

Balanced Budget Amendment / Article V Convention

Campaign Talking Points

There are 20 “talking point” topics on this sheet. Please take one and use it in your own way. Make it the core of your email, phone call, legislative testimony or comments to the media or state legislators in support of a balanced budget amendment to be proposed via convention and ratified by the states.

1 -- In 1798 Thomas Jefferson called for a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution when he stated, “*I wish it were possible to obtain a single amendment to our Constitution ... taking from the Federal Government the power of borrowing.*” If the nation had followed Jefferson’s advice and established a balanced budget amendment, our country wouldn’t now be threatened with national bankruptcy.

2 -- Our nation is currently \$19 trillion in debt. That’s approximately \$160,000 per taxpayer or \$57,000 per American. That means each new-born child in America is saddled with a \$57,000 debt the moment they exit the womb! Congress’ out-of-control spending has usurped the American dream for future generations and threatens to destroy it for good.

3 -- For over two hundred years America has been known as the land of opportunity for those immigrants who come here seeking a better life. Sadly, that is no longer case. The moment an immigrant takes the oath of citizenship, he or she is saddled with a \$57,000 burden as we welcome them to America and their share of the national debt!

4 -- Last year the national debt rose to \$19 trillion while federal tax revenues were only \$3.2 trillion. That’s like someone who makes \$32,000 a year owing \$190,000 in credit card debt. The only possible outcome is bankruptcy unless emergency action is taken. The same applies to the United States of America. We need a balanced budget amendment now!

5 -- For those who say that it’s too risky to call for an Article V Convention: I say the risk of doing nothing is far greater. Our nation is heading towards national bankruptcy. To do nothing is to seal our fate and accept the destruction of our economy. It is much better to have tried and failed, then to have failed without trying. The opposition proposes we sit idly by and watch while Congress bankrupts America. I say we fight by calling an Article V Convention limited to proposing a balanced budget amendment.

6 -- Congress has never proposed an amendment to limit its own power and it never will. If we hope to impose fiscal restraints on Congress, the States will be forced to step up and propose a balanced budget amendment via an Article V Convention. Otherwise Congress will continue to abuse its borrowing power, the national debt will expand, our economy will spiral downward and the American dream will fade.

7 -- There are over 100 million Americans who rely on government benefits to survive. If the States don't exercise their constitutional power to propose and ratify a balanced budget amendment, Congress will bankrupt America. That will leave over 1/3rd of our population, primarily the elderly and the poor, without any means of support. It is imperative that we take time to take action by establishing a balanced budget amendment in order to protect the most vulnerable citizens in this great Republic.

8 -- When Ronald Reagan was asked about the 'run-away convention' issue in a 1979 radio interview, he dismissed it by saying

"Voices have been raised warning of danger that a . . . convention would open the door to all manner of proposed amendments. In my view, those who warn of this show little faith in our democratic procedures. The Constitution provides for both methods and the convention is a safety valve giving the people a chance to act if Congress refuses to."

Congress has not acted. As such, the States must step up and follow Ronald Reagan's advice by calling an Article V Convention in order to propose a balanced budget amendment. That is the only way to STOP Congress' rush towards national bankruptcy.

9 -- Those who argue against an Article V Convention often quote former Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger who warned that a convention couldn't be controlled. What they won't tell you is that Burger opposed the convention because Republican states were threatening to use it to overturn a number of unpopular/Liberal Supreme Court decisions that occurred under his watch. With such a personal axe to grind, Burger's criticism of the Article V Convention cannot be taken seriously.

10 -- Those who argue against an Article V Convention often quote Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg who opposed an Article V Convention. What they won't tell you is that Goldberg opposed the convention because Republican states were threatening to use it to overturn a liberal Supreme Court decision he voted in favor of.

The objectivity of Justice Goldberg cannot be trusted due to this clear conflict of interest.

11 -- Those who oppose an Article V Convention claim that its delegates will 'run-away' and destroy the Constitution because Article V provides no way for Congress to control them. That's where the 10th amendment comes into play. Since Article V of the U.S. Constitution doesn't grant the federal government the power to control the convention delegates, according to the 10th amendment, that power is reserved for the states.

