



SENATOR
VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY



ASSEMBLYMAN
WALTER T. MOSLEY



ASSEMBLYWOMAN
JO ANNE SIMON



ASSEMBLYWOMAN
TREMAINE S. WRIGHT

sponsoring a **COMMUNITY TOWN MEETING** on the
**NEW YORK STATE
CONSTITUTIONAL
CONVENTION**

**SEPTEMBER 19TH
6 PM - 8 PM**
Lafayette Avenue
Presbyterian Church
85 South Oxford Street
Brooklyn, NY 11217
(corner of Lafayette Avenue)

PANELISTS:

Professor John Flateau, PhD
Medgar Evers College, CUNY

Michael Mulgrew
President, United Federation
of Teachers

Henry Garrido
Executive Director, DC 37,
AFSCME AFL-CIO

Jordan Marks
Campaign Manager,
New Yorkers Against
Corruption

John F. Sheehan
Director of Communications,
Adirondack Council

**Professor Helen
Hershkoff**
New York University

Adriene Holder
Attorney in Charge of
Civil Practice,
Legal Aid Society

**Pick up your copy of the
NYS Constitution!**

Light refreshments will be served.

To RSVP or for more information, contact: Jason Salmon
718-643-6140 / salmon@nysenate.gov

Co-sponsored by:



CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

What's at risk?

The New York State Constitution affords us many rights and protections that could be at risk during a Constitutional Convention such as:

SENIORS

- Protects public employee pension and retirement benefits from being “diminished or impaired”



Senator Montgomery and her neighbors celebrate the Fort Greene Council's lease renewal for 966-972 Fulton Street, home to the Grace Agard Harewood Neighborhood Senior Center, Young Minds Child Care Program and the 966 Jazz Program.

WORKER'S RIGHTS:

- Establishes eight hour work day, 5 day work week
- Requires workers be paid minimum wage
- Right to worker's compensation

UNION PROTECTIONS:

- Employees shall have the “right to organize and to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing”



Senator Montgomery meets with members of the Public Employees Federation (PEF).

PRISON PRIVATIZATION:

- Prevents private corporations from profiting off prison labor by maintaining that incarcerated persons not have their work “farmed out, contracted, given or sold to any person, firm, association or corporation”

PUBLIC EDUCATION:

- Guarantees free public education for all students of the state
- Establishes the structure for an independent New York State Education Department



Senator Montgomery meets with Community School District 16 Superintendent Rahesha Amon, Principal Anne Marie Malcolm, staff and students from Madiba Prep Middle School, MS 681.

ENVIRONMENT:

- **Forever Wild Act:** Provides that forest preserve land such as the Adirondacks and Catskills be forever maintained as wild forest

PROTECTING OUR MOST VULNERABLE NEW YORKERS:

- Requires that the state provide social welfare services because the “aid, care and support of the needy are public concerns”

CRIMINAL JUSTICE:

- Right to counsel
- A jury must be composed of 12 members for felony cases
- Security against unreasonable searches, seizures and interceptions
- Habeas corpus
- Bail; fines; punishments; detention of witnesses
- Freedom of worship; religious liberty.
- Freedom of speech and press; criminal prosecutions for libel.
- Equal protection of laws; discrimination in civil rights prohibited.

HOUSING PROTECTIONS:

- Housing and nursing home accommodations for persons of low income

Our State Constitution guarantees these and many other rights we take for granted. This is the document that protects us from the devastating trends in other states such as: right to work laws that undermine unions, prisons that resemble chain gangs, voter ID laws that suppress the vote of specific populations and forest land that is sold off to the wealthiest bidder.

What is a Constitutional Convention?

New York State's Constitution defines many of the liberties that impact our daily lives and addresses concerns not taken up by the U.S. Constitution such as free public education, social welfare protections and environmental preservation.

Our Constitution mandates that every 20 years, voters are asked, "Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the same?". **If voters say "no" our protections remain and amendments may still be added through a legislative process.**

Otherwise, the entire constitution is open to modifications up to and including a complete rewrite.

What happens during a Constitutional Convention?

The Constitutional Convention is a two year long process in which delegates are elected, rules are set, amendments are proposed and initiatives that make it to the ballot are voted on.

