

# The New American

## Convention of States: Fomenting Fear of Civil War

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During an appearance on the *The Big Picture* with Brett Craig, Mark Meckler, president of the Convention of States (COS), explained why Americans “must” support a Constitutional Convention, or a “Convention of States,” as COS calls it.

In a COS blog post reporting on the show, the author summarizes some of Craig’s and Meckler’s discussion on the “political climate” in America, including a metaphor I’m sure that he thought was quite clever. The post opened with this alarming statement:

Is America headed for a Civil War? Not if Mark Meckler has his way.

So apparently Mark Meckler can save us from a new Civil War.

The blog post then reported:

Pressure builds until a valved [sic] is released or an explosion occurs, Meckler and Craig discussed. After the Liberty Bell was forged, it cracked as a result of too much pressure.

Later, the article includes dialogue from the show where Craig and Meckler relate the “history” of the Liberty Bell and how it relates to the COS scheme:

“What’s caused the pressure, is that the federal government has grown bigger and bigger. When that happens, the individual grows smaller and smaller,” said Meckler. “The more space that the government takes up, the less space for the individual and for the state as well.”

Americans need relief, a pressure valve. A unique alleviation mechanism exists in the Constitution, Article V.

“This is that crack in the bell, to relieve pressure, that metaphor we’re talking about. Our Founders understood we needed to do that,” said Craig.

Wow. Meckler must believe no one who listens to him or reads his rhetoric will bother fact-checking him on history or the text of the Constitution.

First, the Liberty Bell didn’t crack because of too much pressure. The Liberty Bell cracked because it was more brittle than the makers thought it was. The men who forged the bell believed

it was sound and could support the impact of the clacker against the inside wall of the bell. They were wrong.

Here's a brief history of why the Liberty Bell cracked taken from the National Park Service's website:

No one recorded when or why the Liberty Bell first cracked, but the most likely explanation is that a narrow split developed in the early 1840s after nearly 90 years of hard use. In 1846, when the city decided to repair the bell prior to George Washington's birthday holiday (February 23), metal workers widened the thin crack to prevent its farther spread and restore the tone of the bell using a technique called "stop drilling". The wide "crack" in the Liberty Bell is actually the repair job!

The crack, then, did not happen because the Liberty Bell was under "too much pressure," but was purposefully placed in the bell to prevent it from cracking even further! It wasn't a bug, it was a feature!

So, to use the Liberty Bell and the history of the crack as an analogy — an accurate analogy — rather than saying that the union of the states created by the Constitution is under pressure and will crack unless a convention of states is held, perhaps it would be a more accurate analogy to say that the sovereignty of the states was the "crack" put into the bell by the Founding Fathers to keep the union from breaking up! The crack, then, is the 10th Amendment!

The 10th Amendment, were it to be read and enforced by the state governments, provides the relief that COS claims it wants from a convention. Our problem is that for generations state legislators and governors haven't read the 10th Amendment, or, if they have, they have chosen not to take advantage of its power to keep the union strong and the states sovereign. Why have state legislatures not deployed this powerful weapon against federal tyranny?

You see, Meckler and the rest of those calling for this new Constitutional Convention (and make no mistake: that's what it will be) spend millions of dollars trying to lobby state legislators to introduce and pass an application for a Convention as set out in Article V. The COS people believe that all it takes to rein in the federal government is for the state legislators to step up and call for an amendments convention.

So the very same group that has allowed the federal government — assisted it, in many ways — to become tyrannical and accumulate trillions of dollars or debt by refusing to be faithful to the oath they swore in Article VI to support the Constitution is the group that COS is telling us is our last hope for survival by following Article V?

This plan concocted by Meckler and his colleagues at COS is so chimerical and so contrary to the facts of history and contemporary experience that it makes one wonder what they're really hoping to achieve by their advocacy of a Convention of States.

To claim that the federal government has grown "bigger and bigger" and "out of control" because it is seizing power from the states and that the states only have one hope of defense — a

convention for proposing amendments — is falsely portraying states as victims rather than as accomplices to these crimes against the Constitution.

States, on average, receive one-third of their annual budget from the federal government. According to data collected in 2013, Mississippi receives nearly half of its money from D.C., followed closely by Louisiana and Arizona.

No one would argue against the assertion that governors and state legislators are addicted to the “free” federal money. The problem, however — and somehow the Article V/Convention of States people don’t want to admit it — is that this money isn’t free.

Federal funds come with strings attached. Here’s [an explanation of the arrangement](#) between the feds and the state governments provided by Tad DeHaven of the Cato Institute:

The appeal of federal funds to governors is obvious: They get to spend additional money without having to raise taxes on their voters to pay for it. A problem with this arrangement is that it creates a fiscal illusion — state taxpayers perceive the cost of government to be cheaper than it really is. In effect, the federal money and a large part of the annual budget appears to be “free.”

That’s the group being promoted by COS as the last hope for liberty: the state legislators — The state legislators who push and shove and campaign and collude to get a better position at the federal trough!

If any of you think that state legislators are suddenly going to surrender power, prestige, and party perquisites in the name of returning power to the people, you need to open your eyes to just how corrupt and complicit those state legislators and governors are in the destruction of the Constitution.

In fact, given the irrefutable realities of that economic relationship between federal and state governments, isn’t it more likely than not that state delegates elected to attend an Article V convention would do whatever it takes with regard to language of the Constitution so as to improve their access to the federal feeding trough?

Would a right-thinking person rely on a crack addict to punish the pushers?

Anyone who believes that is definitely more cracked than the Liberty Bell.

In a future article I’ll address the rest of the claims made by Meckler in his appearance on *The Big Picture*.