

philosophy under which I operate here, I should suggest that the referendum be retained as it is in the Committee Report, but that it not be made an idle or even too easy a process when we are speaking of strengthening the legislature. In essence we must also include strengthening public confidence in the legislature. I would submit, Mr. Chairman, there are many circumstances in this State in which the referendum from a very small minority is disruptive, disruptive of confidence in the legislature, disruptive in the applicability of the law, disruptive in the political process. Yet, there should be retained to the people ideally an opportunity for referendum, when there is such an outpouring that people are willing to go to central places to sign petitions.

We know in our large population centers of this State, and with our communication facilities being what they are, that these outpourings are not always as feasible as we think. Yet, because of the value of esteem and confidence in the representative body, five percent strikes me as a movement in this State for enhancing the strength, prestige and esteem of the legislature, and still reasonably and properly sustaining ultimate power of the people to act, if they feel they must, but not lightly, against the policies of the legislature.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Hutchinson.

DELEGATE HUTCHINSON: I would like to yield three minutes to Delegate Boileau.

DELEGATE BOILEAU: Mr. Chairman, fellow delegates, there has been a great deal said about the explosion of population in Maryland. I think it is very important that this point be pressed even more. Maryland is one of the fastest growing states in the union and I have heard it said a number of times that it is the fastest growing in the east.

To my way of thinking, the three percent figure that we now have is more than justified, when this population growth is taken into account.

With this growth will come an ever-increasing number of gubernatorial voters as well, and this of course will provide a larger and larger burden on those who wish to utilize the referendum process.

I think there is little need to further imbue the referendum as a real and viable method for popular involvement by Maryland voters.

I further question whether it would really be a great check on the legislative branch.

We have strengthened that branch, I think not out of proportion, and I feel, as a number of other delegates mentioned, that it is appropriate that the people have greater voice as well in the act of legislative process.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Koss?

DELEGATE KOSS: I would like to yield three minutes to Delegate Schloeder.

The CHAIRMAN: Delegate Schloeder.

DELEGATE SCHLOEDER: Mr. Chairman, I might just say to begin with that I would reject Delegate Boileau's comment that advocating five per cent would be, or was meant as a check on the legislature.

I do not think that five per cent would be in any way a misuse of referendum, but I think that three per cent would. I consider myself a strong defender and advocate of direct legislation. As a matter of fact, I shortly will join in a minority report supporting direct initiative, which is a companion piece of direct legislation. But I think that 5 per cent puts a real premium on sincere citizen concern, rather than on fast organization, and that a lower 3 per cent with lobbyists representing special economic groups subverts the will of the people, as exhibited through their elected representatives.

I think that the Committee has already been generous in allowing more time to gather signatures than is presently allowed, or may presently be allowed in the 1867 Constitution. I think that this is an indication of the Committee's attempt to relax restrictions, and in short, I think that the lowering of the percentage to three per cent would shift the availability of referendum from a popular movement toward the special economic interest groups, and for that reason I would suggest that you vote against this amendment.

Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Hutchinson.

DELEGATE HUTCHINSON: I have no one else, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Koss?

DELEGATE KOSS: I would like to yield the remainder of my time to Delegate Cardin.