

Constitutional convention resolution passes Assembly nearly along party lines

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The Assembly passed a joint resolution calling for the second constitutional convention of the states in U.S. history to approve a balanced budget and place term limits on members of Congress

Dems slammed the resolution as a dangerous path that could quickly turn into a “runaway convention,” where state delegates could essentially rewrite the constitution to their liking.

But Republicans quickly dismissed the allegation, saying delegates would be required to follow convention rules established by state lawmakers and couldn't stray.

AJR 77 passed 60-38. Its Senate companion received a public hearing last fall but hasn't yet been executed out of committee.

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Republican Reps. Amy Loudbeck, of Clinton, and David Murphy, of Greenville, sided with Dems in opposition to the Resolution.

“This is one small attempt to try to claw back some power to say they can't spend us into oblivion,” said Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, referencing the multi-trillion dollar national debt.

Vos said ahead of the floor period that he supports a convention but wouldn't vote for term limits if it came back to the states.

But fellow Republican Tony Kurtz, of Wonewoc, said he was “a true believer” on establishing term limits on lawmakers. He compared lawmakers to bananas, saying they start green, soon yellow and eventually turn brown and rotten.

Rep. Christine Sinicki, D-Milwaukee, said there already are term limits of a sort on legislators.

“They’re called elections,” she said.

A convention hasn’t happened since the Constitutional Convention of 1787, which formed the current U.S. system of government.

See the resolution:

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2019/related/proposals/ajr77>