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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 183

Offered January 22, 2010

Memorializing the Congress of the United States to call a constitutional convention pursuant to Article V of the Constitution of the United States for the purposes of amending the Constitution of the United States to require (i) a balanced federal budget and reduction of federal debt, (ii) item veto authority to the President, and (iii) prohibition of unfunded mandates to the various states.

Patron—LeMunyon

Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

WHEREAS, with few exceptions during the past four decades, the federal government each year becomes more deeply in debt as its expenditures repeatedly exceed available revenues and the current federal debt is more than \$12 trillion and represents more than \$39,000 in debt per citizen; and

WHEREAS, the federal debt, combined with interest, represents a future tax, and is of such great proportion that responsibility for its payment will be passed to future, unborn generations of Americans to assume without their consent; and

WHEREAS, the Congress of the United States has too often abused its authority under Article I Section 7 of the Constitution by enacting legislation consisting of myriad, unrelated provisions of broad scope in a manner that attempts to compel the president to sign legislation into law, notwithstanding specific provisions, which, if passed separately, would be subject to veto; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, the governors of 43 states, including the Commonwealth of Virginia, maintain at least some authority to veto specific provisions of legislation without vetoing legislation in its entirety; and

WHEREAS, compelling state and local governments to comply with federal laws and regulations without accompanying funding for such mandates is inconsistent with the framework of federalism and the spirit of the 10th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the requirement to balance the budget and reduce the federal debt will promote responsibility at the federal level, provide a check against unnecessary and costly appropriations, and reinforce efforts to bring about fiscal integrity; and

WHEREAS, providing the President of the United States with the authority to veto items in legislation is an essential tool for reducing the unnecessary, wasteful, and excessive spending that has contributed to the overwhelming federal debt, and to restoring the appropriate balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of the federal government on matters pertaining to the making of laws; and

WHEREAS, halting unfunded mandates will restore the appropriate relationship between the federal government and the states, specifically by ensuring that Congress assume the responsibility for funding the cost of legislation it enacts, and provide a check against unnecessary and costly appropriations, and reinforce efforts to bring about fiscal integrity; and

WHEREAS, in Federalist No. 85, Alexander Hamilton wrote in reference to Article V of the Constitution and the calling of a convention for the purpose of proposing amendments that, "We may safely rely on the disposition of the State legislatures to erect barriers against the encroachments of the national authority"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate, concurring, That the Congress of the United States be urged to call a constitutional convention pursuant to Article V of the Constitution of the United States for the purposes of amending the Constitution of the United States to require (i) a balanced federal budget and the reduction of federal debt, (ii) item veto authority to the President, and (iii) prohibition of unfunded mandates to the various states; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Virginia Congressional Delegation, and the clerks of the legislatures of the other 49 states, so that they may be apprised of this act of the General Assembly of Virginia.

INTRODUCED

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