

PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF
THE UNITED STATES REQUIRING A BALANCED BUDGET
FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

FEBRUARY 25, 2026.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed

Mr. JORDAN, from the Committee on the Judiciary,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

DISSENTING VIEWS

[To accompany H.J. Res. 139]

The Committee on the Judiciary, to whom was referred the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 139) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States requiring a balanced budget for the Federal Government, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the joint resolution do pass.

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Purpose and Summary

H.J. Res. 139, introduced by Rep. Andy Biggs (R-AZ), would amend the U.S. Constitution to balance the budget of the federal government. This amendment would cap yearly federal expenditures at the average of the previous three years' receipts, adjusted for inflation and the population of U.S. citizens. The amendment would also provide two mechanisms by which Congress can authorize additional expenditures in an emergency: (1) by a simple majority vote after a declaration of war; or (2) by a two-thirds majority in each house for any emergency (e.g., a natural disaster relief package). The amendment would further require a two-thirds vote of both houses to raise taxes. Finally, the amendment would authorize Congress to pass implementing legislation to enforce the amendment and would take effect five years after ratification.

Background and Need for the Legislation

The debate over the need to establish a constitutional limit on spending or debt is not new.¹ Scholars frequently cite Thomas Jefferson as the leading Founding Father on this issue “because of his distrust of government debt” and his advocacy that “the way to cure what he felt was extravagant spending by the Administration of John Adams was a constitutional amendment that took away the power of the federal government to incur debt.”²

Today, a balanced budget mandate for Congress continues to receive broad public support as well as support from the Trump Administration.³ A balanced budget would advance three major objectives: (1) ending the perverse practice of saddling future generations with a large national debt; (2) improving the economy by lowering the deficit; and (3) increasing citizens' trust in America's political institutions.⁴ During his first term, President Donald Trump publicly supported a balanced budget.⁵ During his second term, President Trump has indicated that he still supports a balanced budget, declaring in a joint address to Congress that he would “do what has not been done in 24 years: balance the federal budget.”⁶ President Trump also signed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act into law on July 4, 2025, which reduces the projected debt-to-GDP ratio, is projected to flip primary deficits into surpluses by 2034, and, factoring in forecasted economic growth, reduces the U.S. deficit by about \$4.5 trillion relative to the policy baseline prior to enactment.⁷

A balanced budget amendment also has widespread support among the states. Several governors, such as Governor Greg Gianforte (R-MT), Governor Ron DeSantis (R-FL), and Governor

¹JAMES V. SATURNO & MEGAN S. LYNCH, CONG. RSCH. SERV. NO. R41907, A BALANCED BUDGET CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT: BACKGROUND AND CONGRESSIONAL OPTIONS (2019).

²*Id.* at 1.

³See e.g., Andrew Crosby & Allyson L. Holbrook, Public Support for a Balanced Budget Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Trends and Predictors, 39 Pub. Budgeting & Fin. 44 (2019).

⁴SATURNO, *supra* note 1, at 4.

⁵EXEC. OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY: H.J. RES. 2—PROPOSING A BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES (Apr. 11, 2018).

⁶President Donald J. Trump, *Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress* (Mar. 4, 2025).

⁷*The One Big Beautiful Bill Drives Deficit Reduction*, S. COMM. ON FIN. (Aug. 18, 2025); *The One Big Beautiful Bill Slashes Deficits, National Debt While Unleashing Economic Growth*, THE WHITE HOUSE (June 30, 2025). Primary deficits exclude borrowing costs.

Brad Little (R-ID), have called on Congress to pass a balanced budget amendment.⁸ Currently, 28 states have submitted petitions calling for a constitutional convention to propose a balanced budget amendment.⁹ Thirty-four petitions are required to organize a convention of the states, but Congress has the authority to propose an amendment itself.¹⁰

Congress has considered several variations of a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution since the founding. In the 118th Congress, for example, at least five Balanced Budget Amendments were introduced in the House.¹¹ H.J. Res. 139 builds from this foundation by incorporating the best components from previous amendment proposals in order to ensure fiscal discipline while providing necessary flexibility to address emergencies.

