

“Bill of Rights Contest 2023”  
Artist’s Statement  
by Davenie Beaton

I propose a balanced budget amendment. Here are the details:

- The president shall submit a balanced budget proposal to Congress one year before October 1<sup>st</sup> of the next fiscal year.
- Three-fifths roll call vote is required of each chamber of Congress to increase the public debt limit.
- Three-fifths roll call vote is required of each chamber of Congress to increase revenue. (taxes)
- The president is required to *only* sign a balanced budget, and *required* to veto unbalanced budgets that Congress sends him at the end of the year.
- A waiver is allowed for use *only* during war as declared by Congress. The waiver allows the expenditures of the government to exceed the revenue until war is officially declared over.
- A third of all revenue (tax income) of the government is required to go to paying down the national debt annually.

My right should be added to the Bill of Rights because America’s debt is getting to be unmanageable. We need to do something about it. When the government spends money it doesn’t have, inflation grows, and the national debt gets larger, ready to consume the next generation of American’s hard-earned money.

My amendment is needed to control the spending of the government. Every cent that the government spends is *our* money. Many presidents have presided over balanced budgets, which is when the government takes in more revenue than it spends, leading to no net borrowing in that year. But a balanced budget doesn’t necessarily mean no debt, because old debt can carry over from previous years. Andrew Jackson was, in fact, the only president to preside over a total elimination of all remaining debt while having a balanced budget. I believe, that with my amendment, and of course, years of chipping away at the national debt, the government can accomplish what Andrew Jackson did.

The national debt today is around 33 trillion dollars. That’s almost \$100,631 for every single person in America. According to data available from the IRS, among the more than 164 million Americans who filed tax returns in 2020, the

average federal income tax payment was \$16,615. Even if Americans are taxed to the limit, there is no way that the debt can be eliminated without also reducing spending. The impact my amendment would have on the citizens of the United States is profound. It would take much more work in Congress to raise taxes than just a simple majority, a good thing for taxpayers who want taxes to be low. A balanced budget with money set aside for paying the national debt also means that in the future the United States will not owe other countries anything. Lowering the debt also will help lower inflation, giving our money back some of its value, and altogether helping the economy.

My picture depicts a great white shark (representing the national debt) advancing on a helpless raft of kids (representing future taxpayers). The passengers on the extravagant cruise ship passing by represent our aging congressmen & women. It is modeled in the way of a political cartoon.