

UHPA Recommends a No Vote on Con Con

The UHPA Board of Directors has taken a position to oppose the convening of a Constitutional Convention. This was not an easy decision because faculty members have benefited from the gains made in the 1978 convention that established the right to collective bargaining and health insurance, while creating an autonomous system for University of Hawaii governance. Although many faculty members, like voters are undecided, a majority of members when asked would vote “no”.

A constitutional convention can be potentially harmful to the interests of faculty and the UH system by reducing revenue for education, taking away the right to collective bargaining, and narrowing the access to health care and pensions. There are also rights to privacy and freedom of speech that can be limited through this process, both which are valued by our members.

Delegates to a constitutional convention may not necessarily represent your interests any better than the current legislature. It is an extension of the status quo with no accountability. It is a redundant process—we don’t need a second mini legislature.

The immediate cost of a constitutional convention is likely to be from \$10 to \$41 million dollars of which is more taxpayer money being diverted from education, health care and programs that benefit families in a poor economic climate.

The Hawaii Constitution is not broken. It does not get in the way of making Hawaii a better place. There have been numerous amendments to the Constitution when needed to address problems or voter demands to take action. Although a convention may engage voters in addressing important policy issues, the outcomes can be questionable. Some results are good, some not; there are simply no guarantees.

UHPA has joined The Hawaii Alliance composed of a number of unions, non-profits, businesses and individuals that have come together to work on defeating a constitutional convention. The Alliance chair is former Governor George Ariyoshi. The group is diverse with many different perspectives. Differences have been set aside to work on this campaign to defeat a constitutional convention with everyone in agreement this is the wrong path at the wrong time.