

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJM 8028

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS,
FEBRUARY 5, 1992**

Brief Description: Petitioning the federal government to balance the budget.

SPONSORS: Senators McCaslin, Oke, Cantu, Barr, Sellar, Amondson, Anderson, Hayner, L. Smith, Craswell, Bailey, Roach, West, Rasmussen and Pelz

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chairman; Roach, Vice Chairman; Madsen, and Sutherland.

Staff: Barbara Howard (786-7410)

Hearing Dates: February 4, 1992; February 5, 1992

BACKGROUND:

There is no prohibition in the U.S. Constitution against federal appropriations exceeding federal revenues in any given fiscal year. Two methods for amending the Constitution are set forth in Article 5. Congress itself, by a two-thirds vote of both houses, may propose an amendment. Alternatively, upon application by the legislatures of two-thirds of the states, Congress must call a constitutional convention to propose amendments.

Any proposed amendment must be ratified to be valid. Congress may provide for either of two methods of ratification: (1) by three-fourths of the state legislatures or (2) by conventions in every state, three-fourths of which must approve ratification.

SUMMARY:

Congress is asked to adopt an amendment to the U.S. Constitution requiring that the President submit and the Congress adopt a balanced budget, with certain exceptions, and submit such an amendment to the states for ratification. As an alternative, the Legislature of the state of Washington makes application to the Congress to call a convention for the exclusive purpose of proposing such an amendment to the Constitution, for submission to the states.

If Congress adopts a similar amendment within 60 days after the legislatures of two-thirds of the states have made application for a convention, this application for a convention is no longer of any force or effect. The

application is also rendered null and void in the event such a convention is not limited to the specific and exclusive purpose.

This application constitutes a continuing application until at least two-thirds of the legislatures have made similar application for a convention or until Congress has adopted a balanced budget amendment.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

All references to calling constitutional conventions are removed.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR: None

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: No one