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The 1787 Philadelphia Convention was NOT a “Runaway Convention”

Norman Bobo · Thursday, November 9, 2017

There is a myth that the highly revered 1787 United States Constitution was the result of a “run away” 1787 Philadelphia convention conducted by dishonorable men who ignored the limits of their instructions from the Confederation Congress. A cursory look at the original documents (linked in this article) shows the exact opposite -- that the 1787 Constitution was written by honorable men who followed the instructions given them -- by the state legislatures, not Congress.

Lovers of a larger centralized federal government popularized the myth in the 60's and 70's in an effective effort to stop Article V conventions. (details: <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/the-judiciary/332172-how-progressives-promoted-the-runaway-convention-myth-to>) Well-meaning conservatives, without doing their own research, accepted the myth, and a movement quickly grew to “defend, not amend” the constitution -- to protect the Constitution from potential “runaway” Article V conventions. (Anti-Article V convention efforts have had the opposite effect of what the conservatives sought to accomplish. Instead of protecting the original intent of the 1787 Constitution, anti-Article V efforts have allowed the original intent of the 1787 Constitution to become even more mangled by false federal court interpretations. The federal government has continued to grow without bounds under those growing false interpretations. Those false interpretations can be found in our current constitution, the “Annotated Constitution” -- but that’s another article.)

Here is how the “runaway convention” logic goes:

1. The Continental Congress supposedly called the 1787 Philadelphia Convention.
2. The Congress supposedly limited that convention to "solely amending the Articles of Confederation", according to a misconstrued interpretation of a February 21, 1787 letter from Congress to the States.
3. The men who attended the convention supposedly acted dishonorably by ignoring the supposed instructions from Congress by writing a new Constitution.

If you accept the premises, it’s easy to falsely conclude that the 1787 convention was a "runaway convention". You can then further jump to the false conclusion that Congress controls all interstate conventions, not the states, and thus an Article V convention would also "run away" and write new a new constitution.

Even a cursory examination of the premises, however, shows that they are false. The entire stream of logic is a house of cards and the conclusion that the 1787 convention "ran away" should be seen for what it is -- a ludicrous myth.

This article lays out the truth, giving links to original documents in the order in which the events actually occurred with quotes directly from those documents. This article shows when and how the concept of the the Philadelphia convention originated, how the states joined the effort, who actually authorized the commissioners to attend the convention, and what instructions were given to those commissioners regarding the scope of their work.

*** 1). The idea of the Philadelphia convention, and the original scope/purpose of the convention, originated in the Annapolis Convention of September 11 -13, 1786, not in Congress.

The Annapolis Convention was titled "A Meeting of Commissioners to Remedy the Defects of the Federal Government". It issued a short journal and a letter to all of the state legislatures and the Confederation Congress. Here's a link to that letter:

https://histcsac.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/281/2017/07/delegate_inst1.pdf. Here is some key language out of that letter:

"Under this impression, Your Commissioners, with the most respectful deference, beg leave to suggest their unanimous conviction, that it may essentially tend to advance the interests of the union, if the States, by whom they have been respectively delegated, would themselves concur, and use their endeavours[sic] to procure the concurrence of the other States, in the appointment of Commissioners, to meet at Philadelphia on the second Monday in May next, to take into consideration the situation of the United States, to devise such further provisions as shall appear to them necessary to render the constitution of the Federal Government adequate to the exigencies of the Union; and to report such an Act for that purpose to the United States in Congress assembled, as when agreed to, by them, and afterwards confirmed by the Legislatures of every State, will effectually provide for the same."

Note the key language "devise further provisions as shall appear to them necessary to render the constitution of the Federal Government adequate to the exigencies of the Union". That language would appear in the resolutions of other states, as you will see.

Please note that the word "constitution" had a different meaning to the Framers than it does to us. To them, "constitution" meant "system", not a piece of paper. You can glean that from the entire letter from Annapolis. To us, it means the document first created in 1787, amended -- and also wildly misinterpreted today.

*** 2) Virginia, not Congress, called for the 1787 Philadelphia Convention, on November 23, 1786.

Virginia was the first state to respond to the Annapolis letter, thus they called for the

convention, not Congress. Here is the link to the full resolution:

https://histcsac.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/281/2017/07/delegate_inst2.pdf. Here are two key sections from that resolution:

"WHEREAS the Commissioners who assembled at Annapolis, on the fourteenth of September last, for the purpose of devising and reporting the means of enabling Congress to provide effectually for the Commercial Interest of the United States, have represented the necessity of extending the revision of the foederal [sic] system to all its defects; and have recommended, that Deputies for that purpose be appointed by the several Legislatures to meet in convention in the city of Philadelphia, on the second day of May next; ...

