

## **NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSING THE BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT**

April 20, 2016

Dear Representative/Senator:

The 273 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 urgent needs in infrastructure and other areas.

According to a 2011 analysis of a balanced budget amendment by Macroeconomic Advisers, one of the nation's preeminent private economic forecasting firms, had a constitutional balanced budget amendment been in effect in 2012, the necessary budget cuts would have thrown about 15 million more people out of work, doubled the unemployment rate from 9 percent to approximately 18 percent, and caused the economy to shrink by about 17 percent instead of growing. And while the economy was weak in 2012, Macroeconomic Advisers concluded that imposing a balanced budget requirement would be undesirable even if the economy were stronger and the budget already balanced, because it would undermine our ability to counter future downturns. Macroeconomic Advisers found under a balanced budget amendment:

"The economy's "automatic stabilizers" would be eviscerated, discretionary counter-cyclical fiscal policy would be unconstitutional, and the sole responsibility for macroeconomic stabilization policy would rest with the Fed. The attempt to enforce a [balanced budget amendment] could well end up heightening fiscal uncertainty while magnifying cyclical risks to the economy."

In addition, most 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 the 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 repeated difficulties in raising the debt limit over the past several years illustrate how hard it can be to secure the necessary votes even when an increase is urgently needed to avoid imminent default. Only six of the last 15 debt limit increases obtained a three-fifths vote in both chambers.

In short, a balanced budget amendment is a recipe for making recessions more frequent, longer, and deeper, while requiring severe cuts that very likely would harshly affect seniors, children, veterans, and people with disabilities, as well as national security, homeland security activities, public health and safety, environmental protection, education and medical research. And it would almost certainly necessitate massive cuts in major programs such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and veterans' benefits.

It would be a serious mistake to insert a balanced budget amendment or other fiscal policy mandates into the Constitution of the United States. Our Constitution has served the nation well in part because it has focused on enduring principles of government, rather than attempting to dictate fiscal policy for current and future generations. Policymakers should be providing leadership on fiscal policy, rather than avoiding doing so and seeking to cover themselves by writing a highly ill-advised, economically damaging balanced budget amendment into the Constitution.

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

Sincerely,

9to5, National Association of Working Women AASA, The School Superintendents Association ADAP Advocacy Association (aaa+) Advance CTE Advocates for Youth African American Health Alliance AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families AIDS Community Research Initiative of America AIDS United Alliance for a Just Society D535 Alliance for Excellent Education Alliance for Justice Alliance for Retired Americans Alliance for Strong Families and Communities American Association for Dental Research American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education American Association of University Women (AAUW) American Council on Education American Counseling Association American Dance Therapy Association American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO American Federation of Labor (AFL-CIO) American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA) American

Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO American Indian Higher Education Consortium American Jewish Committee (AJC) American Music Therapy Association American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO American Public Health Association American School Counselor Association American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF) Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA) Association for Career and Technical Education Association for Psychological Science Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP) Association of Educational Service Agencies Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs Association of Flight Attendants - CWA Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America Autism National Committee Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law Bienestar Human Services B'nai B'rith International Bread for the World Campaign for America's Future Campaign for Youth Justice Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good Center for Community Change Action Center for Family Policy and Practice Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc. Center for Science in the Public Interest Center on Budget and Policy Priorities Child Care Aware of America Child Welfare League of America Children's Action Alliance Children's Defense Fund Children's Dental Health Project Children's Leadership Council Citizens for Tax Justice Clinical Social Work Association Coalition for Health Funding Coalition on Human Needs Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) Committee for Education Funding Common Cause Communications Workers of America (CWA) Community Access National Network (CANN) Community Action Partnership Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) Concerned Black Men National Conservation Legacy Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) Corporation for Supportive Housing CoSN - the Consortium for School Networking Council for Exceptional Children Council for Opportunity in Education Council of Administrators of Special Education, Inc. Council of the Great City Schools CREDO Criminalization of Poverty Project at the Institute for Policy Studies Defenders of Wildlife Democracy 21 Demos Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund Disciples Justice Action Network Easter Seals Ecumenical Poverty Initiative Every Child Matters FamiliesUSA Farmworker Justice Feeding America First Focus Campaign for Children Food & Water Watch Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) Foster Family-based Treatment Association Franciscan Action Network Friends Committee on National Legislation Friends of the Earth Futures Without