EXCEPTIONS FOR WAR, NATIONAL SECURITY, OR NATURAL DISASTERS

Opponents of a balanced budget amendment have expressed concern that a rigid balanced budget requirement would harm the federal government's ability to spend at levels necessary to win a war or respond to an emergency. H.J. Res. 139 addresses this concern by authorizing exceptions for Congress to run a deficit during times of war or emergency, if the proper thresholds are met (a declaration of war requires only a majority vote and any other emergency requires a two-thirds vote in each chamber).

Congress has not declared war since 1942,¹² but the United States has engaged in many foreign conflicts since then. The provision in H.J. Res. 139 would require a declaration of war to deficit spend, incentivizing Congress to either declare war or not authorize armed conflict due to limited resources.

In the case of an emergency other than a declared war, Congress would need a two-thirds majority vote in each chamber to waive the balanced budget requirement and deficit spend. This is a reasonable threshold, as it is the same threshold required by the Constitution for other extraordinary legislative acts (e.g., expulsion, impeachment conviction, and the ratification of treaties).¹³ This heightened threshold ensures broad consensus in Congress, preventing abuse of this exception.

DELAYING THE AMENDMENT'S EFFECTIVE DATE

H.J. Res. 139's five-year effective date is a reasonable measure that gives Congress time to adjust to a balanced budget after decades of deficit spending. This allows Congress to get our fiscal house in order gradually, rather than making drastic cuts immediately, while maintaining an aggressive timeline for balance. This provision is consistent with previous proposals, which also postponed the amendment from taking effect for a certain period of

⁸Press Release, Gov. Brad Little, Gov. Little Hosts Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to Push for Balanced Budget Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Mar. 24, 2025); Press Release, State of Montana Newsroom, Governors Gianforte, DeSantis Promote Balanced Budget Amendment to U.S. Constitution (Mar. 24, 2025).

⁹Mason Brighton, *Florida's governor backs Kentucky push for balanced-budget amendment*, SPECTRUM NEWS (Feb. 18, 2026).

¹⁰*Id.*

¹¹*See, e.g.*, H.J. Res. 9, 118th Cong. (2023); H.J. Res. 15, 118th Cong. (2023); H.J. Res. 19, 118th Cong. (2023); H.J. Res. 80, 118th Cong. (2023).

¹²H.J. Res. 321, 77th Cong. (1942).

¹³*See generally* U.S. CONST. Art I, § 3, 5, 7; Art II, § 2; Art. V.

time after three-fourths of states ratify the amendment (i.e., the date of the amendment’s official incorporation into the Constitution).¹⁴

DEFINITION OF RECEIPTS

For the purposes of H.J. Res. 139, the “total receipts” against which the budget expenditures must be balanced is calculated by averaging the receipts of the previous three years with adjustments based on inflation and the population of U.S. citizens. The average of three years should provide a large enough sample size to reduce the effects of any outlier years with extraordinarily high or low receipts. It will also make the “total receipts” figure more predictable year-to-year, providing certainty for Congress and the country.

INCENTIVIZING CONGRESS TO ENSURE A MORE LIMITED FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

H.J. Res. 139 requires tax increases to be approved by a two-thirds vote in each chamber. This guardrail would ensure that efforts to balance the federal budget would focus on reducing excessive spending rather than raising revenue through exorbitant tax increases on Americans.

