



Madison thought it would be redundant for Congress to call a convention because it was already bound to propose the amendments applied for by two-thirds of the states, otherwise Madison's response makes no sense. How could Congress propose amendments applied for by the states without specifying those amendments in their applications?

The motion for "a convention on application of two-thirds of the states" was agreed to unanimously.

ANSWER: The Framers of the Constitution intended that an Article V Convention was limited to the subject agreed to by two-thirds of the states in their applications

CONCLUSION:

Throughout the entire course of the debates, the delegates clearly understood that a convention called to amend or propose amendments would be limited to the amendment(s) applied for by two-thirds of the state legislatures. The vote to add "a convention on application of two-thirds of the states" only removed the dependence on Congress to propose those amendment(s) that were applied for and transferred that authority exclusively to the states. It did not change the requirement that applications from two-thirds of the states had to be for the same amendment(s), nor the purpose of the convention, to propose those specific amendments.

Not a single delegate during the debates claimed that the convention was an "open" convention, capable of proposing any amendment, they only understood it to be a limited convention that two-thirds of the state legislatures agreed to. This was the clear intention of the Framers as they formulated the text of the amending provision, which is now embodied in Article V.

Sources

1. From Thomas Jefferson to William Johnson, 12 June 1823," Founders Online, National Archives, version of January 18, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3562>.
2. The Debates on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution in the Convention held at Philadelphia in 1787, with a Diary of the Debates of the Congress of the Confederation as reported by James Madison, revised and newly arranged by Jonathan Elliot. Complete in One Volume. Vol. V. Supplement to Elliot's Debates (Philadelphia, 1836). https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1909#Elliot_1314-05_1595