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BALANCING THE BUDGET AND LIMITING FEDERAL SPENDING:
A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

This selected bibliography lists articles and books on various issues concerning legislation to limit Federal spending and proposed constitutional amendments requiring a balanced budget, especially economic issues. The bibliography focuses mainly on literature of recent years.

INTRODUCTION

Efforts to secure a constitutional rule to require a balanced Federal budget and to limit the growth of Federal spending have intensified as the Federal Government's persistent failure to balance its budget has produced a public debt surpassing \$1 trillion and as the Federal share of the economy has continued to increase. Many believe that, in large measure, the nation's economic problems are attributable to these factors. Due to such concerns, there have been efforts in Congress to reestablish limitations upon Federal spending and deficit practices that existed in earlier years through an array of formal and informal provisions which have been eroded over the course of recent years. Since the 84th Congress' outset in 1955, an average of four amendments to the Constitution to require a balanced Federal budget have been proposed during each Congress. In the current 97th Congress, over 80 constitutional amendments have been proposed to require a balanced Federal budget or to impose Federal spending or revenue limitations. On August 4, 1982, the Senate, with a vote of 69-31, passed S.J. Res. 58, a proposed constitutional amendment requiring a balanced Federal budget. However, to become part of the Constitution, two-thirds of the House must approve it and it must be ratified by at least 38 states.

Most of the citations in this bibliography were selected from the computerized bibliographic data base created by the Library Services Division of the Congressional Research Service. This core of literature was supplemented by searches in other indexes and computerized bibliographic retrieval systems.

Citations to items which are in the classified collections of the Library of Congress include the Library's call number. Journal articles are provided with the call number for the bound volumes regardless of whether the issues have been bound at this time. Recent articles may be found in the Newspaper and Current Periodical Room and items with the designation "LAW" may be found in the Law Library of the Library of Congress.

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Alexander, Lee, and others. Taxpayers' revolt: are constitutional limits desirable? [Washington, American Enterprise Institute, 1978] 46 p. (AEI forum 20)

This is an edited transcript of a televised AEI Public Policy Forum held on July 12, 1978, examining the issues surrounding the widespread demands for changes in taxes at all levels of government and for constitutional limits on government spending.

Allen, Gary. Balancing the budget. American opinion, v. 25, June 1982: 1-2, 5-6, 85-87, 89, 91-94. AP2.04732, v. 25

Examines the current state of the budget and identifies "what concerned Americans might do to limit spending and taxes as a means of putting an end to escalating deficits."

American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. Proposals for a constitutional convention to require a balanced Federal budget. Washington [1979] 38 p. (Its Legislative analysis, 96th Cong., no. 3)

Anderson, John W., Carrie Johnson, and James E. Clayton. The budget and the Constitution. Washington post, Feb. 12, 1979: A19; Feb. 14: A23; Feb. 16: A15. Newsp

Series of three articles on the implications of a constitutional amendment to require a balanced Federal budget.

Association of the Bar of the City of New York. Committee on Federal Legislation. Budget-balancing by constitutional amendment. Record of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, v. 34, May-June 1979: 428-440.

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The committee report discusses whether the Constitution should be amended to require the Federal Government to balance its budget.

Balanced budget amendment. New York, WNET/Thirteen, 1982. 8 p.

The MacNeil/Lehrer Report, July 27, 1982.

Televised interview with Sen. Richard Lugar of Indiana, Rep. Peter Rodino of New York, State Rep. Mike Fox of Ohio, and State Sen., Harry Meshel of Ohio.

Balanced budget: political scramble, convention drive. Congressional quarterly weekly report, v. 37, Feb. 17, 1979: 267-279. JK1.C15, v. 37

Bergner, Jeffrey T. Federal spending limitations: an idea whose time has come? Policy review, no. 8, spring 1979: 41-51. H1.P69

Discusses pro and con arguments relating to Federal spending limitations tied to the nation's gross national product.

Boorstin, David. Federal fiscal control. Washington, Editorial Research Reports, 1975. 23-40 p. (Editorial research reports, 1975, v. 1, no. 2)

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Contents.--Options to stabilize the economy.--Operation of Federal budget system.--Future of fiscal reforms in Congress.