Hearings

For the purposes of clause 3(c)(6)(A) of House rule XIII, the following hearing was used to develop H.J. Res. 139: “Balancing the Federal Budget: Examining Proposals for a Balanced Budget Amendment,” a hearing held on December 3, 2025, before the Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Government of the Judiciary Committee.¹⁵ The subcommittee heard testimony from the following witnesses:

- David M. Walker, Former Comptroller General of the United States;
- Kurt Couchman, Senior Fellow, Americans for Prosperity;
- Brittany Madni, Executive Vice President, Economic Policy Innovation Center; and
- Brendan Duke, Senior Director for Federal Fiscal Policy, Center for Budget and Policy Priorities.

The hearing focused on the need for the federal government to balance its budget and begin to control its fiscal crisis brought on by prolonged deficit spending and ballooning debt.

Committee Consideration

On February 3, 2026, the Committee met in open session and ordered the bill, H.J. Res. 139, favorably reported by a roll call vote of 16–10, a quorum being present.

¹⁴ See, e.g., H.J. Res. 6, 119th Cong. (2025); H.J. Res. 10, 119th Cong. (2025); H.J. Res. 17, 119th Cong. (2025); H.J. Res. 110, 119th Cong. (2025).

¹⁵ *Balancing the Federal Budget: Examining Proposals for a Balanced Budget Amendment: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on the Const. and Limited Gov’t of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 119th Cong. (Dec. 3, 2025).

Committee Votes

In compliance with clause 3(b) of House rule XIII, the following roll call votes occurred during the Committee's consideration of H.J. Res. 139:

1. Vote on Amendment #1 to H.J. Res. 139, offered by Ms. Jayapal—failed 8 ayes to 9 nays.

2. Vote on Amendments #2 & #3 (considered en bloc) to H.J. Res. 139, offered by Ms. Scanlon—failed 9 ayes to 13 nays.

3. Vote on tabling the motion to appeal the ruling of the chair (germaneness with respect to Amendment #4, offered by Ms. Kamlager-Dove)—agreed to 14 ayes to 9 nays.

4. Vote on favorably reporting H.J. Res. 139—passed 16 ayes to 10 nays.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

119th CONGRESS

25-19

ROLL CALL

Date: 2/3/20

Vote on: Jayapal Amndt (#1) to HJRCS 139

Roll Call #: 1

REPUBLICANS	AYE	NO	PRESENT	DEMOCRATS	AYE	NO	PRESENT
MR. JORDAN (OH) <i>Chairman</i>		✓		MR. RASKIN (MD) <i>Ranking Member</i>	✓		
MR. ISSA (CA)				MR. NADLER (NY)	✓		
MR. BIGGS (AZ)		✓		MS. LOFGREN (CA)			
MR. McCLINTOCK (CA)		✓		MR. COHEN (TN)			
MR. TIFFANY (WI)				MR. JOHNSON (GA)			
MR. MASSIE (KY)				MR. SWALWELL (CA)			
MR. ROY (TX)				MR. LIEU (CA)			
MR. FITZGERALD (WI)				MS. JAYAPAL (WA)	✓		
MR. CLINE (VA)		✓		MR. CORREA (CA)			
MR. GOODEN (TX)		✓		MS. SCANLON (PA)	✓		
MR. VAN DREW (NJ)				MR. NEGUSE (CO)			
MR. NEHLS (TX)				MS. McBATH (GA)			
MR. MOORE (AL)				MS. ROSS (NC)	✓		
MR. KILEY (CA)				MS. BALINT (VT)	✓		
MS. HAGEMAN (WY)				MR. GARCIA (IL)			
MS. LEE (FL)		✓		MS. KAMLAGER-DOVE (CA)	✓		
MR. HUNT (TX)				MR. MOSKOWITZ (FL)			
MR. FRY (SC)		✓		MR. GOLDMAN (NY)			
MR. GROTHMAN (WI)		✓		MS. CROCKETT (TX)	✓		
MR. KNOTT (NC)							
MR. HARRIS (NC)							
MR. ONDER (MO)		✓					
MR. SCHMIDT (KS)							
MR. GILL (TX)							
MR. BAUMGARTNER (WA)							

