

STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSING THE BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

November 16, 2011

Dear Representative/Senator:

The 423 undersigned state and local 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.

According to a new analysis of a balanced budget amendment by Macroeconomic Advisers, one of the nation's preeminent private economic forecasting firms, if a constitutional balanced budget amendment had already been ratified and were now being enforced for fiscal year 2012, "the effect on the economy would be catastrophic." The analysis reports that if the 2012 budget were balanced through spending cuts, those cuts would have to total about \$1.5 trillion in 2012 alone, which they estimate would throw about 15 million more people out of work, double the unemployment rate from 9 percent to approximately 18 percent, and cause the economy to shrink by about 17 percent instead of growing by an expected 2 percent.

Additionally, all versions of the balanced budget amendment being considered also contain a provision requiring three-fifths of the whole membership of both houses to raise the debt limit, making risk of default more likely and empowering a willful minority to hold the full faith and credit of the U.S. hostage to whatever other political demands they may have. The difficulty of raising the debt limit this summer illustrates how hard it can be to secure the necessary votes even when the consequences are so grave. Only three of the last 11 debt limit increases obtained three-fifths vote in both chambers; two of those instances occurred amidst the financial crisis in 2008 when the debt limit increases were included in larger legislation to respond to the meltdowns already occurring in the housing and financial markets, and the third occurred this August as part of the Budget Control Act and came only after a bitter process that led the nation to the brink of default.

In short, a balanced budget 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 health and 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 lead to even deeper cuts than the House-passed budget.

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,

Alaska

NEA-Alaska

Alabama

Alabama Education Association
Montgomery Transportation Coalition

Arkansas

Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance
Arkansas Interfaith Alliance
The Platypus Society

Arizona

Arizona Education Association
Concilio Latino de Salud Inc.
Foundation for Senior Living
World Hunger Ecumenical Arizona Task Force (WHEAT)

California

9to5 Bay Area (CA)
9to5 Los Angeles
ACLU of Southern California
Avant-Garde Foster Family and Adoption Agency, Inc
California Alliance for Retired Americans
California Association of Social Rehabilitation Agencies
California Budget Project
California Food Policy Advocates
California Housing Partnership Corporation
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
California Partnership
California Reinvestment Coalition
California Teachers Association
California WIC Association
California/Nevada Community Action
Californians for Cures
Centro Binacional para el desarrollo indigena Oaxaqueno
Community Action Marin
Diaz and Associates
Earth Mama Healing, Inc.
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano
Gray Panthers Association of California Networks
Guam Communications Network

California continued

Irvine United Congregational Church Advocates for Peace and Justice
Korean Resource Center
L.A Gay & Lesbian Center
Madera Coalition
Maternal and Child Health Access
Nana's Wish
National Council of Jewish Women, California State Public Affairs
Pacific Islanders Cancer Survivors Network (PICSN)
Peace and Freedom Party of California
Proteus Inc.
Silicon Valley Independent Living Center
Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing
St. Mary's Center
Western Center on Law and Poverty

Colorado

9to5 Colorado
Colorado AIDS Organization
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute
Colorado Progressive Coalition
Colorado Teachers Association
Denver Oncology Consortium
Green Peace Corps
Health Care for All Colorado
Interfaith Alliance of Colorado
Kebaya Coaching Consulting
Mental Health America of Colorado
Otero County Housing Authority
Pipefitter Local 208
Rights for All People
Rocky Mountain Care Solutions
Servicios de La Raza, Inc.
Southwest Statistical Consulting, LLC
The Consortium
University of Denver

Connecticut

AFSCME Council 4
All Our Kin, Inc.
Collaborative Center for Justice, Inc.
Connecticut Association for Human Services
Connecticut Education Association
Connecticut Food Bank
Connecticut Housing Coalition
Connecticut Voices for Children
Gilead Community Services
Middlesex County Coalition on Housing and Homelessness
National Association of Social Workers, CT Chapter

Connecticut continued

National Cambodian American Health Initiative (NCAHI)
People of Faith
Together We Shine

District of Columbia

D.C. LEARNs
Federal Education Association
NAKASEC
National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association
RESULTS, Washington DC Area Chapter
The Capital Area Food Bank
Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless

Delaware

Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families
Delawareans for Social and Economic Justice
Delaware State Education Association

Florida

Center for Independent Living of South Florida Inc.
El Bethel Missionary Church Inc.
Family Care Council
Farmworker's Self-Help
Florida Center for Fiscal and Economic Policy
Florida CHAIN
Florida Education Association
Florida Impact
Florida NOW
National Association of Social Workers- Florida Chapter
National Council of Jewish Women Florida State Policy Advocacy Chair
North Florida Education Development Corporation
Pax Christi Northeast Florida
REG
The Farmworker Association of Florida
The Good Shepherd of Northeast Fla, Inc
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Florida