Brimmer, Andrew F. The political economy of limitations on Federal spending. Challenge, v. 23, Mar.-Apr. 1980: 6-11. HC101.N533, v. 23

"A constitutional amendment to balance the federal budget would make it harder for the government to stabilize the economy, hamper its efforts to counter recession, and restrict its spending flexibility."

Bork, Robert H. Would a budget amendment work? Wall Street journal, Apr. 4, 1979: 20. Newsp

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Brozen, Yale. Deficits are draining strength from the economy. Enterprise, v. 2, Apr. 1978: 13-14.

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Partial contents.--The old-time fiscal religion.--Money-financed deficits and political democracy.--Institutional constraints and political choice.--Alternative budgetary rules.--A return to fiscal principle.

Burkhead, Jesse. Balance the Federal budget? Public affairs comment, v. 25, May 1979: 1-7.

"The campaign to require a balanced federal budget by way of constitutional amendment raises a number of interesting legal issues, partisan political issues, and, of course, economic issues centering on the nature of the current inflation and the efficacy of the stabilization tools that are available to deal with it."

Cameron, Juan. The noble experiment in congressional budget discipline. Fortune, v. 93, May 1976: 206-120, 214, 218. HF5001.F7, v. 93

"The new procedure for relating spending to revenues could set those deficits under better control and alter power relationships in Washington--if it lasts."

----- Waking up to the budget menace. Fortune, v. 97, July 3, 1978: 50-54, 56. HF5001.F7, v. 97

"A flourishing economy was supposed to wipe out those towering deficits. Instead, the deficits are threatening the economy."

Carlson, Keith M. Large Federal budget deficits: perspectives and prospects. Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis review, v. 58, Oct. 1976: 2-7. HG107.A22A2, v. 58

"To the extent that the active part of the deficit remains, the deficit poses an inflationary threat as the recovery continues and the economy moves back toward high employment. Consequently, the size of the budget deficit carries little meaning by itself unless it is analyzed in terms of its active and passive elements."

Clark, Timothy B. It's back to the drawing board for congressional budget cutters. National journal, v. 11, Dec. 22, 1979: 2148-2151.

JK1.N28, v. 11

"Frustration with the long struggle to adopt a fiscal 1980 budget and dismay over the size of that budget's deficit have won converts to the balanced budget cause."

Cohen, Richard E. Trying to kick the spending habit. National journal, v. 11, Apr. 21, 1979: 632-636.

JK1.N28, v. 11

"Nearly everyone is endorsing a balancing budget as a goal, but it remains to be seen whether Congress can find a workable formula for forcing an end to deficits." Says that "though a constitutional amendment forbidding deficits seems unlikely, a statutory requirement--albeit one with an escape hatch--seems a distinct possibility, given Congress' current mood."

Conte, Christopher R. Balanced budget: political scramble; Congress seeks handle on spending restraint issue. Congressional quarterly weekly report, v. 37, Feb. 17, 1979: 267-270.

JK1.C15, v.37

Cohodas, Nadine. Drive for balanced budget amendment gaining ground.

Congressional quarterly weekly report, v. 40, Mar. 27, 1982: 659-662.

JK1.C15, v. 40

Reviews efforts in Congress to propose a constitutional amendment, and in state legislatures to call a Federal constitutional convention, to mandate a balanced Federal budget and prohibit routine deficit spending, and outlines the roles of the National Taxpayers Union and National Tax Limitation Committee in lobbying for these measures.

The Constitution and the budget: are constitutional limits on tax, spending, and budget power desirable at the Federal level? W. S. Moore and Rudolph G. Penner, editors. Washington, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research [1980] 155 p. (AEI symposia, 80B) HJ2052.C646

Contents.--Amending the Constitution by convention.--The effects of constitutional restraints on economic policy making.--Constitutional restrictions on the power of the purse and the theory of public choice.--A roundup of the policy issues raised by proposals for constitutional limits.

Controlling Federal Government expenditures: the roles of Congress and the administration; CED symposium. New York, Committee for Economic Development, 1973. 21 p.

HJ7539.C67

Contents.--Establishing a congressional budget, by A. Ullman.--Presidential budgetary reform, by R. Ash.--The shortcomings in congressional budget making, by M. Weidenbaum.--Precedents for impoundment, by R. Davenport.

