convicted public officials of their taxpayer-funded pensions. This is among the most basic, common-sense bills I have come across in my 16 years in the Assembly. But it took seven years for it to move. Albany doesn’t act quickly or decisively enough. But, through a Constitutional Convention, the people can force action that lawmakers are unwilling to take.^[9] ”

Evan Davis, a lawyer who served as counsel to former Gov. Mario Cuomo (D) and founder of the Committee for a Constitutional Convention, said:^[19]

“ There are a number of changes that need to be made to strengthen the constitution that the Legislature is never going to adopt ... so the only way to get these changes made is to get it through a convention where the people would elect delegates committed to making the changes.^[9] ”

Other arguments in support of the measure include:

Campaign advertisements

The following are campaign advertisements of the NY People's Convention.^[21]



Opposition

New Yorkers Against Corruption (NYAC) is leading the campaign in opposition to the ballot question.^{[22][6]} The campaign manager of NYAC is Jordan Marks.^[23]



Coalition

On June 19, 2017, a coalition of organizations formed the campaign New Yorkers Against Corruption.^[24] As of September 26, 2017, 146 organizations joined the coalition. The following were listed as members of the coalition on the campaign's website:^[6]

- Adirondack Council
- [NYS Conservative Party](#)
- Council of Churches
- CSEA
- Citizen Action New York
- Environmental Advocates of New York
- Equality New York
- [New York State AFL-CIO](#)
- New York State Alliance for Retired Americans
- New York State Professional Fire Fighters
- New York State Rifle and Pistol Association
- Planned Parenthood Empire States Acts
- Right to Life
- New York Republican State Committee
- Strong Economy for All Coalition
- Working Families Party
- Buffalo Branch NAACP
- Capital District Area Labor Federation
- Cattaraugus Allegany Central Labor Council
- CBTU NY Chapter
- CBTU Region 1
- CBTU Rochester Chapter
- Central New York Area Labor Federation
- Central NY Central Labor Council of Oneida & Herkimer Counties
- Chemung County Democratic Party
- Chemung Schulerly Central Labor Council
- Citizens for a Better Southern Tier
- City of Corning Democratic Party
- Coalition for Economic Justice
- Community Voices Heard
- CWA District One
- CWA Local 1122
- CWA Local 1108
- CWW Rochester
- Dunkirk Central Labor Council
- Dutchess County Central Labor Council
- Eastern New York Pride @ Work
- Elmira City Democratic Party
- Equality Long Island
- Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island
- Food & Water Watch
- Greater Southern Tier BOCES Support Staff Association
- Greater Syracuse Council on Occupational Safety & Health
- Horseheads Teachers' Association
- Hudson Catskill Central Labor Council
- Hudson Valley Area Labor Federation
- Humanists of Long Island
- NYSUT
- AFSCME NY
- UFT
- RWDSU
- AFSCME DC37
- NYS Public Employees Federation (PEF)
- 1199SEIU
- New York Farm Bureau
- AFM Local 802
- Albany County Central Federation of Labor
- Alliance of South Asian American Labor
- Alliance of South Asian American Labor - Staten Island Chapter
- Bronx GOP
- Buffalo Central Labor Council

- IBEW - Local Union 10
- IBEW Local 139
- Indivisible Patriots of Long Island
- Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing
- Jamestown Central Labor Council
- Jefferson Lewis & St. Lawrence Counties Central Trades & Labor Council
- Kate Mullany CLUW
- Labor Religion Coalition
- Labor Religion Coalition of the Finger Lakes
- New York State Association of Electrical Workers
- IBEW Local 10
- IBEW Local 43
- LGBT Network
- LITAC Long Island Transgender
- Local 338 RWDSU/UFCW
- Long Island Federation of Labor
- Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth (LIGALY)
- Long Island Jobs with Justice
- Long Island LGBT Community Center
- Long Island Progressive Coalition
- Long Island Transgender Advocacy Coalition
- Make the Road New York
- Metro New York A. Philip Randolph Institute
- Micah Institute at New York Theological Seminary
- Move Forward Long Island
- New York City Central Labor Council
- New York Committee on Occupational Health and Safety
- New York Communities for Change
- New York Professional Nurses Union (NYPNU)
- New York Progressive Action Network of the Southern Finger Lakes
- Niagara Orleans Central Labor Council