"BE it therefore enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, That seven Commissioners be appointed by joint ballot of both Houses of Assembly...to join with [deputies from other states in] devising and discussing all such alterations and farther provisions, as may be necessary to render the foederal [sic] Constitution, adequate to the exigencies of the Union, and in reporting such an act for that purpose, to the United States in Congress, as when agreed to by them, and duly confirmed by the several states, will effectually provide for the same."

Note the reference to "all the defects" of the "federal system" and "all such alterations and farther provisions" and, most importantly, to "render the federal system adequate to the exigencies of the Union" -- the exact language of the letter from the Annapolis Convention.

*** 3) Six more states (NJ, PA, NC, NH, DE and GA) all responded to Virginia's call before Congress ever got involved. All of the resolutions which commissioned delegations to attend the convention, virtually quote the language from the Annapolis letter.

Here are the six states, the dates, links to the resolutions and key sections:

NJ: Nov. 24, 1786. https://histcsac.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/281/2017/07/delegate_inst3.pdf

"[commissioners] hereby are authorized and empowered to meet such commissioners as have been or may be appointed by the other states in the Union at the city of Philadelphia, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, on the second Monday in May next, for the purpose of taking into consideration the state of the Union as to trade and other important objects, and of Devising such further provisions as shall appear necessary to render the Constitution of the Federal government adequate to the exigencies thereof."

PA: Dec. 30, 1786. https://histcsac.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/281/2017/07/delegate_inst4.pdf

"...revising the Foederal [sic] Constitution, for the purpose of making such alterations and amendments as the exigencies of our public affairs require: And whereas the Legislature of the state of Virginia have already passed an act of that Commonwealth, empowering

[sic] certain commissioners to meet at the city of Philadelphia, in May next, a convention of commissioners, or deputies, from the different states; and the Legislature of this state are fully sensible of the important advantages ... [therefore] it is hereby enacted by the Representatives of the Freemen of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in General Assembly, and by the authority of the same ... to join with them in devising, deliberating on and discussing all such alterations and further provisions as may be necessary to render the foederal [sic] constitution fully adequate to the exigencies of the Union; and in reporting such act or acts for that purpose, to the United States in Congress assembled, as when agreed to by them, and duly confirmed by the several states, will effectually provide for the same."

NC: Jan. 6, 1787. https://histcsac.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/281/2017/07/delegate_inst5.pdf

"Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly of the state of North Carolina, and by the authority of the same, That five Commissioners be appointed by joint ballot of both Houses of Assembly, who, or any three of them, are hereby authorised [sic] as Deputies from this state, to meet at Philadelphia on the first day of May next, then and there to meet and confer with such Deputies as may be appointed by the other states for similar purposes, and with them to discuss and decide upon the most effectual means to remove the defects of our foederal [sic] union, and to procure the enlarged purposes which it was intended to effect, and that they report such an act to the General Assembly of this state, as when agreed to by them, will effectually provide for the same."

NH: Jan 17, 1787. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr20-0046>

"Resolved, That any two of the Delegates of this State to the Congress of the United States be, and hereby are appointed as Deputies from this State in the Union, to assemble in Convention at Philadelphia on the Second day of May next, and to join with them in devising and discussing all such alterations and further provisions, as to render the Federal Constitution adequate to the Exigencies of the Union, and reporting such an Act to the United States in Congress, as when agreed to by them and duly confirmed by the several States, will effectually provide for the same."

