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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 146

Offered February 19, 1996

Requesting the Congress of the United States to submit a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution to the states for ratification.

Patrons—Benedetti, Barry, Bolling, Chichester, Colgan, Earley, Goode, Hanger, Hawkins, Holland, Houck, Lambert, Martin, Miller, K.G., Newman, Norment, Potts, Quayle, Reasor, Saslaw, Schrock, Stolle, Stosch, Ticer, Trumbo, Waddell, Walker, Wampler, Whipple, Williams and Woods; Delegates: Abbitt, Albo, Armstrong, Baker, Barlow, Behm, Bennett, Bloxom, Brickley, Bryant, Callahan, Cantor, Clement, Cooper, Councill, Cox, Crittenden, Croshaw, Crouch, Cunningham, Davies, Dillard, Drake, Dudley, Fisher, Forbes, Guest, Hall, Hamilton, Hargrove, Harris, Heilig, Howell, Hull, Ingram, Jackson, Johnson, Katzen, Keating, Kilgore, Landes, Marshall, May, McDonnell, Mims, Moore, Morgan, Murphy, Nelms, Nixon, O'Brien, Orrock, Parrish, Phillips, Purkey, Putney, Reid, Reynolds, Rhodes, Robinson, Rollison, Ruff, Sherwood, Shuler, Stump, Tata, Tate, Thomas, Wagner, Wardrup, Watkins, Way, Weatherholtz, Wilkins and Woodrum

Introduced at the request of Governor

Referred to the Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, with each passing year this nation becomes deeper in debt as its federal government's expenditures repeatedly exceed available revenues, so that the federal public debt is now approximately \$4.9 trillion—or \$19,000 for every man, woman, and child; and

WHEREAS, the annual federal budget has not been balanced since 1969, demonstrating an unwillingness or inability of both the legislative and executive branches of the federal government to spend in conformity with available revenues; and

WHEREAS, knowledgeable planning, fiscal prudence, and plain good sense require that the federal budget should not be manipulated to present the appearance of being in balance, while, in fact, federal indebtedness continues growing; and

WHEREAS, believing that fiscal irresponsibility at the federal level, which is resulting in a lower standard of living and endangering economic opportunity now and for the next generation, is the greatest threat which faces our nation; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson recognized the importance of a balanced budget when he wrote "The question whether one generation has the right to bind another by the deficit it imposes is a question of such consequence as to place it among the fundamental principles of government. We should consider ourselves unauthorized to saddle posterity with our debts, and morally bound to pay them ourselves"; and

WHEREAS, the principal functions of the Constitution of the United States include: Promoting the broadest principles of a government of, by, and for the People; setting forth the most fundamental responsibilities of government; and enumerating and limiting the powers of the government to protect the basic rights of the People; and

WHEREAS, the federal government's unlimited ability to borrow involves decisions of such magnitude, with such potentially profound consequences for the nation and its People, today and in the future, that it is appropriately a subject for limitation by the Constitution of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution vests the ultimate responsibility to approve or disapprove of amendments to the Constitution of the United States with the People of the several States, as represented by their elected Legislatures; and

WHEREAS, opposition by a small minority within Congress and, on occasion, by the President, has repeatedly thwarted the will of the People of the United States that a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution of the United States should be submitted to the States for ratification, while large majorities of both Houses of Congress already have prepared, considered, and voted for such amendment; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Virginia General Assembly hereby memorialize the Congress of the United States to expeditiously pass, and to propose to the Legislatures of the several States for ratification, an amendment to the Constitution of the United States requiring in the absence of a national emergency that the total of all federal appropriations made by the Congress for any fiscal year may not exceed the total of all estimated federal revenues for that fiscal year; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Legislatures of each of the several States comprising the United

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60 States be urged to apply to the Congress requesting the proposal for ratification of an appropriate
61 amendment to the Constitution of the United States; and, be it
62 RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the
63 President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States,
64 each Member of the Virginia Congressional Delegation, and the Secretary of State and the presiding
65 officers of both Houses of the Legislatures of each of the other States in the Union.