Roll Call Totals: Ayes: 8 Nays: 9 Present: X
 Passed: _____ Failed: _____

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

119th CONGRESS

25-19

ROLL CALL

Date: 2/3/20

Vote on: Seanlon Amendments (#2 & 3) to HJRES 139

Roll Call #: 2

REPUBLICANS	AYE	NO	PRESENT	DEMOCRATS	AYE	NO	PRESENT
MR. JORDAN (OH) <i>Chairman</i>		✓		MR. RASKIN (MD) <i>Ranking Member</i>	✓		
MR. ISSA (CA)		✓		MR. NADLER (NY)	✓		
MR. BIGGS (AZ)		✓		MS. LOFGREN (CA)			
MR. McCLINTOCK (CA)		✓		MR. COHEN (TN)			
MR. TIFFANY (WI)				MR. JOHNSON (GA)			
MR. MASSIE (KY)				MR. SWALWELL (CA)			
MR. ROY (TX)				MR. LIEU (CA)			
MR. FITZGERALD (WI)		✓		MS. JAYAPAL (WA)	✓		
MR. CLINE (VA)				MR. CORREA (CA)	✓		
MR. GOODEN (TX)		✓		MS. SCANLON (PA)	✓		
MR. VAN DREW (NJ)		✓		MR. NEGUSE (CO)			
MR. NEHLS (TX)				MS. McBATH (GA)			
MR. MOORE (AL)				MS. ROSS (NC)	✓		
MR. KILEY (CA)		✓		MS. BALINT (VT)	✓		
MS. HAGEMAN (WY)				MR. GARCIA (IL)			
MS. LEE (FL)		✓		MS. KAMLAGER-DOVE (CA)	✓		
MR. HUNT (TX)				MR. MOSKOWITZ (FL)			
MR. FRY (SC)		✓		MR. GOLDMAN (NV)			
MR. GROTHMAN (WI)				MS. CROCKETT (TX)	✓		
MR. KNOTT (NC)		✓					
MR. HARRIS (NC)		✓					
MR. ONDER (MO)		✓					
MR. SCHMIDT (KS)							
MR. GILL (TX)							
MR. BAUMGARTNER (WA)							

Roll Call Totals: Ayes: 9 Nays: 13 Present: X
 Passed: _____ Failed: _____

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

119th CONGRESS

25-19

ROLL CALL

Date: 2/3/20

Vote on: Motion to Table

Roll Call #: 3

REPUBLICANS	AYE	NO	PRESENT	DEMOCRATS	AYE	NO	PRESENT
MR. JORDAN (OH) <i>Chairman</i>	✓			MR. RASKIN (MD) <i>Ranking Member</i>		✓	
MR. ISSA (CA)	✓			MR. NADLER (NY)		✓	
MR. BIGGS (AZ)	✓			MS. LOFGREN (CA)			
MR. McCLINTOCK (CA)	✓			MR. COHEN (TN)			
MR. TIFFANY (WI)				MR. JOHNSON (GA)			
MR. MASSIE (KY)				MR. SWALWELL (CA)			
MR. ROY (TX)				MR. LIEU (CA)			
MR. FITZGERALD (WI)	✓			MS. JAYAPAL (WA)		✓	
MR. CLINE (VA)	✓			MR. CORREA (CA)		✓	
MR. GOODEN (TX)	✓			MS. SCANLON (PA)		✓	
MR. VAN DREW (NJ)	✓			MR. NEGUSE (CO)			
MR. NEHLS (TX)				MS. McBATH (GA)			
MR. MOORE (AL)				MS. ROSS (NC)		✓	
MR. KILEY (CA)				MS. BALINT (VT)		✓	
MS. HAGEMAN (WY)	✓			MR. GARCIA (IL)			
MS. LEE (FL)	✓			MS. KAMLAGER-DOVE (CA)		✓	
MR. HUNT (TX)				MR. MOSKOWITZ (FL)			
MR. FRY (SC)	✓			MR. GOLDMAN (NY)			
MR. GROTHMAN (WI)	✓			MS. CROCKETT (TX)		✓	
MR. KNOTT (NC)							
MR. HARRIS (NC)	✓						
MR. ONDER (MO)	✓						
MR. SCHMIDT (KS)							
MR. GILL (TX)							
MR. BAUMGARTNER (WA)							