DE: February 3, 1787. https://histcsac.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/281/2017/07/delegate_inst6.pdf

"Whereas the General Assembly of this State are fully convinced of the Necessity of revising the Foederal Constitution, and adding thereto such further Provisions as may render the same more adequate to the Exigencies of the Union; and whereas the Legislature of Virginia have already passed an Act of that Commonwealth, appointing and authorizing certain Commissioners to meet, at the City of Philadelphia, in May next, a Convention of Commissioners or Deputies from the different States: And this State being willing and desirous of cooperating with the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the other States in the Confederation, in so useful a Design;"

"BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED by the General Assembly of Delaware, That [five names], are hereby appointed Deputies from this State to meet in the Convention of the Deputies of

other States, to be held at the City of Philadelphia on the Second Day of May next. And the said [five names], or any Three of them, are hereby constituted and appointed Deputies from this State, with Powers to meet such Deputies as may be appointed and authorized by the other States to assemble in the said Convention at the City aforesaid, and to join with them in devising, deliberating on, and discussing, such Alterations and further Provisions, as may be necessary to render the Foederal Constitution adequate to the Exigencies of the Union; and in reporting such Act or Acts for that Purpose to the United States in Congress assembled, as when agreed to by them, and duly confirmed by the several States, may effectually provide for the same."

GA: Feb. 10, 1787. https://histcsac.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/281/2017/07/delegate_inst7.pdf

"Be it ordained by the Representatives of the Freemen of the State of Georgia, in General Assembly met, and by the authority of the same, That [6 names] be, and they are hereby appointed commissioners, who, or any two or more of them, are hereby authorised [sic] as deputies from this state to meet such deputies as may be appointed and authorised [sic] by other states, to assemble in convention at Philadelphia, and to join with them in devising and discussing all such alterations and farther provisions, as may be necessary to render the federal constitution adequate to the exigencies of the union, and in reporting such an Act for that purpose to the United States in Congress assembled, as when agreed to by them, and duly confirmed by the several states, will effectually provide for the same."

*** 4). A committee in Congress "strongly recommends" participation by all of the states.

The committee in Congress that took up the letter from Annapolis did not issue a report until February 19, 1787. Madison stated that the committee, "after considerable difficulty and discussion, agreed on a report by a majority of one". The full report is given on pages 82-83 of this document: http://www.constitution.org/uslaw/cong/32_journals_continental_congress.pdf. The operative section is as follows:

"Congress having had under consideration the letter of John Dickinson esq - chairman of the Commissioners who assembled at Annapolis during the last year also the proceedings of the said commissioners and entirely coinciding with them as to the inefficiency of the federal government and the necessity of devising such farther provisions as shall render the same adequate to the exigencies of the Union do strongly recommend to the different legislatures to send forward delegates to meet the proposed convention on the second Monday in May next at the city of Philadelphia."

Note the language "do strongly RECOMMEND". The word "strongly" was used at this point. However, it was still a recommendation. This was not the wording of a Congress that claimed authorization to command that the states convene in a convention nor a Congress that claimed the power to limit the topic of that convention. Further, this report did not have the language about solely amending the Articles of Confederation. That was a compromise added later in the full Congress, discussed below.

*** 5) On February 21, 1797, Congress took up the committee report. New York proposed the following alternative language, which was rejected by the Congress:

"The delegates for the state of New York thereupon laid before Congress Instructions which they had received from their constituents and in pursuance of the said instructions moved to postpone the farther consideration of the report in order to take up the following proposition to wit:

"That it be recommended to the States composing the Union that a convention of representatives from the said states respectively be held at _____ on _____ for the purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation and perpetual Union between the United States of America and reporting to the United States in Congress assembled and to the States respectively such alterations and amendments of the said Articles of Confederation as the representatives met in such convention shall judge proper and necessary to render them adequate to the preservation and support of the Union."

Note how this version was still a RECOMMENDATION. Also note that this language was CLEARLY limited to only amending the Articles of Confederation -- but that language was rejected and later watered down.

Notice also that the location and date were left blank. James Madison believed that the entire affair was an attempt by New York to thwart the convention which had already been called by seven states. If Congress recommended a different date or location, the whole proposed convention could have been thrown into disarray. Madison wrote: "There was reason to believe however from the language of the instruction from New York that her object was to obtain a new convention, under the sanction of Congress rather than to accede to the one on foot, or perhaps by dividing the plans of the states in their appointments to frustrate all of them." (see https://histcsac.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/281/2017/07/delegate_inst9.pdf)

The final resolution passed by Congress was a mix of what New York wanted and the original committee report, as discussed below.

*** 6). After the NY proposal was rejected, Massachusetts, who agreed with New York, proposed another version which was amended and then adopted by Congress.

This portion of the debate can be found on pages 83-84 of this document:

http://www.constitution.org/uslaw/cont-cong/32_journals_continental_congress.pdf. The resolution which passed is as follows:

"Whereas there is provision in the Articles of Confederation and perpetual Union for making alterations therein by the Assent of a Congress of the United States and of the legislatures of the several States; And whereas experience hath evinced that there are defects in the present Confederation, as a mean to remedy which several of the states and particularly the state of New York by express instructions to their delegates in Congress have suggested a Convention for the purposes expressed in the following resolution and such Convention appearing to be the most probable mean of establishing

in these states a firm national government. Resolved that in the opinion of Congress it is expedient that on the second Monday in May next a Convention of delegates who shall have been appointed by the several States be held at Philadelphia for the sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation and reporting to Congress and the several legislatures such alterations and provisions therein as shall when agreed to in Congress and confirmed by the States render the federal Constitution adequate to the exigencies of Government and the preservation of the Union."

New York and Massachusetts got what they wanted -- some language saying that the convention should consider only amending the Articles of Confederation. But notice that it is a watered down version of the rejected New York proposal. Notice also that some of the wording of the Annapolis letter remained in the language: "to render the federal Constitution adequate to the exigencies ...".

Notice also that Congress picked the same date and location proposed by the Annapolis convention, the date agreed to on the original committee report -- and the same location and date as the other seven states who had already called for a convention. In other words, it was, in effect, "the states should agree to meet as originally proposed at Annapolis".

It was not even a "recommendation" any more. It was now just an "opinion".

This was a classic compromise in a political body. It was neither side and it was both sides at the same time. In the end, the letter was an "opinion" of Congress that it would be "expedient". This is clearly not written a "directive" or an "authorization" for the states to attend a convention nor did it give "permission" to the states. It only stated that Congress was in favor of the convention. It was a suggestion that the states take action.

But the most telling part about the letter was how the states who had not already joined in the convention responded to the letter, as discussed a little later.

*** 7) The Confederate Congress had NO power under the Articles of Confederation to call a convention.

Why did Congress issue an opinion and not a command? Why was it a resolution and not an "Act"? Because they had no authority to call a convention under the Articles of Confederation. They had no authority to "Act". They simply passed a resolution offering an opinion to the States. This is hardly what some would have you believe -- a "call" by Congress, supposedly telling the states, or giving permission for the states, to conduct a convention. Seven states had already done so without the permission of Congress. Clearly such permission was not needed. This letter was merely an opinion. It did have the effect of "breaking the ice" in some states who were still considering whether to attend, but it was not either permission or authorization.

***8) The States DID have the power to call a convention under Article 2 of the Articles of Confederation.

Article 2 of the Articles of Confederation stated: "Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every power, jurisdiction, and right, which is not by this Confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled."

The States saw themselves as sovereign countries under the Articles of Confederation. (Technically, the States still are sovereign under the 1787 Constitution, but this fact is no longer taught in the schools nor discussed in the media.) The States had the power to call the Philadelphia convention. In fact, they called for 11 conventions in the 11 years between 1776 and 1787. Did they ask Congress before calling those conventions? No, they did not. Most importantly, they did not ask the permission of Congress to conduct the Annapolis Convention where the idea of the Philadelphia Convention first occurred.

*** 9) As you might expect, the New York and Massachusetts legislatures quickly passed resolutions authorizing their commissioners to attend, but limiting them to "sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation".

NY: Feb. 28, 1787. https://histcsac.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/281/2017/07/delegate_inst10.pdf

"Resolved ... That three delegates be appointed on the part of this state, to meet such delegates as may be appointed on the part of the other states respectively, on the second Monday in May next at Philadelphia for the sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Confederation, and reporting to Congress and to the several legislatures such alterations and provisions therein as shall when agreed to in Congress and confirmed by the several states, render the federal constitution adequate to the exigencies of government and the preservation of the Union; and that in case of such concurrence the two houses of the legislature will on Tuesday next, proceed to nominate and appoint the said delegates in like manner as is directed by the constitution of this state, for nominating and appointing delegates to Congress."

MA: Mar 7, 1787. https://histcsac.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/281/2017/07/delegate_inst11.pdf

"Whereas Congress did on the 21st day of February 1787 Resolve, "that in the opinion of Congress it is expedient that on the second monday in May next a Convention of Delegates who shall have been appointed by the several States to be held at Philadelphia, for the sole & express purpose of revising the articles of Confederation, and reporting to Congress & the several Legislatures, such alterations & provisions therein, as shall when agreed to in Congress, and confirmed by the States, render the federal Constitution adequate to the exigencies of Government; & the preservation of the Union.

