



University of Connecticut
Center for Survey Research & Analysis

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**New *Hartford Courant*/CSRA Survey:
CONNECTICUT VOTERS SUPPORT CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION**

Storrs, Conn. – Likely voters in Connecticut support holding a Constitutional Convention, according to a new survey sponsored jointly by the *Hartford Courant* and the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut. The *Hartford Courant*/CSRA survey finds 50% of Connecticut likely voters support holding a Constitutional Convention, compared to 39% who oppose a convention. Eleven percent of likely voters remain undecided.

<u>Constitutional Convention Vote</u>	
	Likely Voters
Support	50%
Oppose	39%
Undecided	11%

Connecticut likely voters from all sides of the political spectrum support holding a Constitutional Convention. Among Republicans, 54% support holding a Constitutional Convention, compared to 31% who oppose holding one. Forty-six percent of Democrats support a Constitutional Convention, compared to 43% who oppose it. Independents support a Constitutional Convention by a 52 percent to a 41 percent margin.

Support for a Constitutional Convention is tied to evaluations of the Connecticut General Assembly. Among the 56% of likely voters who approve of the job the General Assembly is doing, 47% are opposed to holding a Constitutional Convention compared to 43% who support holding one. Conversely, among the 29% of likely voters who disapprove of the job the General Assembly is doing, 66% support holding a Constitutional Convention compared to 27% who oppose holding one.

According to Christine Kraus, Associate Director of the Center for Survey Research and Analysis, “The Constitutional Convention question appears to be a referendum on the performance of the General Assembly. Connecticut residents unhappy with legislators in Hartford support holding a convention to amend the constitution, whereas those happy with the General Assembly oppose holding one.”

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Knowledge of the Constitutional Conventional Process

Despite their overall support for a Constitutional Convention, few Connecticut likely voters know how the convention process operates. Only 35% of likely voters know that the General Assembly determines how delegates to the Constitutional Convention are chosen. Less than a quarter (20%) knows that the voters of Connecticut must approve any proposed changes to the Constitution made by delegates to the convention. Five percent of likely voters are aware that amendments to the constitution can be proposed by the General Assembly without holding a Constitutional Convention.

Knowledge of How the Constitutional Convention Process Works

	% Correct
Know that the General Assembly determines how delegates are selected	35%
Know that voters must approve any proposed changes to the Constitution	20%
Know that the General Assembly can propose amendments without a Convention	5%

According to Kraus, “It is troubling to see so many Connecticut voters unfamiliar with a key ballot question. Hopefully, Nutmeggers will take the time to learn more about the convention process so that they can make an informed decision on Election Day.”

Opinions on Constitutional Changes

Proponents of a Constitutional Convention have offered up a wide array of proposals that could be considered by delegates. Not surprisingly, support for these propositions varies by the nature of the question. Sixty-five percent of Connecticut likely voters support amending the Constitution to permit citizen ballot initiatives, whereby residents could bypass the legislative process and petition to have referendum questions put directly to voters for approval or rejection. Only 44% of Connecticut likely voters support amending the state Constitution to prohibit eminent domain, while 51% oppose such a change. Connecticut likely voters also oppose amending the Constitution to prohibit same-sex marriage. Only 41% support amending the Constitution to define marriage as only between a man and a woman, compared to 55% who oppose it.

<u>Positions Toward Proposed Changes To The Constitution</u>	Support	Oppose
Citizen Ballot Initiatives	65%	30%
Prohibit Eminent Domain	44%	51%
Prohibit Same-Sex Marriage	41%	55%

Methodology

This survey was administered by the Center for Survey Research and Analysis (CSRA) at the University of Connecticut to 502 likely voters in Connecticut from October 18 – October 22, 2008. A random-digit-dial technique was used to select respondent households (sampling both listed and unlisted telephone numbers). Within each household, one adult was designated by a random procedure to be the respondent for the survey. The results have been weighted to adjust for variation in the sample relating to sex, race, age, and education. Vote likelihood was based on a model that takes into account past voting history, interest in the campaign, registration status and likelihood of voting in 2008. The margin of error for the survey is +/- 4.4 percentage points. For smaller subgroups, the margin of sampling error is larger.

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Results rounded to nearest whole number

On Election Day this November, a question will appear on the state ballot that asks voters if a Constitutional Convention should be held to amend or revise Connecticut's state constitution. If you had to make the choice today, would you vote for or against holding a Constitutional Convention in Connecticut?

Vote for.....	50%
Vote against.....	39%
No Opinion (vol)	11%

If the ballot initiative passes, a group of delegates will be selected to meet and discuss changes or amendments to the state Constitution. I would like to ask you a few questions about how this process works.

Who determines how delegates to the Constitutional Convention are selected?

The Governor.....	9%
The General Assembly	35%
The State Supreme Court.....	5%
The Voters of Connecticut.....	32%
No Opinion (vol)	19%

If a proposed amendment to the state constitution is approved by the delegates to the Constitutional Convention, does it become law?

Yes.....	33%
No	53%
No Opinion (vol)	14%

IF YES: Who must approve any proposed amendments to the state constitution before they become law?

The Governor.....	20%
The General Assembly	24%
The State Supreme Court.....	18%
The Voters of Connecticut.....	37%
No Opinion (vol)	1%

Can the state Constitution be amended without a Constitutional Convention?

Yes.....	26%
No	61%
No Opinion (vol)	14%

IF YES: Who else can propose amendments to the state constitution?

The Governor.....	17%
The General Assembly	41%
The State Supreme Court.....	19%
The Voters of Connecticut.....	19%
No Opinion (vol)	4%

Now, I would like you to consider ways in which the Connecticut state constitution could be amended.

Would you favor or oppose amending the Connecticut state constitution to allow citizen ballot initiatives, whereby residents could bypass the legislative process and petition to have referendum questions put directly to voters for approval or rejection?

Strongly favor	38%
Somewhat favor	27%
Somewhat oppose	13%
Strongly oppose	17%
No Opinion (vol)	5%

Would you favor or oppose amending the Connecticut state constitution to prohibit same-sex marriage, by defining marriage as only between a man and a woman?

Strongly favor	32%
Somewhat favor	9%
Somewhat oppose	14%
Strongly oppose	41%
No Opinion (vol)	4%

Would you favor or oppose amending the Connecticut state constitution to prohibit eminent domain by which cities and towns can take control of private property in order to benefit the public good after paying compensation to the property owners?

Strongly favor	25%
Somewhat favor	19%
Somewhat oppose	17%
Strongly oppose	34%
No Opinion (vol)	4%
