

nority of the committee. They demanded the immediate enactment of a law authorizing the vote of the people to be taken upon the question of a convention. After considerable opposition, the bill reported by the majority of the committee, but slightly amended, was passed by the House by a vote of forty-three to thirty-five; and the Senate without amendment or debate, except to a question of postponement, passed the bill by a vote of eleven to seven. The representatives from the following counties voted unanimously to submit the bill to popular vote: Baltimore, Harford, Cecil, Talbot, Frederick, Washington, Allegany, Carroll and Baltimore City. The counties of St. Mary's, Calvert, Charles, Dorchester, Queen Anne's, Worcester and Kent voted unanimously against the bill. The remaining counties were divided in their vote.³⁶ The *Baltimore Sun* of May 7, 1850, in an editorial states "That it was not until the popular sentiment turned very decidedly towards a convention independent of the legislature, that the convention was granted; and so decisively had this purpose taken hold of the popular mind that there was some disappointment when the Senate passed the bill."

The convention was to have complete power of framing a new constitution, except that it was prohibited from changing the relation of master and slave as then established and sanctioned by the constitution. The act also provided that the new constitution should be submitted to the people for their ratification or rejection on the first Wednesday in June, 1851. The representation in the convention to be the same as each county and the city of Baltimore then had in both branches of the legislature.³⁷

The reform party did not rest with their success in the legislature, but endeavored to secure the adoption of the measure by the people. In Baltimore City a large meeting was held without distinction of party on the 18th of April. Addresses were made by several prominent reformers,

³⁶ House Journal, February 16, 1850.

³⁷ Act 1849, ch. 346.