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LEGISLATIVE ALERT!

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June 2, 2011

The Honorable Lamar S. Smith, Chairman
House Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Minority Member
House Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Minority Member Conyers:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I am writing to express our strong opposition to H.J. Res. 1, the balanced budget constitutional amendment introduced by Rep. Goodlatte and scheduled for markup later today in the House Judiciary Committee.

The most immediate challenge facing our economy today is not the federal budget deficit, but persistently high unemployment and the lack of a coherent national economic strategy of domestic reinvestment to lay the groundwork for the creation of good, family-sustaining jobs. Capping domestic spending at an arbitrary 20 percent of economic output would make it impossible to make the kind of public investments we need to compete in a dynamic global economy, where other nations are rapidly outpacing the U.S. by investing in education, infrastructure, and green jobs.

An arbitrary spending cap is also a recipe for unemployment and human misery. By requiring spending cuts at the precise moment when government spending is needed to stabilize the economy, a spending cap would threaten the economic recovery, turn future economic downturns into recessions, and turn future recessions into depressions. And an arbitrary spending cap would shred the social safety net by forcing unnecessary and devastating cuts to Medicare, Social Security, and Medicaid in order to minimize taxes for the wealthy and Wall Street.

In fact, H.J. Res. 1 is designed to ensure that the wealthy and corporations do not share any of the burden of deficit reduction. The proof is that H.J. Res. 1 would require a three-fifths vote in both houses of Congress to raise revenue, which would be virtually

impossible to overcome. This supermajority requirement would protect tax breaks for the rich and for Wall Street corporations.

By protecting the privileged and the powerful from shared sacrifice, by demanding pain and sacrifice from middle-income and low-income Americans, by eroding the foundations of long-term economic growth, by unnecessarily prolonging the jobs crisis, and by putting the economic recovery at risk, H. J. Res. 1 would reinforce the worst economic inequality America has experienced since 1929.

For the above reasons, the AFL-CIO urges you to vote no on H.J. Res. 1 and any other balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Samuel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "W" and a long, sweeping tail.

William Samuel, Director
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT