

Federal Balanced Budget Amendment

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The growing national debt, precipitated by decades of deficit spending by Congress, is the primary reasoning for a Constitutional Amendment requiring a balanced federal budget.

If a poll were conducted on this simple concept one could easily predict landslide favoritism for such passage. However, if each voting American were to grasp the ramifications of, "where the buck stops," then such a poll might yield very unfavorable results.

Congress has three basic choices at its disposal regarding spending:

- 1) they can cut it;
- 2) they can raise tax revenues to pay for it, or;
- 3) they can pass the issue off to the localized governments to deal with.

A fourth choice is to spend money not budgeted and add it on to the national debt. This idea of political procrastination has led to our current debt of over 10.5 trillion dollars and current budgets which include interest payments of nearly 2/3 of the total annual government expenditure.

Many states have balanced budget amendments, but they each have four choices because they can always lobby Congress for more money. A federal balanced budget amendment would make it far more difficult for states to pass the buck, up to Washington. Increased responsibility by localized government for their own needs will, I believe, be a major stumbling block to any national initiative. For this reason, that is exactly where we need to begin!

Localized citizen governments are responsible for spending local taxation dollars, within budgetary limits, as well as effectively managing allocation of statehouse and congressional contributions.

We must take the realistic message and mission of a federal balanced budget amendment to every mayor's office, village and city council chamber, township trustee's hall, public school board, and county commissioner's office in each state that has not passed a resolution for passage. Every level of local government affiliates with a statewide association of some type. Such associations must be brought on board with our mission as they are the vehicle best equipped to deliver our message.

Many representatives in Congress favor a balanced budget amendment. They would each like to be able to refer to their own obedience of the Constitution as the reason for not being able to fund a solution to every problem. Our forefathers may not have directly anticipated the need for such a rule of discipline but they certainly did not preclude it. The amendment process was their gift to us, allowing the Constitution to be a fluid document.

Our society is made up of citizens with certain expectations of government as the cure-all whenever any level of crisis develops. We need only look at the criticism leveled at government in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and the mid-western ice storms to get a glimpse at this. President Kennedy's inaugural address, wherein he challenged Americans to, "ask not what your country can do for you, but rather what you can do for your country," falls on deaf ears in these times. Yet such a self-sacrificing attitude is mandated, are we the people to emerge from reckless government, unscathed.

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