



SENATOR PAUL BETTENCOURT

DISTRICT 7

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Senator Birdwell Champions Liberty, Senate State Affairs Passes Convention of States Bill *Joint author Senator Bettencourt says balanced budget amendment sorely needed in federal government*

AUSTIN – During today’s Senate Committee on State Affairs hearing, Senator Brian Birdwell (R-Granbury) took a strong stand for a convention of states to preserve the liberty of the people and the states against federal government overreach by introducing Senate Bill 21. The “faithful delegate bill,” which is jointly authored by Senator Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) and seven other Senators, specifies how the Texas Legislature would select delegates if a convention of states were called and how they would be held accountable to Texas citizens through the direction of the Legislature. Article V, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution allows for a convention of states to restrict the power of the federal government. Senate Bill 21 passed out of the Senate State Affairs Committee on a 7-1 vote.

“For years, we have watched as the executive, judicial and legislative branches have usurped more and more power from the states, issuing dictates that become de facto law by either completely bypassing the legislative branch or acting upon issues that the federal government has no constitutional authority to manage or act upon,” Senator Birdwell said. **“It is my firm belief that the only way we will save this republic is to go about the process of the states regaining control of the federal government that they created. It is the states’ members that created the federal government, and it is the states that must control it if our individual federal representatives cannot.”**

Senator Birdwell also laid out Senate Joint Resolution 2, which focuses on federal fiscal restraints, checks on the power of the federal government, and enacting term limits for federal officials. Senate Joint Resolution 2 passed 6-2, and a cleanup bill to terminate old convention calls also passed 8-0.

“The number one difference between the federal Congress and the Texas Legislature can be summarized in three words: a ‘Balanced Budget Amendment,’” Senator Bettencourt said. **“Without a balanced budget amendment, the federal government ran up a \$20 trillion hard debt and rising for taxpayers, while Texas government doesn’t face that avalanche of debt,”** Senator Bettencourt continued. **“That’s why I was honored to be the first joint author for Senator Birdwell of Senate Bill 21.”**

Some of the most active support has consistently been from Tamara Colbert, the Convention of States Project’s co-director for the state of Texas, who testified today in support of the bill. This group is urging other states to issue a call for this convention. **“The Convention of States Project supports Article V efforts and applauds our Senators for wanting Texas to lead on this front,”** she said. **“What our legislators are undertaking is an ability for the citizens to help bring the power back home.”** Senator Bettencourt concluded, **“This is sorely needed.”**

The bills will now go to the full Senate for a hearing and a vote, and have been designated an emergency item by Governor Greg Abbott. It is also a top priority of Lt. Governor Dan Patrick. Last session, similar bills came over from the House, and were laid out by Senator Bettencourt and Senator Birdwell.

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