



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on March 19, 2019

Scott Walker to Head Up New Push for Constitutional Convention

“If the CBO’s projections hold steady, we’ll see trillion-dollar interest payments in 5-10 years which will account for approximately 25 percent of federal revenue, yet Congress has proved unable to rein in its spending,” former Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker said this week, upon being picked to serve as honorary chairman of the Center for State-led National Debt Solutions (CSNDS).



“Where Washington has failed, the states must step up and lead — using their constitutional authority to solve the problem,” Walker added.

While it is certainly a worthwhile project to put a stop to additional federal deficit spending, which is adding even more to the already-crushing national debt (now more than \$22 trillion) owed by the United States government, Walker’s solution may be even worse than the problem. What Walker and those of like mind wish to do is invoke Article V of the U.S. Constitution to propose an amendment to the Constitution to require a balanced federal budget.

As of now, 28 states, including Walker’s Wisconsin, have applied to Congress to hold a Constitutional Convention, often referred to by proponents as a “Convention of the States.” Six more states need join in the call before Congress would be required to call for a convention. How the U.S. Constitution can be changed — amended — is covered in Article V of the Constitution, which reads, “The Congress, whenever two-thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments.”

The first method of proposing amendments — by two-thirds vote of each house of Congress — has been used for all 27 amendments added to the Constitution thus far. The second method, through a national convention, has never been used. Article V also stipulates that three-fourths of either state legislatures or state conventions would have to ratify any such proposed amendments before they would be added to the Constitution.

Several issues have been proposed to be considered at any national convention, including term limits and altering the First or Second Amendments, but an amendment to require a balanced federal budget has drawn the most support so far. As the CSNDS press release asserted, the national debt is truly a problem, as it is now 6.5 times national revenue. In 2018, the U.S. government paid over \$250 billion just in interest payments on the national debt, which is about 16 percent of federal revenue.

That is more than one million dollars per taxpayer.

But would an amendment to require a balanced budget be the best solution to this problem? After all, most of Congress’ present spending is not authorized by the very Constitution members of Congress



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have sworn to uphold. Why would an additional amendment for them to ignore work any better? Additionally, a balanced-budget amendment would not even address unconstitutional spending, but only total spending. Would the balanced budget amendment require Congress to balance the budget via budget cuts, or would they be allowed to balance it on the backs of the taxpayers, who are already suffering under a crushing tax burden?



Most of the proponents of the so-called Convention of States argue that such a convention could be limited in purpose, but nothing in Article V of the Constitution supports that contention. Many on the Left are salivating at the thought of a National Convention, because they are desirous of gutting the Second Amendment's protections of the right to keep and bear arms. Others want to limit the First Amendment's protections of free speech, or freedom to practice one's own religion.

The same electorate that has picked our present public officer holders is the same electorate that would choose delegates to a Constitutional Convention. It is naïve, to say the least, to think only fiscal conservatives would populate any such meeting. Advocates of a Convention of the States argue that the several state legislatures would choose the delegates, and that each state would be entitled to one vote. That could be what the 1787 Constitutional Convention intended, but Article V does not say that. Does one really think large-population states such as New York and California would accept having only one vote at the convention, just like Wyoming and Alaska? Who would arbitrate this disagreement?

Governor Walker and those like him who favor a convention in these toxic times should re-think their position. The better solution is to invoke Article VI — which states the Constitution is the supreme law of the land. Americans who favor limited government need to get active, educate their neighbors to the benefits of the Constitution and limited government, and elect members to Congress who will follow our present Constitution, rather than trust a national constitutional convention to solve the problem — especially when that solution may create even graver problems.



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