Roll Call Totals: Ayes: 14 Nays: 9 Present: _____
 Passed: X Failed: _____

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

119th CONGRESS

25-19

ROLL CALL

Date: 2/3/20

Vote on: Final passage of H.R. 1391

Roll Call #: 4

REPUBLICANS	AYE	NO	PRESENT	DEMOCRATS	AYE	NO	PRESENT
MR. JORDAN (OH) <i>Chairman</i>	✓			MR. RASKIN (MD) <i>Ranking Member</i>		✓	
MR. ISSA (CA)	✓			MR. NADLER (NY)		✓	
MR. BIGGS (AZ)	✓			MS. LOFGREN (CA)			
MR. McCLINTOCK (CA)	✓			MR. COHEN (TN)		✓	
MR. TIFFANY (WI)				MR. JOHNSON (GA)			
MR. MASSIE (KY)				MR. SWALWELL (CA)			
MR. ROY (TX)	✓			MR. LIEU (CA)			
MR. FITZGERALD (WI)	✓			MS. JAYAPAL (WA)		✓	
MR. CLINE (VA)	✓			MR. CORREA (CA)		✓	
MR. GOODEN (TX)	✓			MS. SCANLON (PA)		✓	
MR. VAN DREW (NJ)	✓			MR. NEGUSE (CO)			
MR. NEHLS (TX)				MS. McBATH (GA)			
MR. MOORE (AL)				MS. ROSS (NC)		✓	
MR. KILEY (CA)				MS. BALINT (VT)		✓	
MS. HAGEMAN (WY)	✓			MR. GARCIA (IL)			
MS. LEE (FL)	✓			MS. KAMLAGER-DOVE (CA)		✓	
MR. HUNT (TX)				MR. MOSKOWITZ (FL)			
MR. FRY (SC)	✓			MR. GOLDMAN (NY)			
MR. GROTHMAN (WI)	✓			MS. CROCKETT (TX)		✓	
MR. KNOTT (NC)							
MR. HARRIS (NC)	✓						
MR. ONDER (MO)	✓						
MR. SCHMIDT (KS)	✓						
MR. GILL (TX)							
MR. BAUMGARTNER (WA)							

Roll Call Totals: Ayes: 16 Nays: 10 Present: _____
 Passed: X Failed: _____

Committee Oversight Findings

In compliance with clause 3(c)(1) of House rule XIII, the Committee advises that the findings and recommendations of the Committee, based on oversight activities under clause 2(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, are incorporated in the descriptive portions of this report.

New Budget Authority and Tax Expenditures

With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a) of the *Congressional Budget Act of 1974* and with respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 402 of the *Congressional Budget Act of 1974*, the Committee has requested but not received a cost estimate for this bill from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office. The Committee has requested but not received from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office a statement as to whether this bill contains any new budget authority, spending authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures. The Chairman of the Committee shall cause such estimate and statement to be printed in the *Congressional Record* upon its receipt by the Committee.

Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate

With respect to the requirement of clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, a cost estimate provided by the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the *Congressional Budget Act of 1974* was not made available to the Committee in time for the filing of this report. The Chairman of the Committee shall cause such estimate to be printed in the *Congressional Record* upon its receipt by the Committee.

Committee Estimate of Budgetary Effects

With respect to the requirements of clause 3(d)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee adopts as its own the cost estimate prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the *Congressional Budget Act of 1974*.

