

The "Balanced Budget" Amendment: *Amendment actually makes it harder to balance the budget!*

Provisions of H.J. Res. 2, the proposed "Balanced Budget" Amendment:

- A budget not in balance can only be passed with a 3/5 vote in the House and Senate
- Debt limit increases require a 3/5 vote in the House and Senate
- Provisions of the BBA may be waived by majority vote if United States is "engaged" in a military conflict

- **The "Balanced Budget" Amendment does not mandate a balanced budget.**
 - All debate on this bill has been about the **title** and not the provisions included in it.
 - Other than the title, **the provisions** of H.J. Res. 2 cannot be found in **any state constitution**.
- **The "Balanced Budget" Amendment will make it harder to balance the budget**
 - Every budget considered by the House this year (including the Ryan plan and the even more conservative Republican Study Committee plan) was not balanced in the first fiscal year. Each of these budgets, under this amendment, would require a 3/5 majority to pass the House (261 votes) and Senate (60 votes).
 - Common sense suggests a meaningful deficit reduction plan would be more difficult to pass with a supermajority rather than a simple majority.
 - H.R. 1, the FY11 continuing resolution with over \$60 billion in cuts only received 235 votes. The Ryan Budget that transforms Medicare to a voucher system only received 235 votes. As draconian the cuts in these plans were, neither would have a chance of passing under this amendment.
 - Once it is ascertained that a 3/5 vote is required, there is no limit on how big the deficit can be.
- **The "Balanced Budget" Amendment requires a 3/5 vote to raise the debt ceiling** – as if this year's debt ceiling drama is not enough of a spectacle.
- **The "Balanced Budget" Amendment requires that all government expenditures equal receipts in each fiscal year.** Even though **Social Security** holds \$2.6 trillion in Treasury securities, under the provisions of this amendment payments from the Social Security trust fund to pay promised benefits would be considered outlays thus requiring new taxes or spending cuts.
- **The "Balanced Budget" Amendment can be waived by a majority of both chambers of Congress if the United States is "engaged in military conflict which causes an imminent and serious military threat to national security."**
 - If Congress and the President can't achieve a 3/5 vote to pass a budget, every two-bit dictator better watch out!

***Balancing the budget requires tough choices;
the "Balanced Budget" Amendment will make it less likely
that those tough choices will be made.***