Georgia

9to5 Atlanta
9to5 Atlanta Working Women
Community Connections
DEW Consultants
Georgia Association of Educators
Georgia Rural Urban Summit

Hawaii

Hawaii State Teachers Association

Iowa

Iowa State Education Association
Child and Family Policy Center
Children and Families of Iowa
Des Moines Area Ecumenical Committee for Peace
Iowa Book Works
Iowa Policy Project
JC & Associate
Methodist Federation for Social Action, Iowa Chapter
Sister of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
South Central Iowa Federation of Labor AFL-CIO

Idaho

Idaho Education Association

Illinois

AIDS Foundation of Chicago
Bethel New Life Inc.
Campaign for Better Health Care
Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance
Chicago Jobs Council
Chicago Metropolitan Association for the Education of Young Children
Chicago Rehab Network
CL Enterprises
Comprehensive Community Solutions, Inc.
Health Care Justice Campaign, Illinois
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance (HIV PJA)
Holy Family Ministries
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters
Housing Action Illinois
Illinois Action for Children
Illinois Education Association
Illinois Hunger Coalition
National Council of Jewish Women Illinois State Public Affairs Committee
Project IRENE
Protestants for the Common Good
Voices for Illinois Children
Women Employed

Indiana

Indiana State Teachers Association
Lafayette Urban Ministry
NASW- Indiana chapter
Sojourner Truth House

Kansas

Kansas National Education Association

Kentucky

Clients Council of Kentucky
Covering Kentucky Kids and Families
Kentucky Center for Economic Policy
Kentucky Education Association
Kentucky Task Force on Hunger
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership

Louisiana

Community United for Change (CUC)
Louisiana Association of Educators
Louisiana Budget Project
Louisiana Federation of Teachers
Mental Health America of Louisiana

Massachusetts

AAUW-MA
AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Citizens for Children
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Massachusetts Teachers Association
National Alliance of HUD Tenants
Project Bread - The Walk for Hunger
Stavros Center for Independent Living

Maryland

Maryland State Education Association
PeterCares House
Public Justice Center

Maine

Advocacy Initiative Network of Maine
ElderCare Network of Lincoln County
Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods (MAIN)
Maine Center for Economic Policy
Maine Children's Alliance
Maine Education Association
Maine Equal Justice Partners, Inc
MSEA-SEIU Local 1989
Preble Street

Michigan

Detroit Methodist Federation for Social Action
Detroit RESULTS

Michigan continued

Groundcover News
LoLaDiVa, Inc.
Michigan League for Human Services
Michigan Legal Services
Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network
Michigan Alliance of Cooperatives
MichUHCAN
National Council of Jewish Women- MI
Michigan Education Association

Minnesota

A Minnesota Without Poverty
HOME Line
Litchfield Early Childhood Programs
Minneapolis Highrise Representative Council
Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless
Minnesota Head Start Association
Minnesota Public Health Association
Northwest Community Action, Inc
Our Saviour's Community Services
Phyllis Wheatley Community Center
Project for Pride in Living (PPL)
The Arc Minnesota
TPS LLC
Education Minnesota

Missouri

Caruthers Street Charities, Inc. dba Project HOPE
Delta Area Economic Opportunity Corp.
East Missouri Action Agency, Inc.
Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis
Kansas City Criminal Justice Taskforce
Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri
Mental Health America of Eastern Missouri
Metro St Louis Coalition for Inclusion and Equity, M-SLICE
Missouri Alliance for Retired Americans
Missouri Association for Social Welfare
Missouri Budget Project
Missouri Health Advocacy Alliance
Missouri Health Care for All
National Council of Jewish Women- St. Louis Section
Saint Louis Effort for AIDS
Women's Voices Raised for Social Justice
Missouri NEA

Mississippi

Public Policy Center of Mississippi
Mississippi Association of Educators

Montana

Helena Indian Alliance
MEA-MFT
Mental Health America of Montana
Montana Association of Area Agencies on Aging
Montana Budget and Policy Center
Montana Coalition for the Homeless
Montana Food Bank Network
Montana Organizing Project
Montana Small Business Alliance
Montana Women Vote
Musikanten Montana

North Carolina

MDC
Sisters of Mercy
Sisters of Mercy South Central Community
North Carolina Association of Educators

North Dakota

Mental Health America of ND
North Dakota Education Association

Nebraska

Center For People in Need
Lutheran Metro Ministry
Piper Farms
Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Justice Team

New Hampshire

Children's Alliance of NH
Housing Action NH
Marguerite's Place, Inc.
New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute
NH Council of Churches
NEA-New Hampshire

New Jersey

Englewood Housing Authority
National Council of Jewish Women, NJ State Policy Advocacy Network
RESULTS, Central NJ Domestic Group
Speech Therapy Fun
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
New Jersey Education Association

