

New Caucus to Push for Passage of Balanced Budget Amendment

(WASHINGTON) —Rep. Mike Coffman (R-CO) and Rep. Jim Marshall (D-GA) today launched a new bipartisan congressional caucus aimed at adding support for H.J. Res. 1, the Balanced Budget Amendment. The bipartisan caucus will be dedicated to achieving passage of H.J. Res. 1, and to educating Members of Congress on the necessity and importance of the proposed amendment to the Constitution. At the launch event Reps. Coffman and Marshall announced they would co-chair the newly formed caucus and that both Reps. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and Mike McIntyre (D-NC) would be founding members.

“The idea of a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget is not new, but it is important. In 1995, a balanced budget amendment passed the House but failed to meet the two-thirds requirement in the Senate by a single vote. It won’t be easy, but it’s not impossible. It’s not overly complicated. It’s not the concept that is hard; it’s finding the will to do so. Millions of American families do it. Millions of American small businesses do it. Forty nine states do it. It’s time for the federal government to do it too. The only solution is to hold Congress’ feet to the fire and require that they, like every family and nearly every state in the country, have a balanced budget,” Coffman said.

Rep. Marshall remarked, "Passing a balanced budget amendment won't be easy; doing the right thing rarely is. Balancing the budget will call for some tough choices. We need to make them. America simply cannot afford to continue racking up debt—our government's addiction to debt is a monumental threat to our future. I want to thank Rep. Coffman for his leadership as well as Rep. Goodlatte for working across party lines to do the right thing for our country's future."

"I applaud Congressmen Coffman and Marshall on the formation of the Balanced Budget Amendment Caucus. As our nation faces many difficult decisions, Congress will face great pressure to spend beyond its means rather than making difficult decisions about spending priorities. My balanced budget amendment ensures that Congress and the President are held accountable to the American taxpayer. Unless Congress is forced to make the decisions necessary to create a balanced budget, it will always have the all-too-tempting option of shirking their responsibility. Americans are desperate for fiscal reform and the Balanced Budget Constitutional Amendment is a common sense approach to ensure that Congress is bound by the same fiscal principles that America's families face each day," said Goodlatte.

The Balanced Budget Amendment Caucus will work to educate members and add cosponsors for H.J. Res. 1. The measure currently has 175 cosponsors and needs 290 to reach the required two thirds majority for passage.

H.J. Res. 1, introduced by Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) on January 6, 2009 prohibits outlays for a fiscal year (except those for repayment of debt principal) from exceeding total receipts for that

fiscal year (except those derived from borrowing) unless Congress, by a three-fifths roll call vote of each chamber, authorizes a specific excess of outlays over receipts.

The measure would also require a three-fifths roll call vote of each chamber to increase the public debt limit. It also directs the president to submit a balanced budget to Congress annually and prohibits any bill to increase revenue from becoming law unless approved by a majority of each chamber by roll call vote which prohibit tax increases from being voice voted or passed by unanimous consent. The measure does authorize waivers of these provisions when a declaration of war is in effect or under other specified circumstances involving military conflict.





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