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News Coverage on Convention

Live At 1 P.M: Bill Samuels To Discuss Reforms To State Constitution

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Bill Samuels, the chairman of the New Roosevelt Foundation, will be our guest in the Gannett Albany Bureau studio today at 1 p.m. to discuss a new initiative, the Citizens' Committee for an Effective Constitution, that will push for reforms to the state Constitution.

Samuels led an effort in 2010 to elect reform-minded Democrats to the state Senate. The group helped defeat scandal-plagued Sen. Pedro Espada, D-Bronx, in the Democratic primary that year.

Now Samuels, son of the late businessman Howard Samuels, who lost the Democratic primary in 1974 to Hugh Carey, is turning his sights on changing the state Constitution. He has started a new group, [Citizens' Committee for an Effective Constitution](#) ^[4], to push for constitutional changes.

Samuels has teamed up with Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb, R-Canandaigua, and SUNY New Paltz professor Gerald Benjamin to push the effort.

The new website lets people review changes that could be made to the state constitution—such as legalizing gambling and reforming campaign finance laws—and shows how parts of the constitution are outdated.

The last constitutional convention was in 1967, and subsequent attempts to hold one have failed. The last time the state Constitution was changed through a convention was in 1938.

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