New Mexico

National Education Association-New Mexico
New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness
New Mexico Voices for Children
NM Center on Law and Poverty
NEA-New Mexico

Nevada

Nevada State Education Association
Food Bank of Northern Nevada
Northern Nevada Center for Independent Living

New York

504 Democratic Club
An Empowered Life
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY
Disabled In Action of Metropolitan NY
Dutchess County Community Action Agency
Early Care & Learning Council
Harlem United Community AIDS Center
Human Services Council
Independent Living Inc
Long Term Care Community Coalition
Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign
National Council of Jewish Women- New York Section
New York State Community Action Association
New York State Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
New York State United Teachers
New Yorkers for Accessible Health Coverage
Peninsula Counseling Center
Schenectady Inner City Ministry
Supportive Housing Network of New York
Tioga Peace & Justice
Westchester for Change
Xavier Mission
YWCA of the Greater Capital Region, Inc.
Neighborhood Family Services Coalition
West Side Campaign Against Hunger

Ohio

COHHIO
Community Action Committee of Pike County
Community Peace Builders
Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio
Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks
Ohio Poverty Law Center
Plymouth Shiloh Food Pantry
RESULTS Columbus
Shared Harvest Foodbank
The Arc of Greater Cleveland

Ohio continued

The Hunger Network of Greater Cleveland
Tri-County Independent Living Center
UHCAN Ohio
Voices for Ohio's Children
Ohio Education Association
CDCRC Inc
Ohio Association of Community Health Centers

Oklahoma

Joyland Child Development Center
Oklahoma Policy Institute
Oklahoma Education Association

Oregon

501 Drive LLC
Brainstormers Inc.
Oregon AFSCME Council 75
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
ROSE Community Development
Oregon Education Association

Pennsylvania

Advocacy Committee for Justice and Peace of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
All Hands United, Inc.
Catholic Social Services of Lackawanna/Wayne Counties
Central Pennsylvania Food Bank
Christian Churches United
Community Intervention Center
Family Connection of Easton
Just Harvest: A Center for Action Against Hunger
PA Coalition for the Children
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center
Providence Connections
Resident Advisory board
United Way of Beaver County
Pennsylvania State Education Association

Puerto Rico

One Stop Career Center

Rhode Island

Feinstein Center for a Hunger Free America
Mental Health Association of RI
Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless

Rhode Island continued

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
NEA Rhode Island

South Carolina

SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center
South Carolina Education Association

Tennessee

(Changer) Chattanooga and North Georgians for Economic Rights
The Black Children's Institute of Tennessee
Tennessee Education Association

Texas

Brazos Valley Community Action Agency, Inc.
Cameron County Homeless Partnership
Center for Public Policy Priorities
Dominican Sisters of Houston
La Fe Policy Research and Education Center
National Council of Jewish Women Texas
Senior Community Outreach Services, Inc.
Texas Tenants' Union
Van Zandt County Democratic Party
Texas State Teachers Association

Utah

Utah Education Association
Disabled Rights Action Committee
Crossroads Urban Center
Utahns Against Hunger

Virginia

A & K Enterprise, Inc.
CPHAR-Charlottesville Public Housing Association of Residents
Crossroads Community Services
Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia Inc.
RePHRAME
Social Action Linking Together (SALT)
The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy
Virginia NOW
Virginia Poverty Law Center
World Knowledge Bank
Virginia Education Association

Vermont

Gilman Housing Trust, Inc.
Hunger Free Vermont
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition
Vermont-NEA
Voices for Vermont's Children

Washington

Catholic Charities Housing Services
Children's Alliance of WA
Community services of Moses Lake
Faith Action Network
FISH Food Banks of Pierce County
Northwest Harvest
Northwest Health Law Advocates
Northwest Housing Development
Nutrition First
Pierce County Housing Authority
Positive Solutions
Seattle RESULTS
Solid Ground
South King County Food Coalition
Statewide Poverty Action Network
WA State National Organization for Women
Washington Education Association
Washington Food Coalition
Washington State Budget & Policy Center

Wisconsin

AFSCME Wisconsin (Councils 24, 40, and 48)
ARC of Greater Milwaukee
Disability Rights Wisconsin
Hunger Task Force
Influencing State Policy
Mental Health America of Wisconsin
One Wisconsin Now
St. Matthew Justice & Human Concerns
Voces de la Frontera
Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities
Wisconsin Community Services, Inc.
Wisconsin Education Association Council
9to5 Milwaukee
League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Network

West Virginia

Direct Action Welfare Group
Huntington Area Food Bank
Mountain CAP of West Virginia, Inc., a CDC
West Virginia Education Association

West Virginia continued

West Virginia UU Advocacy Network
WV Center on Budget and Policy
WV Citizen Action Group