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BALLOT PROPOSAL
26-1

An Overview

Prepared by
Abby Schneider,
Legislative Analyst;
Joe Carrasco, Jr.,
Associate Director;
and
Bobby Canell,
Economist

Kathryn R. Summers, Director

Phone (517) 373-2768

<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/sfa>



Article XII, Section 3 of the State Constitution requires the question of a general revision of the Constitution to be submitted to the voters every 16 years, or at other times as provided by law. The question was last on the ballot in 2010 and it will again be put to voters on November 3, 2026. The proposal will appear on the ballot as follows:

Proposal 26-1

A proposal to convene a constitutional convention for the purpose of drafting a general revision of the State Constitution

Shall a convention of elected delegates be convened in 2027 to draft a general revision of the State Constitution for presentation to the State's voters for their approval or rejection?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If a majority of the electors vote "yes" on Proposal 26-1, the constitutional convention will occur.

BACKGROUND

A History of Conventions

A constitutional convention is a formal assembly called to draft a new constitution or revise an existing one. Michigan's second constitution, the State Constitution of 1850, included a requirement that the question of whether to hold a constitutional convention be automatically put to voters every 16 years, beginning in 1866. That year, voters approved the calling of a constitutional convention; however, they rejected the proposed revision the following year. The Constitution of 1850 remained in effect until voters approved a convention in 1907, which resulted in the adoption of the Constitution of 1908. The Constitution of 1908 maintained the requirement that a constitutional convention be put to voters every 16 years. Ballot proposals to call a constitutional convention failed in 1926, 1942, 1948, and 1958; however, the latter two elections showed that a majority of those voting on the question favored a new convention. Despite this, the Constitution of 1908 contained a requirement that, to call a convention, a majority of *all* those voting at the election vote "yes". Because many did not vote on the convention question, the "yes" votes still did not constitute a majority.

In 1960, a citizen initiative placed on the ballot a proposed constitutional amendment to require a convention if a majority of those voting on the question voted in favor. The amendment passed in November 1960 and the question of calling a convention was placed before the voters the following April. The question was approved and a constitutional convention was convened on October 3, 1961. That convention produced Michigan's present Constitution, which was approved by voters on April 1, 1963. Voters defeated the constitutional convention question on the 1978, 1994, and 2010 ballots.

A Constitutional Convention in 2027

If voters approved Proposal 26-1, the State would hold its first constitutional convention since 1961 in 2027. In 1961, 144 delegates met to draft a new constitution; in 2027, that number would increase to 148 (one for each of the State's 38 Senate districts and 110 House districts). Delegates likely would be elected through a partisan primary in May 2027, followed by a general election in August, using general election timelines. The Constitution requires these delegates, once elected, to convene in the State Capital on the first Tuesday in October following their election. (Accordingly, if delegates were elected in August, they would convene in Lansing on October 5, 2027.) If delegates were elected outside of general elections, there would be additional costs to run special elections.

A convention may elect officers from among its own numbers, establish its own proceedings, and establish and approve its own budget. Accordingly, a convention operates largely independently, upon appropriation; however, if a delegate resigns, the Constitution of 1963 allows the sitting Governor to appoint that delegate's successor. A successor must be from the same political party and district as the former delegate. Following the final passage of the proposed constitution, the question of whether to adopt that constitution would have to be put to voters within 90 days following the convention's final adjournment.

Views on Proposal 26-1

A number of opposing and supporting positions have been expressed by both legislators and organizations.

