



HOW THE STATES CAN SAVE AMERICA

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The federal government has become a lumbering giant. With each passing year, it gets bigger and scarier. In 1965, Washington was 761 billion dollars big. In 2016... it was 3.5 trillion – five times the size.

If the government spent only the money it collected in taxes, that would be one thing. But it always spends more—which is why we're \$20 trillion dollars in debt. That's 13 zeroes. Count 'em: Thirteen.

But the crazy spending isn't even the worst of it. Washington is involved in every part of our lives. Think about anything you do, from driving your car to buying your groceries to mowing your lawn. Whatever it is—your education, your job, your health—the government has its hands on your shoulder, if not on your throat. As a congressman and senator for 14 years, I know this only too well.

So, how do we cut this giant down to size? Is it even possible? Yes. And the amazing thing is, the answer is right in front of us.

The Founding Fathers, in their wisdom, foresaw the situation we find ourselves in today. They wrote into the Constitution a way to repair Washington...not from the inside, because that will never happen but from the outside, where it might. It's right there in Article 5. Most people are familiar with the first part: "The Congress, whenever two thirds of both houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution..."

All 27 Amendments we have now started this way. Congress proposed them and at least three-quarters of the states ratified them. But is this the only way to amend the Constitution?

Well, let's read the next clause: It says that Congress, "...on the application of the legislatures of two thirds of the several states, shall call a convention for proposing amendments..."

Did you catch that? Congress must call a convention to amend the Constitution if two-thirds of the states—that's 34 states—demand it.

The time has come to demand it. The time has come to propose amendments that will restore meaningful limits on federal power and authority. The time has come for a convention of states.

Here's how it would work: Once the 34 states call a convention, all 50 states send a delegate

to represent their interests. For any constitutional amendments proposed, each state gets one vote. And an amendment only passes out of the convention and to the states for ratification if a majority of the states' delegates vote in the affirmative. In this scenario, Congress has no say. It is completely in the hands of the states, which means it's a whole lot closer to the hands of the people. We've never once amended the Constitution this way—but that doesn't mean we can't.

But, you might ask, doesn't this open the door to rewriting the entire Constitution?

Antonin Scalia, the late Supreme Court justice, acknowledged this risk, but regarded it as a "minimal" and "reasonable" one. Why? Because to be ratified, a proposed amendment would need the approval of 38 states. That's a high bar. Thirty-eight states would never agree to something radical like abolishing freedom of speech. "The Founders," Scalia said, "knew the Congress would be unwilling to give attention to many issues the people are concerned with, particularly those involving restrictions on the federal government's own power... [so] they provided the convention [of states] as a remedy."

This should not be a partisan, left/right, Democrat/Republican issue. This should be a "who controls your life" issue: you or the government?

Today, politicians can turn your life upside down on a whim, kind of like King George in 1775. Being at the mercy of distant, disconnected rulers was why the American Revolution was fought in the first place! But we don't need a revolution. We have Article Five.

So, what amendments might a Convention of States propose to limit Washington's power?

Term limits, for one.

No one should be in Congress for 20 or 30 years. The only people who disagree have been in Congress for 20 or 30 years.

And how about a limit on taxes, spending and borrowing? Since you began this video, the national debt has gone up \$8.4 million dollars.

Here's one more idea: A constitutional amendment that Congress can't exempt itself from the laws it passes—something it's done dozens of times, from insider trading to Obamacare.

Now, I don't believe a Convention of States will solve all of America's problems. But the Founders put it in the Constitution for a reason. They knew a time would come when Washington would become so big, and so intrusive, that only we the people could cut it down to size.

That time is now.

I'm Jim DeMint for Prager University.