Duplication of Federal Programs

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(5) of House rule XIII, no provision of H.J. Res. 139 establishes or reauthorizes a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another federal program.

Performance Goals and Objectives

The Committee states that pursuant to clause 3(c)(4) of House rule XIII, H.J. Res. 139 would amend the Constitution of the United States to require a balanced budget for the federal government.

Advisory on Earmarks

In accordance with clause 9 of House rule XXI, H.J. Res. 139 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clauses 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of House rule XXI.

Federal Mandates Statement

An estimate of federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget office pursuant to section 423 of the *Unfunded Mandates Reform Act* was not made available to the Committee in time for the filing of this report. The Chairman of the Committee shall cause such estimate to be printed in the *Congressional Record* upon its receipt by the Committee.

Advisory Committee Statement

No advisory committees within the meaning of section 5(b) of the *Federal Advisory Committee Act* were created by this legislation.

Applicability to Legislative Branch

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the *Congressional Accountability Act* (Pub. L. 104–1).

Section-by-Section Analysis

Section. 1. Total expenditures for a year shall not exceed the average annual receipts collected in the three prior years, adjusted in proportion to the changes in the population of citizens of the United States and inflation. Total expenditures shall include all expenditures of the United States except those for payment of debt, and receipts shall include all receipts of the United States except those derived from borrowing

This section caps annual federal expenditures at the average of the last three years' federal receipts. It adjusts this receipts cap based on population growth and inflation over the previous three years.

This section excludes debt servicing from the “expenses” side of the balancing equation and prohibits Congress from counting money borrowed as receipts.

Section 2. Congress may by a roll call vote of two-thirds of each House provide by law for specific expenditures in excess of the limit in section 1

This section allows for additional spending in the case of a national emergency, like a financial crisis or major natural disaster. Approval of the excess spending would require two-thirds of each house of Congress.

Section 3. Congress may by a roll call vote provide by law for specific expenditures in excess of the limit in section 1 for any year in which a declaration of war is in effect

This section allows Congress to approve spending over the balanced budget cap if a war has been declared by Congress.

Section 4. Any bill to levy a new tax or to increase the rate of any tax shall not become law unless approved by two-thirds of the whole number of each House of Congress by a roll call vote

This section requires a two-thirds vote in each House of Congress to raise taxes or levy a new tax.

Section 5. Congress shall enforce and implement this article by appropriate legislation

This section authorizes Congress to implement the amendment through legislation, for example by prescribing the means by which receipts are adjusted for inflation and changes in population.

Section 6. This article shall take effect with the fifth year beginning after ratification

The amendment would take effect five years after ratification to give Congress and the Executive Branch time to adjust to the new limits.

Dissenting Views

PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES REQUIRING A BALANCED BUDGET FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

H.J. Res. 139 provides some needed comic relief from all the tragedy that has occurred recently in Minnesota at the hands of an out-of-control Department of Homeland Security. It is perhaps the funniest legislative initiative of this Congress: a Republican constitutional amendment to address a problem that Republicans created and that Republicans have refused to address even with all the necessary legislative tools at their disposal.

I refer, of course, to gigantic runaway federal budget deficits that result from out-of-control Republican spending and stupendously reckless Republican tax cuts for billionaires and giant corporations. Our colleague Representative Chip Roy (R-TX) described the so-called One Big Beautiful Bill (OB BB) as “garbage” prior to the House vote, saying: “If we’re going to do the tax policy, at least do the spending policy. Have the courage and the fortitude to do what you campaign on when you’re talking about balancing the dang budget.”¹

Rep. Roy is correct. *Republicans* currently control the House. *Republicans* control the Senate. *Republicans* control the White House. *Republicans* effectively control the Supreme Court. Yet, they have not once balanced the federal budget or even tried to present a balanced budget for legislative consideration this Congress.

