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Fundraiser
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TALKING POINTS FOR COALITIONS FOR AMERICA RECEPTION

Background on Coalitions

- Coalitions for America is a unique endeavor--it is comprised of 110 different business, defense and family groups who have banded together to strengthen their collective voice to promote free enterprise, limited government, a strong defense and traditional values.
- Coalitions for America was formed in 1977 and it organized into a variety of different groups which focus on particular issue areas.
- For example, the Kingston group focuses on domestic and economic issues, the Stanton Group on defense and foreign policy, the Library Court Group on family and social issues, the 721 Group on criminal justice and judicial reform.
- In addition the Coalitions have added a Jewish, Conservative Alliance and the Carroll Group, a group of conservative lay Catholic leaders.

Coalitions Have Made a Difference

- Coalitions and its various subgroups have been extremely helpful to me as Majority Leader as we have pursued common goals.
- For example, I have greatly appreciated the support and lobbying work of the Kingston Group as the Senate battled in a lonely fight to cut the budget deficit.
- I have appreciated the help of Coalition groups in MX and SDI votes, on gun control, in opposition to the superfund VAT tax and many other issues.
- We may not always agree on every issue, but we agree more often than not.
- In addition to the contact I have directly with the Coalition groups, my staff meets on a regular basis with Paul's staff to review the issues that were raised in the group meetings.

Paul's Role

- I have worked with Paul for many years and greatly appreciate his counsel, clear thinking and his support.
- Coalitions for America is Paul's creation and I don't believe it would be as effective without Paul's personal energy and commitment.
- In sense, Paul is the engine that keeps the coalition train on the tracks and moving forward.
- Knowing Paul's obsession with trains, I would like to present Paul with this book "Railways at War" to remind him what working the Congress is like.

Why Now

- The campaign for a balanced budget amendment is not a new one, but its urgency is increasingly apparent. As we keep piling up massive deficits, we threaten the health of our economy and the welfare of our children, and their children. That's what is really at stake here.
- Very soon the Senate will be asked to raise the debt ceiling to over \$2 trillion. That is a massive debt burden, and it will keep piling up unless we do something. But even if we could agree on a major deficit-reduction plan for the near term--which we haven't been able to do yet--we need a long-term solution as well, to improve the odds in favor of fiscal discipline, year in and year out.
- No one proposes to write a particular economic philosophy into the Constituion. But maintaining discipline over our spending habits and our debt load is not a matter of economic philosophy: it's a matter of good government, pure and simple. My own State of Kansas has a limit on the debt it can incur--and that limitation has worked well for the people of Kansas, and for politicians in Kansas as well. They benefit from that kind of discipline, and so can we.

(Note: the Kansas Constitution limits the States debt to \$1 million. By statute, the State must reduce expenditures if revenues fall short)

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

- The balanced budget amendment is an appropriate long-term response to our fiscal problem: our inability to eliminate deficit spending. Even with strong public pressure to balance the budget, Congress hasn't been able to do so. We need an institutional restraint--in the Constitution--to help us keep the public interest ahead of special interest pressures.
- Legislation to require balanced budgets has never succeeded, because it can simply be overridden by a subsequent action of Congress. The Constitution should not lightly be tampered with, but there is no longer any question that our sorry record on deficits and spending is causing great concern throughout the country, and around the world. That is why 32 of the 34 States required to call a constitutional convention on this issue have petitioned Congress for such a convention--that is a message that we in Congress have to heed, and a 33rd State may join the roster this year. I have been in Michigan three times this year to urge support for a balanced budget amendment.
- The fundamental problem of deficit spending demands a fundamental solution. The balanced budget amendment reported by the Senate Judiciary on July 11 does not embody any particular economic theory, but just requires that Congress be specifically accountable for its decisions on fiscal policy.
- The amendment would just require a 3/5 vote to adopt a deficit budget, and an actual majority (51 Senators, 218 Representatives) to raise the level of taxation as a percent of the national income. That is all there is to it: increased accountability, and an appropriate counter to the never-ending pressures for responding to special interests.
- This is not a partisan issue and it is certainly not a quick-fix: we have to do everything we can right now to reduce spending and deficits. But we also need to reform the basic way we deal with the budget in Congress. The balanced budget amendment would limit our options in a way that is good for us and good for the country.
- No one claims that a fiscal restraint amendment is a panacea for our immediate deficit dilemma, and it should not be used as an excuse for ignoring our own lack of responsibility in failing to make a real impact on the triple-digit deficits we are facing. For that we need substantive legislation to

reduce spending, well beyond what we agreed to do in this year's budget resolution.

Convention Call

- The campaign in the States for a constitutional convention to draft a balanced budget amendment shows how keenly this issue is felt at the grassroots level. Polls consistently show that between 70% and 80% of the people favor a balanced budget amendment.
- In my view the convention calls from the States have been very effective in getting Congress to focus on this issue. That's one reason the Senate was able to pass the balanced budget amendment in 1982.
- Article V of the Constitution provides for the convention method of amendment precisely in order to get a recalcitrant Congress to respond to an overwhelming popular consensus. It's not that we are eager to hold a convention: but if Congress doesn't want a convention, it ought to respond to the demands for a balanced budget amendment.
- Convention calls need not be feared: Congress can properly limit a convention, and many of the 32 State petitions on the subject say outright that are not aimed at an open convention. When neither Congress nor the States want a wide open or 'runaway' convention, I am not certain why some fear the idea of convention calls.
- As a former Member of the Judiciary Committee, I am convinced that Congress can limit any convention to the subject at hand--in this case the balanced budget amendment. In fact, both last year and again this year our Judiciary Committee has approved legislation (S. 40) providing regular procedures for the convention method of proposing amendments. Furthermore, in 1973 the American Bar Association concluded in their study of this issue that Congress had power to limit a convention to the subject matter of the petitions.
- If an open convention were a real danger, we would be having one right now. In addition to the 32 petitions on the balanced budget amendment, Congress has received 7 other petitions for a convention on various other subjects. That is more than enough to require a convention, if Congress were to disregard the petition. But Congress doesn't, and it is not expected to.