"And it is further Resolved, that the Said Delegates on the part of this Commonwealth be, and they are hereby instructed not to accede to any alterations or additions that may be proposed to be made in the present Articles of Confederation, which may appear to them, not to consist with the true republican Spirit and Genius of the Said Confederation: and particularly that they by no means interfere with the fifth of the Said Articles which

provides, "for the annual election of Delegates in Congress, with a power reserved to each State to recall its Delegates, or any of them within the Year & to send others in their stead for the remainder of the year.

"And which also provides, that no person shall be capable of being a Delegate for more than three years in any term of six years, or being a Delegate shall be capable of holding any Office under the United States for which he or any other for his benefit, receives any salary, fees, or emolument of any kind".

*** 10) Three more states (SC, CT and MD) joined the convention -- using primarily the language of the Annapolis convention ("meet the exigencies"), not the language from the Feb. 21 letter from Congress ("revise the Articles").

SC: Mar 8, 1787. https://histcsac.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/281/2017/07/delegate_inst12.pdf

"Be it enacted by the ... general assembly, and by the authority of the same, THAT five commissioners be forthwith appointed ..., who or any three or more of them, ... by virtue of this act shall be and are hereby authorised [sic] as deputies from this state to meet such deputies or commissioners as may be appointed and authorised [sic] by other of the united states, to assemble in convention at the city of Philadelphia in the month of May next ... and to join with such deputies or commissioners ... in devising and discussing all such alterations, clauses, articles and provisions as may be thought necessary to render the foederal [sic] constitution entirely adequate to the actual situation and future good government of the confederated states, and that the said ... do join in reporting such an act to the united states in congress assembled, as when approved and agreed to by them, and duly ratified and confirmed by the several states, will effectually provide for the exigencies of the union."

CT: May 17, 1787. https://histcsac.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/281/2017/07/delegate_inst13.pdf

Note that the convention was scheduled to have started by this date, but had not actually started as a quorum of states had not yet gathered in Philadelphia.

"Be it enacted by the Governor Council & Representatives in General Court assembled, and by Authority of the same— That [three names] be, and they hereby are, appointed Delegates to attend the sd Convention, and are requested to proceed to the City of Philadelphia for that Purpose, without Delay, and the said Delegates, ... are hereby authorized and impowered [sic] to represent this State therein, & to confer with such Delegates appointed by the several States, for the Purposes mentioned in the sd Act of Congress, that may be present and duly empowered to act in said Convention, and to discuss upon such Alterations and Provisions, agreeable to the general Principles of Republican Government, as they shall think proper, to render the foederal [sic] Constitution adequate to the Exigencies of Government, and the Preservation of the Union; and they are further directed, pursuant to the said Act of Congress, to report such

Alterations and Provisions, as may be agreed to, by a Majority of the united States represented in Convention, to the Congress of the United States, and to the General Assembly of this State."

The Connecticut resolution discusses the Act of Congress in the "whereas" clause. Any lawyer will tell you, though, that the "therefore" is the controlling part of a resolution. Even though the "whereas" section of this resolution included the language "sole and express purpose of amending the Articles of Confederation", the "Be it enacted" section of the resolution specifically did NOT include that language. In fact, the operative words in the "Be it enacted" section used the wording much closer to the Annapolis letter, wording already used by nine other states at this point. But it is admitted that the SC resolution is not as clear cut on this question as the other nine states.

MD: May 26, 1787. https://histcsac.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/281/2017/07/delegate_inst14.pdf

"Be it enacted, by the general assembly of Maryland, That [five names] be appointed and authorised [sic], on behalf of this state, to meet such deputies as may be appointed and authorised [sic] by any other of the United States to assemble in convention at Philadelphia, for the purpose of revising the federal system, and to join with them in considering such alterations, and further provisions, as may be necessary to render the federal constitution adequate to the exigencies of the union, and in reporting such an act for that purpose to the United States in congress assembled, as, when agreed to by them, and duly confirmed by the several states, will effectually provide for the same; and the said deputies, or such of them as shall attend the said convention, shall have full power to represent this state for the purposes aforesaid; and the said deputies are hereby directed to report the proceedings of the said convention, and any act agreed to therein, to the next session of the general assembly of this state."

