

# Japan and Constitutional change: Leading scholars launch group against revising Article 96

Monday 3 June 2013, by [Kyodo News](#), [Mainichi Shimbun](#) (Date first published: 24 May 2013).

## Leading scholars launch group against revising Constitution's Article 96

A group of 36 professors of constitutional law and other prominent scholars have launched an organization advocating against the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's move to amend Article 96 of the Constitution.

The group, called "96-jo no kai" (Article 96 Association), has both supporters and opponents of constitutional amendments among its members. The group is specifically opposed to amending Article 96 to make it easier for the Diet to initiate constitutional revisions.

Group chairman Yoichi Higuchi, professor emeritus at the University of Tokyo, and other founders held a press conference at the Diet on May 23 to mark the inauguration of the group.

"We'd like to assemble people from all walks of life, regardless of whether they are supporters of the current Constitution or advocates of constitutional amendments, and arouse public opinion over the issue," Jiro Yamaguchi, professor at Hokkaido University, told reporters.

The group is planning to hold a symposium and other events ahead of this summer's House of Councillors election. Members of the "Article 9 Association," which is known as a staunch opponent of the move to revise the Constitution's war-renouncing Article 9, have also joined the group.

Keio University professor Setsu Kobayashi, an advocate of constitutional revisions and one of the founders of the Article 96 Association, criticized the move to change Article 96, calling it "a destruction of the Constitution."

"Revising Article 96 undermines the premises of my cherished arguments," he said.

*Mainichi Shimbun*, May 24, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20130524p2a00m0na009000c.html>

---

## LDP to drop Article 96 revision from upper house election pledges

TOKYO (Kyodo) — The ruling Liberal Democratic Party has decided not to include revising Article 96 of the Constitution in its campaign pledges for the upcoming upper house election, senior party officials said Thursday.

It will still pledge to seek to change the process for amending the Constitution.

Article 96 states that any initiative to amend the Constitution must be supported by at least two-thirds of members of each house of parliament. The LDP seeks to ease the requirement to a majority vote.

Although eager to revise Article 96 first, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has endorsed the plan to drop its revision from the LDP's campaign pledges for the House of Councillors election expected in July, according to the officials.

The LDP will still seek at some point to revise Article 96, as well as other sections of the Constitution, the officials said.

The LDP's coalition partner, New Komeito party, remains cautious about revising Article 96, which is believed to be a reason for the LDP's decision not to seek the revision at least for the upper house election.

**Kyodo News**, May 24, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20130524p2g00m0dm045000c.html>

---