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Lincoln County's Home Newspaper

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## Towards a balanced budget amendment

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November 17, 2015

I've previously written about the Compact for America, an organization that advocates a balanced budget amendment (BBA) to the Constitution through an interstate compact. (Full disclosure: I'm on the CFA Council of Scholars.)

Not surprisingly there are several organizations and grassroots movements out there pushing BBAs. They all have their pluses and minuses, and they're all trying to mobilize states to get behind their efforts to get Congress to call an Article V amendment convention.

As I've detailed before, CFA's procedural advantage is that once a state has acted, it's done; there's a cascading turn-key operation that goes into effect once three-quarters of the states have passed the enabling legislation and Congress has acquiesced. CFA currently has four states signed up – Georgia, Alaska, Mississippi, and North Dakota – with various others considering the relevant legislation (I testified before the Texas legislature earlier this year).

Other efforts claim to have more states signed up but the problem is that the BBA idea has been around for so long that the existing state resolutions are so different that they can't be considered together as one unified call for Congress to call a convention under Article V. I've always known this intuitively, but recently I was sent a study that shows why the various resolutions are irreconcilable. It was put together by Jeff Kimble, a West Virginia attorney who dabbles in legal theory and public policy. As you can imagine, I get plenty of queries from amateur constitutionalists, but this looks pretty thorough. Judge for yourself: here's the appendix that shows all 27 BBA resolutions that have been passed to date, grouped into the 9 categories that Kimble has devised.

In sum, there are no short cuts to a BBA – and that's even before you consider the economic merits of the different kinds of BBAs.]

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