

The Alternate Article Mechanism for Proposing Amendments to the Constitution

The Constitution of the United States is a living document that has been amended 28 times since its ratification in 1788. The amendment process is a complex one, designed to ensure that changes to the Constitution are made deliberately and with broad support.

There are two methods for proposing amendments to the Constitution:

- **Article V, Section 1:** This method requires a two-thirds vote of both the House and Senate, followed by ratification by three-fourths of the states.
- **Article V, Section 2:** This method allows states to propose amendments by calling a convention. If two-thirds of the states call for a convention, it must be held, and any amendments proposed by the convention must be ratified by three-fourths of the states.

The Article V, Section 2 method is known as the "alternate article mechanism" for proposing amendments. It has been used only once in American history, to propose the 21st Amendment, which repealed the 18th Amendment (Prohibition).



Conventional Wisdom: The Alternate Article V Mechanism for Proposing Amendments to the U.S.

Constitution by John R. Vile

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : Portuguese

File size : 1891 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Print length : 521 pages



The alternate article mechanism was included in the Constitution as a way to allow states to bypass Congress and propose amendments directly. This was seen as a necessary safeguard against a potential "tyranny of the majority" in Congress.

The first attempt to use the alternate article mechanism was made in 1789, when several states called for a convention to propose amendments to the Bill of Rights. However, Congress quickly passed the Bill of Rights and the convention was never held.

The alternate article mechanism was not used again until 1861, when several Southern states called for a convention to propose amendments to the Constitution that would protect slavery. The convention was held, but the amendments it proposed were never ratified.

The alternate article mechanism was finally used successfully in 1933, when several states called for a convention to propose amendments to the Constitution that would repeal Prohibition. The convention was held and proposed the 21st Amendment, which was ratified by the states in 1933.

The process for using the alternate article mechanism is as follows:

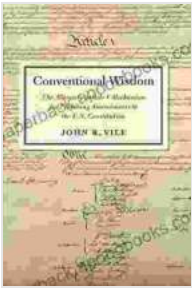
1. Two-thirds of the states must pass resolutions calling for a convention to propose amendments to the Constitution.
2. Once two-thirds of the states have passed resolutions, Congress must call a convention.
3. The convention must be held within one year of being called.
4. Any amendments proposed by the convention must be ratified by three-fourths of the states.

The alternate article mechanism is a significant part of the American constitutional system. It provides a way for states to bypass Congress and propose amendments to the Constitution directly. This is an important safeguard against a potential "tyranny of the majority" in Congress.

The alternate article mechanism has only been used once in American history, but it remains a potential tool for states to use if they believe that Congress is not acting in the best interests of the people.

The alternate article mechanism for proposing amendments to the Constitution is a complex but important part of the American constitutional system. It provides a way for states to bypass Congress and propose amendments directly. This is an important safeguard against a potential "tyranny of the majority" in Congress.

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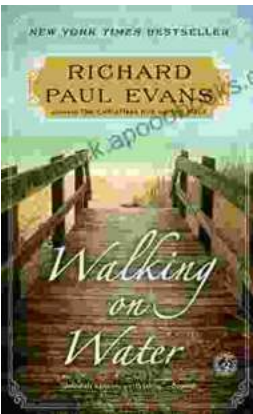
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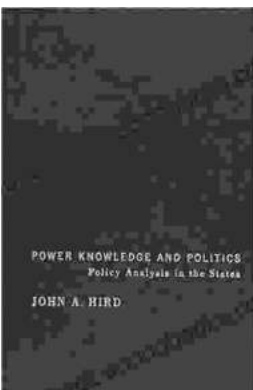
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