

Rep. Zepnick: concerned about legislation authorizing constitutional convention

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There is probably not a worse time to have a constitutional convention in our nation

MILWAUKEE – State Representative Josh Zepnick (D-Milwaukee) yesterday, as ranking Democrat on the Federalism and Interstate Relations Committee, heard testimony regarding AJR 20, AJR 21, and AB 165, all pertaining to issues of an Article V Constitutional Convention.

“Calling for a constitutional convention could create a situation where the fundamental rights of all American citizens could be up for grabs,” Representative Zepnick said. “Even if we could limit Wisconsin delegates to voting on just one amendment, there is nothing we could do to control the actions of delegates from the other 49 states on voting for amendments.

“The only constitutional convention the United States previously held was in 1787, and we simply don’t know what could happen if the door is opened to having another one. There is no framework in place to ensure delegates stick to one issue and there is nothing stopping delegates from proposing new amendments or rewriting existing amendments so long as they feel they are somehow linked to balancing the budget. We are simply signing a blank check if we move these bills forward.

“The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) has been the driving force behind calling the Constitutional Convention, which has been passed by 28 other states. It’s concerning that the organization that has continuously promoted

corporate and wealthy interests over the average citizen is pushing for this convention and the possible rewriting of our constitution.

“If this constitutional convention went forward, and if we could somehow ensure the delegates were only voting on amendments related to a so-called “balanced budget” amendment, that could mean devastating economic effects for our nation. Families that have always paid their taxes and asked nothing of government, could lose everything if the economy plunges solely because the government would be prohibited from spending a dime on their behalf. Is that worth opening this Pandora’s box that could fundamentally change our constitution and jeopardize our rights?”