

## PREFACE

This booklet presents to the citizens of Maryland the Constitution adopted by the Constitutional Convention of Maryland. Signed by delegates to the Convention on January 10, 1968, the document will be submitted to Maryland voters for ratification on May 14, 1968. At this election Marylanders will decide whether to substitute this new Constitution for our present Constitution. Believing that the citizens of Maryland should have full opportunity to study the new Constitution carefully and to compare it with the old Constitution before voting on May 14, the Convention directed that this booklet be prepared and distributed.

The decision facing Maryland voters is of momentous importance because it involves the basic document which establishes the form of the government that will serve and protect the citizens of this State. A constitution defines the relationship between the people and their government in addition to providing the structure and organization of the government. It also guarantees certain fundamental rights to the people and provides them with the means to change the structure of the government if they so desire. A constitution is thus often referred to as the basic law, in contrast to the kind of detailed laws that are passed by a legislative body. The crucial test of a consti-

tution is not its age, but whether the government which it creates is able to solve the problems which society faces. The question before Marylanders on May 14 is which constitution, the present one adopted in 1867 or the one just adopted by the Constitutional Convention, will best serve and protect present as well as future generations of Marylanders.

Our present Constitution, adopted over 100 years ago, was written immediately after the Civil War when sharp differences among Marylanders were still very real. Maryland at that time had an agricultural economy and was rural in environment. Her citizens were not confronted with problems created in this century by rapid population growth and urbanization. Not only were the problems of a century ago less complex, but citizens then had a quite different attitude toward the role of government. Today we look to the government for services such as air and water pollution control, land use regulation, urban renewal and recreational facilities, but the citizens of 1867 subscribed to the predominant 19th century political philosophy that the best government was that which governed least. The 203 amendments which have been made to our present Constitution since 1867 demonstrate the inability of our state