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Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 3.2 million members of the National Education Association, we would like to express our deep concern in advance of this week's Judiciary Committee mark-up of a proposed balanced budget Constitutional Amendment. The particular proposal under consideration (H.J. Res 1), introduced by Representative Goodlatte (R-VA), as well as any other proposals to require a balanced budget or artificially cap federal spending, would be devastating for public education and retirement security, undermining economic recovery and jeopardizing our future strength as a nation.

The Goodlatte proposal would limit federal spending to 20 percent of GDP and allow waiver of this cap only by a two-thirds majority vote of both houses of Congress. In addition, the proposal would prohibit any legislation to increase revenues without a three-fifths majority vote of both houses, thereby guaranteeing a decimation of federal programs in order to meet the caps. Overall, the Goodlatte plan, like other proposed spending caps and balanced budget amendments, would result in the largest cuts in federal spending in modern history.

Educators understand that Congress must work to ensure America's long-term economic prosperity and that we must address the nation's serious fiscal challenges. However, cutting education funding and slashing programs that serve children, the elderly, and working families is not the answer. It simply will not be possible to achieve the spending levels required under the Goodlatte plan or other balanced budget proposals without massive cuts in education, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and other programs that meet crucial national needs. Even proposals like the McCaskill-Corker spending cap plan, which sets caps higher than the Goodlatte proposal, would be devastating for our nation.

Mandating a balanced budget and/or capping federal spending would constitute exceedingly unwise economic policy. It would risk tipping a faltering economy into recession and slowing economic recovery. It would determine spending levels for decades and tie future Congress' hands. And, it would render impossible the sorts of investments necessary to continue economic recovery and grow the skilled workforce necessary for future economic strength.

A balanced budget amendment would put our nation at great risk by decimating public education and other programs that ensure a competitive workforce and future economic vitality. We strongly urge you to oppose these dangerous proposals.

Sincerely,

Kim Anderson
Director of Government Relations

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Manager of Federal Advocacy