

But the Constitution had been formed and passed in an irregular and unsatisfactory manner, and was unpopular with a large number of the people, who demanded a more just and more modern instrument. In fact, there had already been several movements for a Constitutional Convention, notably in 1858, when the Legislature ordered a vote on the question of a new Constitution, and made provision for a convention in case the people were favorable, but there was a majority of over 8000 against it.<sup>14</sup> Later, the Legislature of 1862 made a strong move in this direction. During the special session in the fall of 1861 permission was, on December 11, granted the Senate "Committee on Judicial Procedure" to report a bill for taking the sense of the people on calling a Constitutional Convention. The bill was reported during the regular session on January 20, 1862, and passed its third reading on February 14. The House of Delegates amended the Senate bill, and passed it during the night of the last day of the session (March 10), seemingly returning it too late for any further action by the Senate, as we have no subsequent record of the bill.<sup>15</sup>

The radical wing of the Union party in the state had been sharp enough to see the advantage of combining the emancipation sentiment with this dissatisfaction with the State Constitution, and instead of favoring an amendment, declared for a new Constitution in a convention in Baltimore on May 28, 1862, composed of delegates from Union ward-meetings.<sup>16</sup> They carried this move further in the summer of 1863, when they formed a new political party, known as the "Unconditional Union," which embodied the idea among its principles.

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<sup>14</sup> Governor's Message, House Documents, 1864. Schmeckebier, "Know Nothing Party in Maryland," 94-6. (J. H. U. Studies, series xvii, 238-40.)

<sup>15</sup> Senate Journal (1861-2), 20, 127, 250. House Journal, 474, 894-7, Deb. 1, 581.

<sup>16</sup> Nicolay and Hay, viii, 455.