

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSING THE BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

July 13, 2011

Dear Representative/Senator:

The undersigned national organizations strongly urge you to oppose any balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution.

A balanced budget constitutional amendment would damage the economy, not strengthen it. Demanding that policymakers cut spending and/or raise taxes, even when the economy slows, is the opposite of what is needed to stabilize a weak economy and avert recessions. Such steps would risk tipping a faltering economy into recession or worsening an ongoing downturn, costing large numbers of jobs while blocking worthy investments to stimulate jobs and growth and address the nation's urgent needs in infrastructure and other areas.

Furthermore, the version of the balanced budget amendment that the House Judiciary Committee recently approved (H. J. Res. 1) would impose an arbitrary and severe cap on total federal spending, which, remarkably, would require much deeper cuts than the draconian cuts in the Ryan budget resolution. The bill also would require supermajority votes in the House and Senate to increase the debt limit, waive the balanced budget requirement — or to raise any taxes, including closing the most egregious tax loopholes. This irresponsible requirement would create an extremely steep hurdle to raising any revenues — effectively blocking revenue measures even as part of packages to restore long-term solvency to Social Security and Medicare — while protecting the more than \$1 trillion a year in “tax expenditures” and forcing severe program cuts.

In short, this amendment is a recipe for making recessions more frequent, longer, and deeper, while requiring severe cuts that would harshly affect seniors, children, veterans, people with disabilities, homeland security activities, public safety, environmental protection, education and medical research. It would almost certainly necessitate massive cuts to vital programs including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, veterans' benefits and other programs, and, as noted, lead to even deeper cuts than the House-passed budget.

A responsible deficit reduction plan must embrace both spending cuts and new revenues, including curbing special-interest tax loopholes, not a one-sided reliance on spending cuts.

A balanced budget amendment has no place in the Constitution of the United States. Our Constitution has served the nation well because it represents enduring principles that are the foundations of our government. It should not be used as a substitute for real leadership on fiscal policy.

We strongly urge you to oppose any constitutional balanced budget amendment.

Sincerely,

9to5, National Association of Working Women
AFL-CIO
African American Health Alliance
AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
AIDS Project Los Angeles
AIDS United
Alliance for a Just Society
Alliance for Excellent Education
Alliance for Retired Americans
Alliance to End Hunger
American Association of Classified School Employees (AACSE)
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Counseling Association
American Dance Therapy Association
American Educational Research Association
American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO
American Federation of School Administrators, AFL-CIO
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
American Humane Association
American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association (AMRPA)
American Network of Community Options and Resources
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO
American Public Health Association
American School Counselor Association
Americans for Democratic Action
The Arc of the United States
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association for Career and Technical Education
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP)
Association of Education Service Agencies (AESAs)
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
Autism National Committee
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Bread for the World
Building and Construction Trades Dept., AFL-CIO
B'nai B'rith International
CAEAR Coalition
Campaign for America's Future
Campaign for College Affordability
Campaign for Community Change
CANN - Community Access National Network
The Cave Institute
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)
Children's Defense Fund

Children's Dental Health Project
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington
Citizens for Tax Justice
Clinical Social Work Association
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Coalition on Human Needs
Committee for Education Funding
Common Cause
Communications Workers of America (CWA)
Community Action Partnership
Community Food Security Coalition
Community Organizations in Action
Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)
Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED)
Council for Exceptional Children
Council for Opportunity in Education
Council of the Great City Schools
Dab the AIDS Bear Project
Defenders of Wildlife
Democracy 21
Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO
Direct Care Alliance
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Easter Seals
Every Child Matters Education Fund
Families USA
Federally Employed Women (FEW)
Feminist Majority
First Focus Campaign for Children
Food & Water Watch
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of the Earth
Gay Men's Health Crisis
Generations United
Gray Panthers
Growth & Justice
Half in Ten
Health & Disability Advocates
Health Care for America Now
Health GAP (Global Access Project)
HIV Law Project
Horizons for Homeless Children
Housing Works
Interfaith Worker Justice
International Association of Fire Fighters
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers, and Helpers, AFL-CIO
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers (IFPTE)
International Reading Association

International Society for Technology in Education
International Union of Police Associations, AFL-CIO
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)
Knowledge Alliance
Laborers' International Union of North America, (LiUNA!)
Latino Commission on AIDS
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
League of Conservation Voters
League of Women Voters of the U.S.
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Main Street Alliance
Medicare Rights Center
Mennonite Central Committee U.S., Washington Office
Mental Health America
NAACP
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National AIDS Housing Coalition
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
National Alliance of HUD Tenants
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association for Music Education
National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSPP)
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD)
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools
National Association of Government Employees/SEIU
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO)
National Association of Letter Carriers
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)
National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA)
National Association of Postal Supervisors
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Black Child Development Institute
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Coalition for LGBT Health
National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Congress of American Indians
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP)
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare

National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Council of Women's Organizations (NCWO)
National Council on Independent Living
National Disability Rights Network
National Education Association (NEA)
National Employment Law Project (NELP)
National Family Caregivers Association
National Family Farm Coalition
National Federation of Federal Employees
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA)
National Housing Trust
National Immigration Law Center
National Indian Head Start Directors Association
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC)
National Organization for Women (NOW)
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU)
National Priorities Project
National Respite Coalition
National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition (NREAC)
National Rural Education Association (NREA)
National School Boards Association
National Senior Citizens Law Center
National Senior Corps Association (NSCA)
National Title I Association
National Treasury Employee Union
National Urban League
National WIC Association
National Women's Conference Committee
National Women's Law Center
National Women's Health Network
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Not Dead Yet
OMB Watch
Our Bodies Ourselves
OWL-The Voice of Midlife and Older Women
People For the American Way (PFAW)
Pension Rights Center
PHI – Quality Care through Quality Jobs
Population Action International
Progressive States Action
Promise the Children
Public Citizen
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition (REHDC)

RESULTS

School Social Work Association of America
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE)
Sisters of Mercy Institute Justice Team
Sojourners
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future (SAHF)
Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association
Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice
TASH
Teaching Strategies, Inc.
Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO
Treatment Access Expansion Project
Trust for America's Health (TFAH)
Union for Reform Judaism
United Cerebral Palsy
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
United Food and Commercial Workers, International
United for a Fair Economy
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society
United Mine Workers
United Spinal Association
United Steelworkers (USW)
USAction
U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW)
US Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (USPRA)
VillageCare
Voices for America's Children
Voices for Progress
Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW)
The Wilderness Society
The Women of Color Policy Network, NYU Wagner
Women of Reform Judaism
Women Together for Change (WTFC)
Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement (WISER)
Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press
World Knowledge Bank
YouthBuild USA
YWCA USA
ZERO TO THREE