Michigan's current constitution, the Constitution of 1963, has remained in effect for 63 years. Accordingly, it is the State's longest-lived constitution. (The Constitution of 1835 remained in effect for 15 years, the Constitution of 1850 for 58 years, and the Constitution of 1908 for 55 years). Proposal 26-1's opponents believe that the Constitution of 1963's longevity stems from its flexibility. Citizens' ability to initiate constitutional amendments has allowed the Constitution to adapt to changing economic, political, and social conditions. As a result, opponents believe there is no need to draft a new constitution. Furthermore, some opponents believe that the constitutional convention process lacks transparency and accountability. Special interest groups and lobbyists could push delegates to propose significant changes to Michigan's Constitution and government, which could result in the reversal of previously enacted constitutional amendments.¹ Additionally, some believe that the uncertainty created by a constitutional convention could harm the State's economy. Among other areas, the convention likely would examine the State's tax structure. Proposed changes could discourage businesses from relocating to Michigan and hinder existing businesses' future planning. Lastly, a constitutional convention would not guarantee the adoption of a new constitution. If voters rejected a new or revised constitution, the State would have spent State funds on a convention without any change(s) to the existing Constitution (see **FISCAL IMPACT**).² Overall, opponents believe that Michigan should not risk a constitution that is currently working.

Generally, supporters of Proposal 26-1 believe that the current Constitution does not work. Some believe that the Constitution's governmental structure promotes corruption and lacks transparency.³ To these supporters of the ballot initiative, a constitutional convention could offer a way to reform the State's education system, budget process, or other aspects they consider inoperative. Other supporters believe that the Constitution of 1963 has become too complicated in the years since its approval.⁴ Approving a constitutional convention would allow delegates to streamline the Constitution, making it more accessible for Michiganders. Additionally, some supporters see a constitutional convention as an opportunity to overturn controversial constitutional amendments or recent initiated laws. For example, voters in Michigan have recently adopted a law governing recreational marijuana and a constitutional codification of reproductive rights. Some have suggested that a constitutional convention could be an avenue for opponents of such measures to restrict or reverse them.⁵ Overall,

¹ Burr, Alyssa, "What's at stake as Michigan voters weigh constitutional convention question", *The Michigan Independent*, April 10, 2026; "Protect MI Constitution from Special Interests and Lansing Politicians", protectmiconstitution.com. Retrieved on 9-15-2026.

² Dwyer, Dustin, "The Mids: A constitutional convention in 2026?", *Michigan Public*, August 24, 2026; "Protect MI Constitution from Special Interests and Lansing Politicians", protectmiconstitution.com. Retrieved on 9-15-2026.

³ Watkins, Tom, "A chance to reclaim your state government", *Michigan Advance*, February 26, 2026.

⁴ Roth, Andrew, "Hall, Nesbitt support convention to rewrite state constitution", *Michigan Advance*, May 30, 2025.

⁵ See, e.g., Mauger, Craig, "Exclusive: John James' running mate floats path to new abortion ban", *The Detroit News*, September 14, 2026.

supporters believe that a constitutional convention would allow delegates to rewrite and streamline the current Constitution.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact of a constitutional convention has two main components: the convention itself and the elections to select convention delegates and to ratify the proposed constitution. Since the last convention was held in 1961, costs have drastically changed. Therefore, it is difficult to estimate the costs of a convention that could be held in 2027. Accordingly, the Senate Fiscal Agency has provided three distinct analytical approaches for estimating these costs. The first reflects inflating the previous constitutional convention costs to today's dollars and the second uses the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission's (MICRC's) spending as a stand-in for a convention's cost. The third uses the Oklahoma Legislature's budget as a proxy for what a constitutional convention could spend. The SFA also presents an estimate of possible elections costs, if they were not held during regularly scheduled election dates.

Ultimately, the budget for a constitutional convention would be subject to an appropriation (or appropriations) from the Legislature. The specific amount of any appropriation likely would depend on the specific budget requests made to the Legislature from convention delegates based on the modern needs of a constitutional convention, as well as the Legislature's willingness and ability to fund all of the delegates' requests.

1961 Constitutional Convention Estimate

Proposal 26-1 could cost an estimated total of \$10.2 million based on inflating the majority of the 1961 convention's costs to today's dollars. Public Act 204 of 1958 outlines the salary provided to convention delegates. For as long as an individual works as a delegate, that individual receives \$500 twice a month, up to a maximum of \$7,500. (Public Act 204 prescribes a minimum salary of \$1,000). Accordingly, the cost to pay delegate salaries could range from \$148,000 to \$1.1 million, depending on the length of the convention. Unlike delegates' salaries, the other costs to administer a convention are highly variable, depending on need. For example, the 1961 Constitutional Convention employed over 60 support staff. Many of these staff, such as stenographers and telephone operators, would no longer be necessary; however, it is likely that a convention held in 2027 would require the hiring of clerks, legal and information technology experts, and more.