¹ Dan Katz, *Texas Rep. Chip Roy calls GOP megabill ‘garbage’*, TEXAS PUBLIC RADIO (July 2, 2025), <https://www.tpr.org/government-politics/2025-07-02/why-texas-rep-chip-roy-broke-with-trump-on-the-gops-mega-bill>.

So to cover up for their pathetic capitulation to Donald Trump—who has six Chapter 11 bankruptcies to his name, which is more bankruptcies than impeachments, although fewer bankruptcies than criminal convictions—and to coverup for their unceasing giveaways to the Jeffrey Epstein and Elon Musk class of financial and sexual predators, Republicans now want to start finger-painting all over the U.S. Constitution.

Republicans want us to use our Constitution to make them do what they claim to want to do, at a time when they already possess the complete power to do it. And in the process, Republicans will put our government into a fiscal straitjacket for all time so responsible leaders like Franklin D. Roosevelt won't have the flexibility to deal with real economic crises created by Republicans like Herbert Hoover, Calvin Coolidge and Donald Trump.

The simple truth is that we don't need a constitutional amendment to balance the budget or have responsible fiscal policies. With one-party control of the White House, the Senate, and the House of Representatives and nonstop blather about the importance of balancing budgets, Republicans could simply do it right now if they wanted to during the 119th Congress. But billionaire ripoff artists like Elon Musk or Peter Thiel or Donald Trump don't get rich off balanced budgets—they get rich when the MAGA gangster state opens the spigots of taxpayer money in federal contracts and giveaways for billionaires and the high-flying rent-seeking corporate class.

Republicans have run up historic corrupt deficits this Congress and have never once submitted a single balanced budget. We don't need a constitutional amendment to force this Majority to do the right thing. That's hopeless. We just need a new Majority.

Republicans may as well introduce a constitutional amendment saying that federal agents shouldn't shoot American citizens in the face for exercising their First Amendment rights, like Rene Good of Minnesota, or a constitutional amendment saying that federal agents shouldn't strip firearms from people lawfully carrying them under state law and the Second Amendment and then shoot them ten times for disagreeing with the President and Stephen Miller, like Alex Pretti, also of Minnesota.

You don't need a constitutional amendment to comply with the law or do the right thing. Just do it.

History proves we don't need a constitutional amendment to budget responsibly. It also shows that, nearly every time a Democratic administration has put our fiscal house in order, Republicans have taken it as an opportunity to pass giant giveaways for corporations and billionaires and blown massive holes in our budget.

In the 1990s, President Bill Clinton, a Democrat, worked with a Republican-controlled Congress to eliminate the deficit, and the federal government ran a huge surplus without the aid of a contrived balanced budget constitutional amendment.

President Clinton bequeathed to his successor, George W. Bush, a \$236 billion budget surplus, which he and his GOP Congress squandered on tax cuts for the wealthy and the staggeringly costly forever wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2017, President Trump and a Republican Congress passed a so-called Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, a law that increased the federal

deficit by \$1.9 trillion. At the time, no President had ever added more to the deficit.

But then last year, Republicans passed the Obscenely Ugly Profligate Law, which will add a jaw dropping \$4 trillion to the national debt because of its obscene giveaways to billionaires and corporations with the MAGA seal of approval. They paid for a small fraction of their profligacy by cavalierly stripping health insurance and food assistance from tens of millions of working-class Americans who are now living with these Marie Antoinette policies that came out of the Trump White House.

I will only support a constitutional amendment compelling Republicans to finally balance a budget if it also compels them to stop throwing money at billionaires, to crack down on record corruption and profit-taking by their incorrigible President and to get their private army in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to start complying with the Constitution, including the First Amendment, the Second Amendment, and the Fifth Amendment.

Maybe we should consider a constitutional amendment to compel President Trump to respect the Constitution? Though perhaps that would be as equal a waste of congressional time as considering H.J. Res. 139 on the House Floor. I urge Members to oppose this legislation.

JAMIE RASKIN,
Ranking Member.

