

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 11, 2011

Dear Colleague:

The American people are demanding action from Washington to get our fiscal house in order once and for all. They don't want any more empty rhetoric or excuses. In that vein, we invite you to join us as co-sponsors of the attached resolution proposing a constitutional amendment that will set effective limits on federal spending and taxes and require a balanced budget.

Our nation is facing a fiscal crisis that is only getting worse. The over \$14 trillion national debt has increased by more than 25 percent in just the last two years. The Congressional Budget Office says it is already nearly two-thirds the size of our economy and could stand at an astonishing 90 percent in just 9 years.

This crisis has national security as well as economic implications. Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, calls the debt "the most significant threat to our national security." Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warns that the debt "sends a message of weakness internationally."

Yet year after year, decade after decade, Congress proves that it will not solve this crisis on its own. There are simply too many ways for Washington to avoid controlling its spending and balancing its budget. But continued failure and a deepening budget crisis are not acceptable.

Our proposed amendment requires the President submit a balanced budget to Congress, and supermajorities for deficit spending, spending that exceeds 20 percent of the gross domestic product, and for raising taxes. It would also allow Congress to waive these provisions if a declaration of war is in effect or if the United States is engaged in military conflict that Congress declares to be an imminent and serious threat to national security. The amendment has been endorsed both by Americans for Tax Reform and the American Conservative Union.

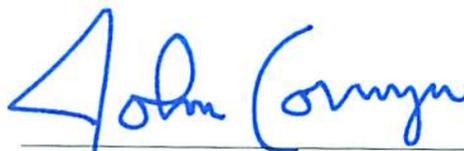
The annual budget deficit is more than ten times what it was in 1997, when the Senate came within one vote of approving a similar amendment. This crisis is getting worse and will not solve itself. Millions of working families across the country balance their checks every year; their government should do the same.

We hope you will join us. If you want more information about this resolution or wish to be listed as a co-sponsor, please contact Tom Jipping in Senator Hatch's office at 224-3526 or Andrew Siracuse in Senator Cornyn's office at 224-8255.

Sincerely,



Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. J. RES. _____

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to balance the budget.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mr. CORNYN) introduced the following joint resolution; which was read twice and referred to

JOINT RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to balance the budget.

1 *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives*
2 *of the United States of America in Congress assembled*
3 *(two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That the fol-*
4 *lowing article is proposed as an amendment to the Con-*
5 *stitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all*
6 *intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when*
7 *ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several*
8 *States:*

1 “ARTICLE—

2 “SECTION 1. Total outlays for any fiscal year shall
3 not exceed total receipts for that fiscal year, unless two-
4 thirds of the duly chosen and sworn Members of each
5 House of Congress shall provide by law for a specific ex-
6 cess of outlays over receipts by a rollcall vote.

7 “SECTION 2. Total outlays for any fiscal year may
8 not exceed 20 percent of the gross domestic product of
9 the United States for the calendar year ending before the
10 beginning of such fiscal year, unless two-thirds of the duly
11 chosen and sworn Members of each House of Congress
12 shall provide for a specific amount in excess of such 20
13 percent.

14 “SECTION 3. Prior to each fiscal year, the President
15 shall transmit to the Congress a proposed budget for the
16 United States Government for that fiscal year in which
17 total outlays do not exceed total receipts.

18 “SECTION 4. No bill to increase Federal taxes shall
19 become law unless approved by two-thirds of the duly cho-
20 sen and sworn Members of each House of Congress by
21 a rollcall vote.

22 “SECTION 5. The Congress may waive the provisions
23 of this article for any fiscal year in which a declaration
24 of war is in effect. The provisions of this article may be
25 waived for any fiscal year in which the United States is

1 engaged in military conflict which causes an imminent and
2 serious military threat to national security and is so de-
3 clared by a joint resolution, adopted by a majority of the
4 duly chosen and sworn Members of each House of Con-
5 gress, which becomes law.

6 “SECTION 6. The Congress shall enforce and imple-
7 ment this article by appropriate legislation, which may rely
8 on estimates of outlays, receipts, and gross domestic prod-
9 uct.

10 “SECTION 7. Total receipts shall include all receipts
11 of the United States Government except those derived
12 from borrowing. Total outlays shall include all outlays of
13 the United States Government except for those for repay-
14 ment of debt principal.

15 “SECTION 8. This article shall take effect beginning
16 with the fourth fiscal year beginning after its ratifica-
17 tion.”.