*** 11) All 12 of the states who sent commissioners sent them by the authority of the state legislature, not Congress.

Every one of the commissions claimed that it was the State Legislature who had the authority to send, and instruct, the commissioners from each State. They were NOT sent by the authority of Congress, but by the states.

*** 12) Summary of the facts so far:

a) The states had been calling for conventions prior to the 1787 convention. This was one of their reserved sovereign powers. In fact, the conclusion that must be reached is that the 1787 convention was NOT executed under the power of the Articles of Confederation, but rather completely outside of them.

b) The Annapolis Convention, not Congress, started the process, suggesting the language "render the federal constitution adequate to the exigencies of the nation".

c) Virginia was the first state to call for the convention, using the language from Annapolis.

d) 6 other states joined Virginia BEFORE the Feb. 21, 1787 letter from Congress. All six used the language from Annapolis. They did so without even a whisper from Congress. They did not ask for permission from Congress -- as they did not need their permission.

e) The Feb. 21 letter from Congress was an "opinion"

f) The Feb. 21 letter from Congress contained a mix of language regarding the scope of the convention -- it was unclear.

g) After the Feb. 21 letter, only two states used the language, "sole and express purpose of amending the Articles of Confederation", which was their prerogative.

h) After the Feb. 21 letter, three states sent commissioners using the broader language of the Annapolis Convention. This shows that the letter from Congress did NOT control the scope of the convention -- the letter was, after all, only an "opinion".

i) The seven states who had called for the convention prior to the February 21, 1787 letter from Congress did not go back and change their resolutions after the letter was issued. They, too, in effect, ignored the letter from Congress and the "supposed" limitation on "sole and express purpose of amending the Articles of Confederation". They understood that letter for what it was -- an opinion.

j) All 12 of the state legislatures claimed the authority to commission and instruct their commissioners.

k) Congress had no power to call a convention under the Articles of Confederation, much less control the topic of a convention.

Each of the facts above is, on its own, enough to bust the myth that Congress called the 1787 convention. When you add them all up, it is abundantly clear that the state legislatures, not Congress, "called" the Philadelphia convention. Ten of the states used the language of the Annapolis Convention, "render the federal constitution adequate to the exigencies of the Union". Only two of the states limited their commissioners to "sole and express purpose of amending the Articles of Confederation".

Does this conclusion fit with the events during and after the convention? Absolutely.

*** 13) During the convention, the two states were simply outvoted by the ten states.

There was some discussion at the convention regarding the letter from Congress and the commissions from the states. If you have a bias towards the "runaway convention" concept, it is possible to "proof text" some passages from the journals and notes of the convention to say that the convention was limited to the "sole and express purpose of amending the Articles of Confederation". But if you read those same passages while keeping in mind the clear evidences listed above (that the states and not Congress, called the convention), those passages take on the opposite meaning.

In the end, after being outvoted, the New York and Massachusetts delegations disbanded (though some commissioners remained, they stopped voting as a state). In the end, the ten states completed the work of drafting the constitution -- well within their instructions to "render the federal constitution adequate to the exigencies of the nation."

*** 14) After the convention, Congress did NOT censure the convention. Rather, Congress voted to send the new constitution to the states.

If Congress were really in charge of the convention and really had the power to limit the topic of the convention, they would have censured the commissioners and rejected the results of their work. They did neither. Rather, they sent the results of the convention to the states for ratification.

*** 15) After the convention, not a single state legislature chastised their commissioners for exceeding their commissions.

If the state legislatures were not happy with the results, they would have rejected them. Instead, the state legislatures called for ratification conventions.

*** 16) The clear conclusion -- Myth busted!

Once you see the sequence of events and read the actual resolutions and journals, piece together all of the history prior to, during and after the convention, it is clear that the Philadelphia Convention accomplished what ten of the state legislatures intended for it to do -- "render the federal constitution adequate to the exigencies of the nation". It was conducted by honorable men who created one of the greatest man-made governing documents in the history of man. In fact, of the close to 40 interstate conventions in the history of our country (including the colonial period), there has NEVER been a runaway convention. We can now say the myth which has been propagated for decades is -- BUSTED!

(Note: This myth is pervasive. Almost all scholarly literature on the 1787 Philadelphia convention, even the University of Wisconsin website where many of the links in this article point, states that Congress called the convention and limited the topic. This myth has been spread for decades and it will probably take many years for all of those sites to be updated as the authors slowly learn the truth.)