Additionally, the 1961 Constitutional Convention spent an estimated \$139,000 to rent the Lansing Civic Center for 10 months. Due to inflation, the State could face a significant but unknown cost to rent a similar building. These and other costs could be offset if the convention used State buildings, such as Heritage Hall, and State equipment, such as computers and drafting software. Holding delegate salaries at the levels prescribed by PA 204 of 1958 but adjusting all other expenses for inflation, the Constitutional Convention of 1961 would cost \$10.2 million in 2027 dollars (see below). A convention held in 2027 could cost a similar amount, depending on its length and needs. Since the length of a convention is unknown, a monthly average is provided. This estimate is \$0.85 million per month.

(The 1961 Convention's "estimated total expenditures" were calculated based on average costs through March 15, 1962. Fiscal year (FY) 2026-27 estimated costs consider Detroit Consumer Price Index inflation, while holding salaries and wages for the delegates at the maximum allowed under current law. "Post-convention estimate" is the residual spending after the 1961 Convention on wages and materials which, along with the costs during the Convention, totaled to the final cost of the Convention, at \$2,075,000.)

1961 Convention Budget	Actual Expenditures (3/31/62)	Estimated Total Expenditures (8/1/62)	Estimated Total Expenditures (2027)
Salaries and wages--delegates	\$ 864,000.00	\$ 1,080,000.00	\$ 1,110,000.00
Other salaries, wages, contractual services, supplies, materials, rent, and equipment	\$ 687,280.76	\$ 995,000.00	\$ 9,080,270.46
Equipment rental, lease, and purchase [†]	\$ 148,567.25	\$ 183,416.36	\$ 1,673,839.34
Office supplies and printed matter	\$ 58,967.64	\$ 72,799.56	\$ 664,361.46
Rental and lease of building [†]	\$ 112,607.53	\$ 139,021.64	\$ 1,268,697.60
Other contractual services	\$ 33,595.32	\$ 41,475.70	\$ 378,503.12
Postage*	\$ 8,153.31	\$ 10,065.81	\$ 91,859.62
Telephone*	\$ 6,011.84	\$ 7,422.02	\$ 67,732.66
Fees and compensation	\$ 1,983.22	\$ 2,448.42	\$ 22,344.03
Maintenance services [†]	\$ 1,664.18	\$ 2,054.54	\$ 18,749.56
Travel and subsistence	\$ 42,163.60	\$ 52,053.83	\$ 475,038.02
Educational supplies and library	\$ 1,730.50	\$ 2,136.42	\$ 19,496.75
Insurance and bond	\$ 6,440.76	\$ 7,951.56	\$ 72,565.10
Other salaries and wages [†]	\$ 254,390.30	\$ 314,062.10	\$ 2,866,099.31
Contingency fund	\$ 320.30	\$ 395.43	\$ 3,608.67
Office of public information	\$ 8,555.16	\$ 10,561.93	\$ 96,387.08
Michigan convention handbooks	\$ 2,086.60	\$ 2,576.05	\$ 23,508.77
Eisenhower fund*	\$ 43.25	\$ 53.40	\$ 487.28
Post-convention estimate	\$ -	\$ 146,505.23	\$ 1,336,992.08
Estimated Total	\$ 1,551,280.76	\$ 2,075,000.00	\$ 10,190,270.46
† If the proposed Constitutional Convention were to use State resources, such as State-owned buildings and equipment, the State could see significant cost-savings.			
* Costs not expected to be necessary for the proposed 2027 Constitutional Convention.			
Note: Using 1961-2026 Detroit, Michigan CPI (912.59%).			

Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission Estimate

To compare the costs of a more recent statewide commission, one can look at the MICRC costs for FYs 2023 and 2024. The MICRC consists of 13 commissioners and an estimated staff of six, along with contracted costs for legal services. The FY 2022-23 MICRC spending totaled roughly \$2.4 million and the FY 2023-24 MICRC spending totaled just over \$10.0 million, but \$1.8 million of that was for a settlement agreement, which should be excluded from this analysis.⁶ Litigation council costs (\$5.0 million) and Commissioners' salaries (\$1.8 million) also were removed from this calculation, leaving \$3.8 million as the amount of net operational spending that occurred over two years, or roughly \$1.9 million per year on average. The ICRC meetings included spending on legal consultation, facilities, information technology, and travel, as well as staff salaries, which remain in the analysis.

A constitutional convention would be relatively 11 times the size of the Commission in terms of delegates and estimated staff. If the MICRC operational costs averaged over 2023 and 2024 are multiplied by 11 for a comparison, and delegates' salaries (\$7,500 per year) are added in, those costs for salaries for staff and the abovementioned other costs would total roughly \$22.0 million per year. Since the length of a convention is unknown, a monthly average is provided. This estimate is \$1.8 million per month.

Legislative Estimate

The delegates of a constitutional convention and legislators share similar responsibilities and needs. Accordingly, examining the budget of a legislature could provide another lens through which to look at a constitutional convention budget. The number of staff a constitutional convention would employ currently is unknown. The Senate Fiscal Agency selected as a proxy a state with a part-time legislature comprising approximately the same number of legislators as a constitutional convention would have delegates and having a relatively low staff headcount, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.⁷ The Oklahoma

⁶ See, generally, [MICRC Quarterly Reports](#).

⁷ "Size of State Legislative Staff", NCSL. Retrieved on 9-30-26.

Legislature meets these parameters and employed 229 staff in 2021.⁸ This would provide a staffing ratio of roughly three staff (who could be hired directly or contracted as legal counsel, policy analysis, or information technology positions, as well as direct support for delegates) for every two delegates.

For FY 2025-26, the Oklahoma Legislature appropriated \$12.8 million for the Senate, \$22.8 million for the House of Representatives, and \$22.6 million for the Legislative Service Bureau.⁹ (Oklahoma's Legislative Service Bureau drafts bills, resolutions, and amendments; documents meetings; facilitates the budget process; and provides information technology support). Taken together, Oklahoma's Legislature received \$58.2 million in FY 2025-26. To reduce this number to the Oklahoma Legislature's 'operating' budget, legislator salaries must be removed. Most Oklahoma legislators earn \$72,860 a year, which includes salaries, retirement, and per diem.¹⁰ A total of 149 legislators serve in Oklahoma's State Legislature. Removing the total paid to salaries (approximately \$10.9 million) but leaving in stipends as a proxy for delegates' salaries, results in an operating budget of \$47.3 million for FY 2025-26 and a monthly budget of approximately \$3.9 million. It is possible that a constitutional convention with a similar staff size could necessitate a similar budget.

Additional Elections

Additionally, a convention held in 2027 would require the State to administer at least three elections: a primary and general election to elect convention delegates and one to vote on the proposed constitution. A statewide election costs approximately \$4,500 per voting precinct, and there are an estimated 4,500 precincts in Michigan. The estimated cost per election is \$20.3 million. Thus, if the process required three new elections and if none were held concurrently with other scheduled elections (which are generally the first Tuesday after the first Monday in May, August, and November), election expenditures could exceed \$60.9 million. However, it is likely that the elections could be held at regularly scheduled times in May and August to elect delegates and the vote to adopt the Constitution could be at the next regularly scheduled election date. If elections were held at these times, there would be no additional election costs.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Oklahoma Senate, Fiscal Impact Statement for SB 1177. Available on the Oklahoma Legislature website: <https://www.oklegislature.gov/>.

¹⁰ "Board on Legislative Compensation Presentation, Oct. 21, 2025", Legislative Compensation Board, Oklahoma Office of Management and Enterprise Services. Retrieved on 9-30-26. Some legislators in leadership positions earn additional stipends but these amounts were disregarded for the purpose of this analysis.