12 -- Those who oppose an Article V Convention claim that Congress will dictate the rules of a convention (such as voting by state population as opposed to the one-state, one-vote precedent set in Article V) despite the fact that that power is not specifically delegated to Congress anywhere in the Constitution. As such, the 10th amendment dictates that this power rests with the states.

13 -- Those who oppose an Article V Convention claim that the far-left will hi-jack the convention and use it to destroy the Constitution. What they won't tell you is that it takes a minimum of 26 states to control the convention. The Constitution clearly specifies one vote per state as a part of the state-initiated Article V amendment process. With 31 State legislatures under its control, only the Republican Party has enough States to control the convention making it impossible for the far-left to hi-jack the process.

14 -- Those who oppose an Article V Convention claim that convention will run-away and destroy the Constitution. What they won't tell you is that convention delegates only have the power to propose amendments, not ratify them. Once the convention delegates propose an amendment, it takes 38 states to ratify it. That is the ultimate safeguard.

15 -- Those who oppose an Article V Convention often cite college professors and liberal Supreme Court Justices to bolster their case. What they won't tell you is that the greatest American presidents and founders all strongly supported the convention. For example, Abraham Lincoln actually preferred amendments proposed by the States via a convention as opposed to those proposed by Congress. Here's what he said:

"This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing Government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it ... I will venture to add that to me the convention mode seems preferable, in that it allows amendments to originate with the people themselves."

16 -- Ronald Reagan was a strong supporter of the campaign to propose a balanced budget amendment via an Article V Convention because he knew Congress would

never do it. After eight years of first-hand experience dealing with uncooperative Congressman and Senators, he had the following to say in a letter written in 1994:

We can't depend on Congress to discipline itself... we must rely on the states to force Congress to act on our balanced budget amendment. Fortunately, our Nation's Founders gave us the means to amend the Constitution through action of state legislatures ... That is the only strategy that will work."

Congress has had 40 years to propose a balanced budget amendment and it has refused dozens of opportunities. The only way we'll ever see a balanced budget amendment is by following Reagan's advice and proposing it via an Article V Convention.

17 -- In 2012, Kentucky Senator Rand Paul visited the Kentucky legislature to urge his own state legislators to apply for a Convention of the States to propose a balanced budget amendment. As a U.S. Senator, he had observed firsthand the fiscal dysfunction in Washington DC which prompted him to declare:

"Our Founders, in their enduring brilliance, provided the states with a mechanism to amend the Constitution should the U.S. Congress fail to act. Congress has not acted on a Balanced Budget Amendment despite the overwhelming feeling of the American people that it would help put our nation's fiscal house in order."

18 -- Many anti-Article V activists claim that James Madison was opposed to the Article V Convention when in fact he preferred it over nullification and viewed it as the ultimate legal method by which to reestablish state sovereignty:

"The final resort within the purview of the Constitution" for restoring state sovereignty "lies in an amendment of the Constitution, according to a process applicable by the states."

That comes straight from the father of the U.S. Constitution himself and disproves the false assertion that he was opposed to the Article V Convention.

19 -- Quite possibly our nation's greatest general and two-term president, Dwight Eisenhower was a big proponent of the Article V Convention. He rightly pegged it as the ultimate method by which the American people might proactively obtain a redress of their grievances against the federal government.

"Through their state legislatures and without regard to the federal government, the people can demand a convention to propose amendments that can and will reverse any trends they see as fatal to true representative government."

We would be wise to follow Eisenhower's advice if we hope to avoid national bankruptcy. The only way to solve our nation's financial problems is to call for an Article V Convention to propose a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

20 -- The easiest way to understand how safe an Article V Convention will be, is to remember that it has the same power as Congress: it can only PROPOSE amendments, not ratify them. As such, imagine what would happen if Congress proposed a repeal of the second amendment? The state legislatures would laugh at Congress and refuse to ratify it, just like they would laugh at Article V Convention delegates and refuse to ratify it should they do the same thing.

There is no way a rogue amendment like a repeal of the second amendment would ever be ratified because Republicans control 31 of the 50 state legislatures and it takes 38 states to ratify an amendment.