

# Brooklyn Daily Eagle

## Conservative Party gears up for election battle

*Leaders urging voters to reject Constitutional Convention*

*By Paula Katinas*

*January 10, 2017*

The next election is still several months away, but the Conservative Party of New York State isn't wasting a minute as it prepares for political battles ahead.

The first of these skirmishes involves a referendum that New York state residents will vote on later this year on whether or not to authorize a constitutional convention.

The constitutional convention question will be on the ballot when the state's voters go to the polls on Nov. 7. If the voters approve the measure, the next step would be to elect three convention delegates from each of the state's 63 state Senate districts as well as 15 at-large delegates. That vote would take place in the November, 2018 general election.

The Constitutional Convention would take place in April of 2019.

Led by Chairman Mike Long, the executive committee of the Conservative Party voted on Jan. 7 on a resolution urging the voters to vote against the idea of New York state convening another constitutional convention. The party's headquarters is located in Bay Ridge.

Previous conventions have been nothing more than exercises in political posturing, according to Long, who lives in Bay Ridge.

"It is important for voters to understand that the history of holding constitutional con-

ventions proves they are a colossal waste of taxpayers' money that fails to accomplish what supporters claim," Long said in a statement released by the party's executive committee.

Since 1846, the New York State Constitution has mandated that voters must decide anew every 20 years if there should be a constitutional convention. The purpose of a constitutional convention is to seek to make amendments to the Constitution. Any proposed amendments would be voted on by the state's residents.

In New York state's history, constitutional conventions have taken place in 1801, 1821, 1846, 1867-1868, 1897-1873, 1894, 1915, 1938 and 1967. Residents ultimately voted against the proposals that were put forth at the 1967 convention.

In 1977 and again in 1997, the state's voters rejected the idea of holding a convention.

In their resolution, Conservative Party of New York State executive committee members wrote that "the last four constitutional conventions were a carbon copy of legislative sessions and the majority of delegates were influential legislators."

The delegates were unfairly "able to collect a salary as a delegate and a legislator," the executive committee wrote.

**The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government at the State University of New York (SUNY) teamed up with the Government Law Center at Albany Law School, the League of Women Voters of New York State and the Siena Research Institute on a**

multiyear mission to educate the public on the constitutional convention “to ensure that each of New York’s voters, made aware of this work, goes to vote with a clearer sense of what a constitutional convention could

achieve,” a statement on the institute’s website, [rockinst.org](http://rockinst.org), read.