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Amend Article V to Diffuse Our Ticking Debt Time-Bomb

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By: Joe Penland

On Sept. 17, 2025, I had the good fortune to attend a press conference held in the Cannon House Office Building in Washington, D.C., to celebrate the 238th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution.

The speakers at the event were U.S. House Budget Chairman Jodey Arrington, W. Bruce Lee of the National Federalism Commission, and former-Comptroller General of the United States and Chairman of the Federal Fiscal Sustainability Foundation, David M. Walker.

They all spoke about federalism, a term that Britannica [defines](#) as a "mode of political organization that unites separate states or other polities within an overarching political system in a way that allows each to maintain its own integrity."

Chairman Arrington pointed out that understanding federalism is central to understanding our government because it was the sovereign states who created the federal government, not the other way around.

In Framing our government through the Constitution, the Founders made sure that the powers not expressly given to the federal government were to remain with the states.

Unfortunately, this lesson sometimes seems lost on our politicians in Washington.

Although we live in the greatest country on Earth, we all know that it's not perfect.

Our Founders knew this as well. This is why the preamble of the Constitution begins with the following: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union . . . establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

They also understood the Constitution would need to be amended in pursuit of perfection, so they left us with two methods to amend it in Article V. The first method for amending must be initiated within Congress.

"Alternatively, [Article V](#) provides that Congress shall call a convention for proposing amendments upon the request of two-thirds of the state legislatures."

In his remarks, Chairman Arrington mentioned that one of the greatest threats to our country is our mounting national debt.

He noted that this is the fault of *both* political parties.

Bruce Lee picked up on this when he spoke and pointed out that the states have been calling for action to reign in our debt for decades.

In 1979, 34 states called for a constitutional convention to tackle our debt under Article V, which met the two-thirds threshold of states.

This threshold continued to be met for the next 25 years; however, Congress never acted as called for by the Constitution.

The threshold was again met between 2016 and 2017, with the high count of 36 states being met on March 13, 2017.

The Federal Fiscal Sustainability Foundation discovered these omissions three years ago and pointed out that Congress had failed to call the Article V convention.

Bruce Lee noted that inaction by Congress is a slap in the face to the states.

However, he did point out two areas of good news.

The first bit of good news is that in 2015 Congress adopted a rule that the chairman of the U.S. House Judiciary Committee would direct any calls for an amending Article V convention, and for the clerk to organize these calls.

He applauded the efforts of the current chair and clerk observing they have worked closely with the National Federalism Commission.

Additionally, Mr. Lee referenced that Chairman Arrington has authored H. Con. Res. 15, a resolution calling for an Article V convention for the purpose of proposing a fiscal responsibility amendment to the Constitution.

He encouraged Congress to act on this resolution.

Dave Walker pointed out that the required number of states first called for a convention to address our out-of-control budget 46 years ago.

At that time, our national debt was less than \$1 trillion. It has now risen to over \$37 trillion.

He offered that the Constitution does not say that Congress should call a convention when the threshold of states is met, rather it says the Congress "shall" call a convention.

Although Walker is hopeful that H. Con. Res. 15 will spur Congress to action, he noted that states are prepared to take legal action if necessary to force them to act.

There are fearmongers who say that such a convention would be a runaway event; however, Mr. Walker said such fears are misguided because the convention called for under the Article V threshold would be limited to fiscal issues only.

He's quite correct that we have nothing to fear from such a convention.

Instead, what we should fear is inaction. If you conduct an internet search of any topic regarding our national debt, you will find that there is almost a universal agreement that our debt is a ticking time bomb, one threatening to rob our children and grandchildren of bright futures.

The politicians in Washington, D.C. continue to prove they will *not* solve this problem.

They created it and have continued to make it worse. Nevertheless, this writer is hopeful.

We now have an organized movement, one in which the states (most of which know how to balance budgets) are aggressively pushing for long overdue action on a constitutional amendment to deal with our debt.

They won't take no for an answer.

For more information, please visit www.JoeFromTexas.com.

Joe from Texas is a family man with children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. He's experienced tremendous success and lived the American Dream. His beliefs are both straightforward and deeply held. He believes in God, his family, and the United States of America. Read Joe Penland's Reports — [More Here](#).

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