

Tyler August: Balanced budget amendment advances

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Washington is broken. For too many years, both Democrats and Republicans have implemented poor fiscal policy putting our nation at risk. As I write this, the federal debt is \$19,944,932,146,987 and climbing by about \$100,000 with each sentence I write. And there is no end in sight. This is what makes it such a danger to our nation and our children and grandchildren's future.

How much is \$20 trillion dollars of debt? Well, breaking it down per US citizen, would amount to over \$60,000 of debt for every man, woman, and child. It is clear Congress is unwilling to make the tough decisions to balance the federal budget.

For years our Congressman, Paul Ryan, has offered common-sense solutions to balance the federal budget, which we applaud. However, too many others in Washington have stood in his way, making the debt grow to unsustainable and dangerous levels.

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The time has come for the states to step in and force the federal government to balance its budget. The states can do this by utilizing a little-known tool that was written into Article V of the US Constitution, which allows the states to amend the constitution.

The process is started when 34 states pass a resolution calling for a convention. So far, 27 other states have called for an amendment to balance the federal budget. Ultimately, 38 states would need to ratify any proposed amendment.

Forty nine states, including Wisconsin, are required to pass a balanced state budget. So why should Congress be any different? Just like any family or small business, Washington should be required to balance its budget.

The founding fathers set up this process for this very scenario: should Washington become so corrupt or irresponsible that the states could step in and amend the constitution. It is quite a brilliant tool that provides a key check and balance on the federal government.

The State Assembly just passed an article V resolution calling for a balanced budget at the federal level. As a co-author of the legislation, I proudly voted yes.

Spending in Washington has been out of control for too many years. It is my hope that this will be a first step toward balancing the federal budget and returning toward a more limited and lean government.

— August, R-Lake Geneva, represents the 32nd Assembly District and serves as Assembly speaker pro tempore.