Controversy over proposed mandatory balancing of the Federal budget; pro & con. Congressional digest, v. 55, Mar. 1976: whole issue. JK1.C65, v. 55

Partial contents.--The Federal balance sheet since 1789.--Present procedures for considering the budget.--Current budgetary practices and constraints in the states.--Actions to date in the 94th Congress.--Pros & cons.

Cox, William N. Constitutional limitation of the Federal budget. Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta economic review, v. 64, May-June 1979: 73-76.

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Davenport, John A. Amending the Constitution is a dubious way to curb Federal spending. Fortune, v. 99, Mar. 22, 1979: 114-116. HF5001.F7, v. 99

"The objective is fine, but efforts to reach it by the amendment route run into serious legal and economic difficulties."

----- The U.S. rediscovers the economics of supply. Fortune, v. 98, Oct. 23, 1978: 46-48. HF5001.F7, v. 98

"While the great tax revolt has been making the headlines, support has also been building for an assault on federal spending. Some cherished economic theories are toppling."

Davidson, James Dale. The balanced budget amendment: an end to the "good-will" theory of government. Taxing & spending, v. 2, no. 4, 1979: 42-47.

HJ2381.F67, v. 2

The chairman of the National Taxpayers Union explains why it is necessary to have a constitutional amendment that requires a balanced Federal budget.

----- The TRA--Taxpayers' Rights Amendment. Across the Board, v. 16, Feb. 1979: 12-13, 77-78. HC101.C64, v. 16

"A proposal for a Constitutional Amendment requiring that the Federal budget be balanced. Already 22 states have informed Congress of their desire for a convention to start to do just that."

Democratic Research Organization. Committee to Investigate a Balanced Federal Budget. Report. In Remarks of Richard C. White. Congressional record, v. 124, Aug. 16, 1978: 26510-26518 J11.R5, v. 124

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Domenici, Pete. Can Congress control spending? Policy review, no. 14, fall 1980: 49-65. H1.P69

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Dornbusch, Rudiger. Inflation, capital, and deficit finance. Journal of money, credit, and banking, v. 9, Feb. 1977: 141-150. HG201.J6, v. 9

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- Heller, Walter W. Balanced budget fallacies. Wall Street journal, Mar. 16, 1979: 22. Newsp
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Is deficitus fiscalis an endangered species? Citibank monthly letter, Mar. 1979: 6-9. HC1066.F52

"The cry for fiscal responsibility by amendment is getting louder--and the proposals for writing it into law are proliferating. Whatever happens, the end result will be a rein on federal spending."

Kaus, Robert M. Power to the people: making the Constitution work again. Washington monthly, v. 11, Oct. 1979: 51-58. E838.W37, v. 11

"Sometime in the next year the 34th state may call for a constitutional convention to balance the budget. It is a prospect that scares many of us--not so much the balanced budget as the idea of the convention itself, and the possibility that it could open up our founding document for a general revision. If the balanced budget drive fails, or even if it succeeds without producing 'Con Con II,' we will breathe a collective sigh of relief." Asserts that "the truth is that our constitution was not designed to allow the government to act quickly on the wishes of the majority. It was designed to frustrate that action. The exaggerated power of 'special interests,' the debilitating stalemates between the president and Congress, are neither accidental nor necessary features of our politics."

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Knapp, Elaine S. A balanced Federal budget and constitutional convention controversy. State government, v. 52, spring 1979: 58-64. JK2403.S7, v. 52
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Lee, L. Douglas. Balancing the budget--does it matter? Journal of the Institute for Socioeconomic Studies, v. 5, winter 1980: 25-35. HV95.I49a, v. 5
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MacLaury, Bruce K. Proposals to limit Federal spending and balance the budget. In Pechman, Joseph A., ed. Setting national priorities: the 1980 budget. Washington, Brookings Institution, 1979. p. 213-223. HJ2051.S47
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Malbin, Michael J. Huge budget deficit projections fuel drive for balanced budget amendment. National journal, v. 14, May 1, 1982: 757-762.

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 The president of the National Tax Limitation Committee explains why a constitutional amendment to limit Federal spending is needed and discusses the provisions of such an amendment.
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