- North Country Peace Group
- Northeast Central Labor Council
- NYC & Vicinity District Council of Carpenters
- NYC Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
- NYS PEF Retirees
- NYSUT Local #11-226
- Port Authority PBA
- Pride at Work - NYC/LI
- Pride at Work - Rochester/Finger Lakes
- Professional Staff Congress
- Progressive East End Reformers
- Queens LGBT Community Center (QCenter)
- Rochester & Genesee Valley Area Labor Federation
- Rochester & Vicinity Labor Council
- Rochester Metro Justice
- Rochester Next Up
- Rockland County Central Labor Council
- SEIU 32 BJ
- Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders-Long Island (SAGE-LI)
- Staten Island Republican Party
- Steuben Livingston Central Labor Council
- Suffolk Child Care Council
- Teamsters Joint Council 16
- Teamsters Local 814
- Tioga County Republican Party
- Tri-County Central Labor Council
- TWU Local 100
- TWU NY/NJ State Conference
- UAW Local 2110
- UAW Region 9A New York Area CAP Council
- UFCW Local 1500
- United Steelworkers District 4
- Upper Hudson Central Labor Council
- WESPAC
- Westchester Putnam Central Labor Body
- Western New York Area Labor Federation
- Writers Guild of America, East
- Yonkers PBA
- Citizens Campaign for the Environment
- United University Professions
- Police Conference of New York Inc
- New York Progressive Action Network
- Uniformed Firefighters Association
- ALIGN: The Alliance for Greater New York
- New York Immigration Coalition
- Greater New York Labor Religion Coalition
- Rural and Migrant Ministry
- Worker Justice Center of NY, Inc.
- SEIU Local 200
- Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
- IBEW Local 86
- IBEW Local 3
- IBEW Local 41
- IBEW Local 139

Other opponents

Officials

- [Mayor Bill de Blasio](#) (D) of [New York City](#)^[25]
- [Sen. John Flanagan](#) (R-2)^[26]
- [Sen. Diane Savino](#) (D-23)^[27]
- [Sen. Jeff Klein](#) (D-34)^[27]
- [Sen. Andrea Stewart-Cousins](#) (D-35)^[28]
- [Sen. David Carlucci](#) (D-38)^[29]
- [Rep. Carl Heastie](#) (D-83)^[30]
- [Sen. John DeFrancisco](#) (R-50)^[31]

Parties

- [Independent Democratic Conference](#)^[30]

Organizations

- [New York Civil Liberties Union](#)^[32]
- [Association of Justices of the Supreme Court of the State of New York](#)^[33]

Arguments

The **United Federation of Teachers** stated the following on the constitutional convention question:^[34]

“ A constitutional convention is unlimited in the scope of what it could change. This would place New York State's rights and protections at risk of alteration or elimination, including the guarantee of a free public education, a prohibition against aid to non-public schools and the right to Workers' Compensation. The right to unionize and bargain collectively and state requirements regarding pensions and social welfare could also wind up on the chopping block.^[9] ”

District Council 37, a public employee union, stated:^[35]

“ If this sounds like a long and cumbersome process, that's just the tip of the iceberg. This is also a wasteful process that would give big business interests and anti-worker interests the opportunity to attack public services and the retirement security of the men and women who provide them.

If successful, these special interests would:

- do untold damage to our retirement security by changing pension laws to reduce retirement benefits;
- weaken the power of the state legislature on budget matters;
- restrict and redefine the state government's role in providing services for those in need; and
- turn back the clock on workers' compensation laws.^[9] ”

Anthony Figliola, vice president of Empire Government Strategies, said:^[36]

“ History has shown that a constitutional convention is nothing more than a carbon copy of a typical legislative session. In short, it's a \$335 million-plus workforce development initiative for the politically connected. ...

There is a less costly and more effective approach to changing our constitution and that is the public referendum process, which has successfully amended the constitution more than 200 times. ...

Voters seeking good government solutions can't afford the luxury of another convention.^[9] ”

Other arguments against the measure include:

- **Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie** (D-83) said, “We are going to need you to remind people that dangerous things can happen. There are some very wealthy people who want to open up the constitution and really undo some of the protections for labor.”^[30]
- **Steve Ammerman**, spokesperson for the New York Farm Bureau, said he was concerned that “convention delegates who are unfamiliar with agriculture and rural life would make long lasting decisions that will negatively affect farmers.”^[37]

Campaign advertisements

The following are campaign advertisements of the New York State United Teachers, a coalition member of New Yorkers Against Corruption.^[38]



Other positions

Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) said he supports the idea of constitutional conventions, but expressed concern about the delegate selection process. He said:^[39]

“ [Y]ou have to find a way where the delegates do not wind up being the same legislators who you are trying to change the rules on. I have not heard a plan that does that.

The theory of the constitutional convention is just good people come in and they're the delegates. The way it will work is you'll probably elect assemblymen and senators as delegates. And the unions will probably fund the campaigns. And you may make the situation worse, not better.^[9] ”