



# AMERICANS *for* TAX REFORM

March 30, 2011

The Honorable Jon Kyl  
730 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Orrin Hatch  
104 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Pat Toomey  
B-40B Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators,

We write to encourage your colleagues to support your Balanced Budget Amendment to the United States Constitution, signaling the United States Senate is serious about reforming federal government spending.

The amendment limits spending to 18 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Capping spending at this level puts spending in line with the historical average of revenue receipts. Since 1970, spending has averaged 21 percent of GDP while tax revenues have consistently stayed around 18 percent. However, CBO projects spending will explode over the next decade, averaging over 23 percent of GDP. Capping spending at 18 percent demonstrates that the government should be cognizant of its means – and live prudently within them.

Most importantly, your Balanced Budget Amendment places the onus of responsible budgeting on lawmakers, rather than passing the burden onto taxpayers who are already shouldering the weight of failed “stimulus” programs and bailouts. It does this by requiring any net tax increases to overcome a two-thirds supermajority in each chamber of Congress.

This clause is vital to keep the debate where it should be-federal overspending. Americans are not taxed too little; Washington spends too much. In the same vein, the spending restraint in the amendment cannot be waived unless a two-thirds majority agrees to do so.

While the bill could be strengthened to require a supermajority to waive the spending cap during a declared war, it does require a vote of three-fifths of the Congress to approve spending beyond the cap in the times of a military conflict. What’s more, the amendment requires a three-fifths vote to raise the debt limit, forcing Congress to confront its poor spending habits rather than simply increasing its borrowing authority.

Thus, we support the Balanced Budget Amendment and encourage your colleagues to co-sponsor the measure to signal lawmakers are serious about fiscal restraint.

Sincerely,

Grover Norquist  
President  
Americans for Tax Reform



# Center for Fiscal Accountability

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