April 10, 2018

Dear Member of the House of Representatives,

We write to you today on behalf of NDD United – an alliance of over 2,000 national, state, and local organizations working together to protect nondefense discretionary funding – to urge you to vote NO on the Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution. While concern over long-term debt is warranted, a requirement to balance the federal budget annually would severely hinder the government’s ability to respond to the needs of the nation and its economy.

This proposal poses a direct threat to the nondefense discretionary (NDD) programs that keep Americans healthy, safe, and secure. With large and growing annual deficits forecast for the foreseeable future, funding available for core government functions is scarce even without this arbitrary requirement. If Congress is forced to balance the budget each year, a dip in the economy would also require Congress to either raise taxes on Americans already hurting from the recession or impose deep cuts to vital services like housing, education, public health, infrastructure, environmental protection, etc. Both would be damaging to Americans and the economy in the long term.

Further, no family, business, or state balances its budget annually. Families rely on loans for cars and homes. Businesses borrow from their investors and states have “rainy-day funds” that allow them to hold on to revenue until it is needed. The federal government similarly relies on borrowing and saving as changes in the economy affect how much revenue is collected. Thus the government has been able to spend more and create jobs when the economy is weak, and store surpluses to be used for those rainy days. A balanced budget amendment would not give the government this ability to balance out the economy’s lows.

Because of the threat to services provided by NDD programs and the unpredictability created by a Balanced Budget Amendment, we urge you and your colleagues to vote NO. Instead, Congress should continue to build on the bipartisan support for the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, and continue to work toward fully restoring the NDD budget.

Sincerely,

Emily J. Holubowich
Founding Co-Chair, NDD United
Executive Director, Coalition for Health Funding

Sheryl Cohen
Co-Chair, NDD United
Executive Director, Committee for Education Funding

Ben Corb
Co-Chair, NDD United
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