



Michigan Constitutional Issues

At the November 2026 general election, Proposal 2026-01 will ask Michigan voters whether a constitutional convention should be convened for the purpose of a general revision of the state Constitution. This question appears on the ballot automatically every 16 years as required by the state constitution. Voters will choose: to allow the 1963 Michigan Constitution to continue in its present form; or to convene a constitutional convention to draft a revised constitution to deal in a holistic manner with issues perceived to be problematic.

If electors vote “no”, the 1963 Constitution will continue to be used and interested parties may continue to offer amendments to it. Since 1963, voters have approved 39 amendments from 82 attempts. While past amendments have mostly targeted the Legislative Branch, Finance and Taxation, the Declaration of Rights, the Executive Branch, and the Education articles.

If electors vote “yes”, a special primary would be held in February 2027, and a general election would be held in May 2027. Voters in each of the 110 state House districts and 38 state Senate districts shall elect one delegate to the convention. The convention will be convened in Lansing on October 5, 2027.

The delegates are empowered to choose their own officers, determine the rules of proceedings and judge the qualifications, elections and returns of their members. The delegates will be compensated for their time and to incur additional costs through the appointment of such officers, employees, and assistants as it deems necessary; printing and distribution of documents, journals, and proceeds; and explanations and information dissemination about the proposed constitution.

The Constitution does not limit the amount of time that a convention can meet to complete its work and draft a revised constitution. A proposed new constitution drafted by the delegates must be submitted and win the approval of voters in a statewide election.

Citizens Research Council is publishing a series of reports to provide information which voters may use to decide whether the convening of a constitutional convention is in the best interest of Michigan at this time.

That analysis begins by defining the nature and purpose of a state constitution. A constitution should serve the purpose of a fundamental organic document: establishing, defining and limiting the basic organs of power, stating general principles, and declaring the rights of the people. Some of basic principles are so fundamental and familiar and their implications so plain that they need not be developed at length:

- That political power rests ultimately in the people;
- That the popular will is reflected in the constitution and in the institutions of representative government designed to serve the interests and welfare of the people;
- That the organs of government are subject to the limitations imposed by the people and by the rights retained by them;
- That a constitution is fundamental and supreme law; and
- That the courts in the exercise of the power of judicial review have the responsibility and the duty to uphold this fundamental law and to refuse to enforce legislative and other acts of government found to be in conflict with it.

Additionally, a state constitution can be expected to establish the organs of governmental power, to define and distribute authority among them, and to state limitations on these powers. It should address questions of direct participation by the electors in the legislative process by means of the referendum and initiative and the mechanics of these processes require attention. Finally, attention may well be given to the roles that political parties may play in Michigan’s state and local government.

Within that context, delegates will be charged with drafting a new constitution and convincing voters that it improves upon the current document. In the past, this exercise has worked from the existing constitution. But delegates are not bound by anything in the current constitution. They will have a wide range of latitude in identifying issues to amend from their current wording, delete provisions, or add new detail.

Some topics considered may have strong emotional connotations.

- In addition to reaffirming basic core federal First Amendment rights in the state constitution (freedom of speech, press, assembly, petition, and religion for instance), they might wish to address such hot button topics as equal protection, the right to bear arms, same-sex marriage, affirmative action, reproductive freedom, and the death penalty.
- They might revisit some of the voting qualification and voting rights provisions, redistricting, and the initiative, referendum, and recall rights, and the process for amending the constitution.
- They might address oversight of education with the independent state board of education and appointed superintendent of public education, the independence of Michigan’s universities.
- Issues of finance and taxation are sure to require large amounts of attention, including the mechanics of property tax limitations and the state tax limitations.

Other topics might be a little more mundane, even if very important to the functioning of Michigan’s state and local governments.

- They will revisit the size and structure of the Michigan legislature.
- They might examine how Michigan selects executive officers – include the governor, secretary of state, attorney general – and supreme court justices.
- They could reconsider the types and powers of local governments.
- They could address issues important to government but not often discussed outside of the halls of government, such as the state civil service, funding of pensions, how the lower courts are funded.

The Citizens Research Council’s description of the constitutional convention process and analysis of the issues is being published over eight months. The Citizens Research Council of Michigan takes no position on the question of calling a convention. It is hoped that examination of the matters identified in the papers will promote discussion of vital constitutional issues and assist citizens in deliberations on the question. Read the full analysis at www.crcmich.org/publications/2026con-con-2.

Citizens Research Council of Michigan Board of Directors

CAROLEE KVORIAK - Chair
THOMAS G. KYROS - Vice Chair
STEPHAN CURRIE - Treasurer
LAURA BASSETT
NATHAN BENEDICT
LAWRENCE BLUTH
JENNIFER BOWMAN

MARK BURTON
GEORGE COOK
DANIEL DOMENICUCCI
ZENNA ELHASAN
RICHARD FAVOR, JR.
MONIQUE FIELD-FOSTER
MARTY FITTANTE

MARY LYNN FOSTER
MATT GILLARD
JASON GRIFFIN
MARITA HATTEM-SCHIFFMAN
MICHAEL HERRIGAN
EARLE "WIN" IRWIN
JADE JAMES-GIST

ANDREW JOHNSTON
NICK KHOURI
LAUREN LAPINE
JAMIE LARSON
CARRIE LINDEROTH
PATRICK MCGOW
DAVID PALSROK

JESSICA ROBINSON
KELLI SAUNDERS
TONY STAMAS
KEN ZENDEL
ERIC LUPHER - President