

News from Senator

# BOB DOLE



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## AMERICAN PEOPLE WANT BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

The following is the opening statement of Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) before the Subcommittee on the Constitution of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, May 23, 1979:

Mr. Chairman, I commend you for moving forward with hearings on the pressing need for a constitutional amendment to balance the federal budget. I had the pleasure of testifying before this subcommittee at the first round of hearings on this subject held on March 12, 1979. Since that time there has been growing Senate interest in promptly completing subcommittee action on the various balanced-budget proposals. Indeed, a substantial group of Senators, including myself, have been regularly meeting in an informal caucus to promote action on a balanced budget amendment.

Mr. Chairman, the constituent mail that I have received overwhelmingly favors adoption of a balanced budget amendment. This mail is reflective of the broad sentiment of the American people as revealed by numerous public opinion polls. I believe the American people are right. A constitutional amendment to balance the budget offers the only realistic prospect for restoring fiscal responsibility to Washington. Accordingly, on the first day of this Congress, I introduced S.J. Res. 5, a proposed constitutional amendment that is a three-pronged attack on the fiscal problems facing this nation. S.J. Res. 5 not only requires a balanced budget, but it also directly limits federal spending and taxation. The proposal is drafted to provide the flexibility needed to manage the economy and to respond to any financial or political crisis, yet it still requires reasonable fiscal restraint.

I strongly disagree with those who label a constitutional amendment to balance the budget as a quick-fix or gimmick. Proposed amendments, such as S.J. Res. 5, represent a fundamental philosophical shift toward greater fiscal discipline and toward a smaller and necessarily more efficient federal government. If Congress fails to heed the message now being delivered by the states and the American people by moving forward on a reasonable measure such as S.J. Res. 5, the states will have no choice but to impose their own solution to the constitutional amendment procedure.

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