How are delegates elected and how do they run the Convention?

Delegates are selected based on New York Senate Districts. 3 delegates are elected from each Senate district as well as 15 "at large" delegates for the rest of the state for a total of 204 members. Elected officials are allowed to serve as delegates. **The 26 Senate Districts that represent N.Y.C. would elect 78 of the 204 delegates to the Convention.**

The political party with the most delegates controls the convention and make all of the decisions regarding the convention. They determine the rules as well as which amendments make it to the ballot for the public to vote on. **There is no guarantee that progressive proposals will make it to the ballot or that convention rules will have any consistency.**

Are there other ways to change the constitution?

The state constitution can be amended legislatively:

1. The proposed amendment is developed as a legislative statute that is reviewed by the Attorney General.
2. The proposed amendment must pass the Senate and Assembly in two consecutive legislative sessions.
3. If passed, the bills would then appear on the following November ballot as a referendum.
4. If voters pass the referendum, the constitution would be amended without jeopardizing any other part of the state constitution.

Does this actually ever happen?

The state Constitution has been amended through this process over 200 times since 1894. Most recently in 2013, voters approved allowing veterans to receive additional civil service credit to increase the employment opportunities available to them and legalized casino gambling throughout the State.

What are New Yorkers saying about the Constitutional Convention?

TIMES UNION

A Constitutional Convention stands to harm seniors

Commentary by Barry Kaufmann,
Published 5:09 pm, Tuesday, June 13, 2017

<http://www.timesunion.com/>

TIMES UNION

Farmers join push against constitutional convention

By Matthew Hamilton on August 2, 2017 at 5:04 PM

<http://blog.timesunion.com/>

AMSTERDAM NEWS

Vote 'NO' on the CON-CON con

Commentary by Gregory Floyd,
President, Teamsters Local 237
6/22/2017, 11:33 a.m.

<http://amsterdamnews.com/>

UFT

Vote "no" to a state constitutional convention

<http://www.uft.org/>

TIMES UNION

Convention not the way to fix state's problems

Letter to the Editor by
George Hebert

Published 5:22 pm, Saturday,
July 8, 2017

<http://www.timesunion.com/>

NYSUT

Why we must say NO to a state constitutional convention

FEBRUARY 2016 ISSUE

JANUARY 26, 2016

<https://www.nysut.org/>

Why are all these organizations concerned about a Constitutional Convention?

Adirondack Council • AFSCME NY • Council of Churches
• Citizen Action New York • CSEA • Environmental Advocates of New York • Equality New York • New York Farm Bureau
• New York State AFL-CIO • New York State Alliance for Retired Americans • Planned Parenthood Empire States Acts • Strong Economy for All Coalition • Working Families Party • NYSUT
• AFSCME DC37 • PEF • Coalition for Economic Justice
• Community Voices Heard • CWA District One • Food & Water Watch • LGBT Network • Make the Road New York • New York City Central Labor Council • New York Communities for Change
• New York Professional Nurses Union (NYPNU) • NYC & Vicinity District Council of Carpenters • NYS PEF Retirees • Professional Staff Congress • RWDSU • SEIU 32 BJ • Teamsters Joint Council 16 • TWU Local 100 • UFCW Local 1500 • United Steelworkers District 4 • Writers Guild of America, East



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Update from State Senator **VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY**



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New York State Constitutional Convention **COMMUNITY TOWN MEETING** SEPTEMBER 19TH • 6 PM - 8 PM Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church

This November, voters will be asked to decide if our state should convene a Constitutional Convention. The New York State Constitution predates the United States Constitution by ten years and provides greater protections for New Yorkers. This issue is of the utmost importance as **every protection granted to residents will be open for modification.**

As your State Senator, I am committed to ensuring my constituents are informed about issues and policies that affect them. This newsletter provides information on the rights guaranteed in the New York State Constitution and the Convention process to help you understand what is at stake in November. **Your vote will have wide-ranging implications for the future of our state.**

Sincerely,

Senator Velmanette Montgomery
 25th Senate District



Senator Montgomery shares Planned Parenthood's concerns about the Constitutional Convention