

# NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSING THE BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

November 16, 2011

Dear Representative/Senator:

The 277 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 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,

9to5, National Association of Working Women  
AFL-CIO  
AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families  
AIDS Community Research Initiative of America  
The AIDS Institute  
AIDS Project Los Angeles  
AIDS United  
Alliance for a Just Society  
Alliance for Excellent Education  
Alliance for Justice  
Alliance for Retired Americans  
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education  
American Association of Community Colleges  
American Association of School Administrators (AASA)  
American Association of University Professors  
American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
American Counseling Association  
American Dance Therapy Association  
American Educational Research Association  
American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO  
American Federation of School Administrators, AFL-CIO  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO  
American Jewish Committee  
American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association (AMRPA)  
American Medical Student Association (AMSA)  
American Network of Community Options and Resources  
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Rights at Work  
American School Counselor Association  
Americans for Democratic Action  
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)  
The Arc of the United States  
Asian American Justice Center, member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice  
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum  
Association for Career and Technical Education  
Association of Adult Literacy Professional Developers  
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP)  
Association of Education Service Agencies (AESAs)  
Association of Flight Attendants - CWA  
Association of School Business Officials  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)  
Autism National Committee  
AVAC: Global Advocacy for HIV Prevention

Bazon Center for Mental Health Law  
Bienestar Human Services  
Bread for the World  
Break the Cycle  
Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO  
B'nai B'rith International  
Campaign for America's Future  
Campaign for Community Change  
CANN - Community Access National Network  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
The Center for Media and Democracy  
Center for Medicare Advocacy  
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities  
Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)  
Children's Defense Fund  
Children's Dental Health Project  
Cities for Progress, Institute for Policy Studies  
Citizens for Global Solutions  
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington  
Citizens for Tax Justice  
Clinical Social Work Association  
Coalition for Health Funding  
Coalition of Labor Union Women  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Commission on Adult Basic Education  
Committee for Education Funding  
Common Cause  
Communications Workers of America (CWA)  
Community Action Partnership  
Community Food Security Coalition  
Community Organizations in Action  
Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED)  
Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders  
Council for Exceptional Children  
Council for Opportunity in Education  
Council of Administrators of Special Education  
Council of the Great City Schools  
CREDO Action  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Democracy 21  
Demos  
Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO  
Direct Care Alliance  
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund  
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)  
Easter Seals  
Elev8 (Baltimore, Chicago, New Mexico, and Oakland)  
Every Child Matters Education Fund  
FairTest, the National Center for Fair & Open Testing, Inc.

Families USA  
Farmworker Justice  
Feminist Majority  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Food & Water Watch  
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)  
Forum for Youth Investment  
Foster Family-based Treatment Association  
Franciscan Action Network (FAN)  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Friends of the Earth  
Gamaliel  
Generations United  
GLSEN  
Gray Panthers  
Growth & Justice  
Half in Ten  
Health & Disability Advocates  
Health Care for America Now  
Health GAP (Global Access Project)  
HealthHIV  
HIV Law Project  
Horizons for Homeless Children  
Housing Works  
Interfaith Worker Justice  
International Association of Fire Fighters  
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers  
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers, and Helpers, AFLCIO  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters  
International Society for Technology in Education  
International Union of Police Associations, AFL-CIO  
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Laborers' International Union of North America, (LiUNA!)  
Latino Commission on AIDS  
The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
Leadership Team, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia  
League of Conservation Voters  
League of Rural Voters  
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
Main Street Alliance  
Medicare Rights Center  
Mental Health America

NAACP

National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)

National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity

National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD)

National Assembly on School-Based Health Care

National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs

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 Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD)

National Association of Elementary School Principals

National Association of Federally Impacted Schools

National Association of Government Employees/SEIU

National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO)

National Association of Letter Carriers

National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)

National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA)

National Association of Private Special Education Centers

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)

National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium

National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)

National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

National Association of Thrift Savings Plan Participants

National Black Child Development Institute

National Center for Family Literacy

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 Coalition for LGBT Health

National Coalition for Literacy

National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare

National Congress of American Indians

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP)

National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare

National Council for the Social Studies

National Council of Jewish Women

National Council of La Raza (NCLR)

National Council of Women's Organizations (NCWO)

National Council on Independent Living

National Disability Rights Network

National Education Association (NEA)

National Employment Law Project (NELP)  
National Fair Housing Alliance  
National Family Caregivers Association  
National Federation of Federal Employees  
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council  
National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA)  
National Housing Trust  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty  
National Low Income Housing Coalition  
National Organization for Women (NOW)  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Pediatric AIDS Network  
National People's Action  
National Priorities Project  
National Respite Coalition  
National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition  
National Rural Education Association (NREA)  
National School Boards Association  
National Skills Coalition  
National Superintendents Roundtable  
National Treasury Employees Union  
National Urban League  
National WIC Association  
National Women's Conference Committee  
National Women's Law Center  
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)  
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
Not Dead Yet  
OMB Watch  
Paralyzed Veterans of America  
People For the American Way (PFAW)  
Population Action International  
Progressive States Action  
Project Inform  
Public Citizen  
Public Education Network  
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition (REHDC)  
Rebuild The Dream  
RESULTS  
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
School Social Work Association of America  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)  
Share Our Strength  
Sisters of Mercy Institute Justice Team  
Social Security Disability Coalition

Social Security Works  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center  
Stand Up for Rural America, Robert S. Warwick, Steering Committee  
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future (SAHF)  
Strengthen Social Security Campaign  
Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice  
TESOL International Association  
Transportation Communications Union  
Transportation Equity Network  
Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO  
Treatment Access Expansion Project  
Treatment Action Group (TAG)  
Trust for America's Health (TFAH)  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada  
United Cerebral Palsy  
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE)  
United for a Fair Economy  
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society  
United Methodist Women  
United Mine Workers  
United Spinal Association  
United States Student Association (USSA)  
United Steelworkers (USW)  
USAction  
US Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (USPRA)  
VillageCare  
Voices for America's Children  
Voices for Progress  
Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW)  
Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement (WISER)  
The Woodhull Sexual Freedom Alliance  
Working America  
YouthBuild USA  
YWCA USA  
ZERO TO THREE