Violence Gamaliel Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) Generations United Global Justice Institute Health GAP (Global Access Project) Higher Education Consortium for Special Education Housing Works Interfaith Worker Justice International Association of Fire Fighters International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers International Brotherhood of Boilermakers International Brotherhood of Teamsters International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers (IFPTE), AFL-CIO International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Jewish Council for Public Affairs Jobs With Justice Justice in Aging LeadingAge League of Conservation Voters League of United Latin American Citizens League of Women Voters of the United States Learning Disabilities Association of America Main Street Alliance Medical Mission Sisters, North America Medicare Rights Center Mental Health America Metropolitan Community Churches MomsRising NAACP NASTAD (National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors) 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 Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) National Alliance of HUD Tenants National Alliance to End Sexual Violence National Association for Children's Behavioral Health National Association for College Admission Counseling National Association for Hispanic Elderly National Association for Music Education 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 and City Health Officials National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors National Association of Elementary School Principals National Association of Federally Impacted Schools National Association of Letter Carriers National Association of Private Special Education Centers National Association of School Psychologists National Association of Secondary School Principals National Association of Social Workers (NASW) National Association of State Directors of Special Education National Association of State Head Injury Administrators National Black Justice Coalition National Center for Law and Economic Justice National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence National Coalition Against Domestic Violence National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD) National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare National Community Development Association National Congress of American Indians National Council for Behavioral Health National Council for Community and Education Partnerships National Council of Asian Pacific Americans National Council of Jewish Women National Council of La Raza (NCLR) National Council on Independent Living National Disability Institute National Disability Rights Network National Domestic Violence Hotline National Down Syndrome Congress

National Education Association (NEA) National Employment Law Project  
National Fair Housing Alliance National Federation of Federal Employees  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council National Hispanic Medical  
Association National Housing Law Project National Housing Trust National  
Immigration Law Center National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund National Low Income Housing Coalition  
National Network to End Domestic Violence National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families National People's Action National  
Priorities Project National PTA National Recreation and Park Association  
National Respite Coalition National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition National  
Rural Education Association National School Boards Association National Skills  
Coalition National Superintendents Roundtable National Treasury Employees  
Union NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable National  
WIC Association National Women's Health Network National Women's Law  
Center Natural Resources Defense Council NDD United Network for  
Environmental & Economic Responsibility of United Church of Christ NETWORK:  
A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby Not Dead Yet OWL-The Voice of Women  
40+ PAI Paralyzed Veterans of America Partnership for America's Children  
People for the American Way PICO National Network Planned Parenthood  
Federation of America Prevention Institute Professional Aviation Safety  
Specialists (PASS) Progressive Congress Project Inform ProLiteracy Protect All  
Children's Environment Public Advocacy for Kids Public Citizen Public Health  
Institute Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition RESULTS Sargent Shriver  
National Center on Poverty Law School Social Work Association of America  
School-Based Health Alliance Senior Executives Association (SEA) Service  
Employees International Union (SEIU) Share Our Strength Sisters of Charity of  
Nazareth Congregational Leadership Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western  
Province Leadership Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) Special  
Needs Alliance State Innovation Exchange (SiX) Stewards of Affordable Housing  
for the Future Susan G. Komen TESOL International Association The AIDS  
Institute The Arc The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights The  
National Coalition for Literacy The National Crittenton Foundation The Sisters of  
Mercy of the Americas, Institute Justice Team The United Methodist Church –  
General Board of Church and Society Transportation Trades Department, AFL-  
CIO Treatment Action Group (TAG) Tremor Action Network Trust for America's  
Health (TFAH) UNCF Union for Reform Judaism United Auto Workers (UAW)  
United Cerebral Palsy United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Spinal Association United States Student Association (USSA) United  
Steelworkers (USW) USAction Voices for Progress Women's Institute for a  
Secure Retirement (WISER) Young Invincibles YouthBuild USA ZERO TO THREE 。

