

Dear Members of the House,

Two bills will come to the floor of the house in the coming days, **HR392** and **HJR008**. Both of these bills are extremely important and deserve your enhanced attention as they involve an Article V convention called by the states. Some voices are asking you to dismiss these two bills for fear of a run-away constitutional convention. I urge you, rather, to consider these two bills carefully, and to vote for both this session.

There is no question that spending at the Federal level is out of control. Many Utah citizens have long felt that a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution, like HJR008, is a vital tool for restoring fiscal sanity to our nation. For years we have voiced these concerns to leaders in Washington, and yet nothing has changed; rather, our fiscal house is in greater disarray, and the need for solutions more pressing. America's fiscal problems will not be solved in Washington. It is time for the states to act. Article V is exactly the tool that the Founders placed in the states' hands for precisely the times in which we find ourselves.

There are some voices in Utah who, while supportive of a balanced budget amendment and in agreement with the challenges Utah faces due to the encroachment of the Federal Government, are concerned that an Article V call could devolve into a run-away constitutional convention. I believe that, thanks in large measure to these warnings over the years, the states are better prepared than ever to bring to pass a safe convention, limited to those amendments only that the state legislatures have collectively authorized in advance of the convention. Please allow me to list for you a few points to consider in support of HJR008 as a safe pathway for the states to re-assert themselves as viable counterweight to the growing mass of the Federal Government.

- The bill calls for a limited convention, considering a BBA only. This is not a constitutional convention, or a con-con, or any other general revamp of the US constitution. We trust Utah legislators, including those who (rightly) oppose a con-con, to be able to pre-empt any attempt at a run-away convention. Especially with the foresight we have of potential risks, and legislation like **HR392 backstopping** the convention's limits.
- Amending the Constitution is *by design* very difficult. No matter the result of any call for a Article V convention, 38 states must ratify any changes that come out of that convention. Put another way, **13 conservative states** (i.e. either the house or senate in 13 states) **can block any undesirable outcome**. Given the conservative makeup of most state legislatures, this is a very likely pathway. On the other hand, a balanced budget amendment enjoys broad, multi-generational, bi-partisan support across state boundaries.
- Utah is one of over 30 states considering Article V amendments. There is wide agreement among these participants that the scope of the convention be decided in advance to safeguard against surprises. I encourage you to discuss this point further with some of your colleagues who have been in dialogues with representatives from other states.
- In many ways, we see in the status quo an on-going constitutional convention. There are too many examples of the Legislative Branch, the Executive Branch, and even the Supreme Court setting aside the Constitution when its boundaries are considered inconvenient. The call to action that the States will raise with an Article V convention will be **in defense of Constitutional governance**. The convention's mandate will be to bolster the authority of Constitution, not undermine it.

From time to time, particularly when the Government in Washington appears especially unresponsive to the wishes of the States or the People, we see states begin to call for an Article V Convention. Rarely has the momentum in our nation for a convention been as strong as it is today. For this reason, HR392 is extremely important, and should be a non-controversial bill. Even those who oppose an Article V Convention on the grounds that it *may* devolve into a run-away constitutional convention should support HR392. If there is a convention at any point in the future, whether Utah has participated in the call or not, we will want to send delegates. Especially considering arguments made by those who (rightly) wish to safeguard against a run-away convention, groundwork must be laid in advance such that delegates represent exactly the wishes of the Utah Legislature, and not those of any other party. HR392 establishes important requirements that restrict the votes of any delegate to those authorized by joint resolution in the state legislature.

Representatives, I urge you to vote for HJR008 and HB392. The Constitution empowers you as state legislators to right the tilting ship that is the American Federal Government. Bold action is not without risk, but at this moment in history, America must rely once again on the strength of her member States.

Sincerely,

Jeff Campbell

Spanish Fork, UT