

Balanced budget amendment wrong

Most everyone knows that, for some time, the federal government has racked up a sizable deficit by spending millions of dollars it doesn't have.

Congress wants to solve the problem by passing a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. However, the amendment is a short-sighted idea that will have massive and unnecessary implications for the country.

Everyone would agree it is necessary to reduce the deficit. It isn't right that the federal government is living beyond its means year after year for several decades.

But a balanced budget amendment goes too far. By legally — constitutionally — requiring the government to balance its budget, the hands of the government will effectively be financially tied. If this happens, how will America ever be able to afford costly programs like Medicare and Social Security, or be able to cope with emergencies such as natural disasters?

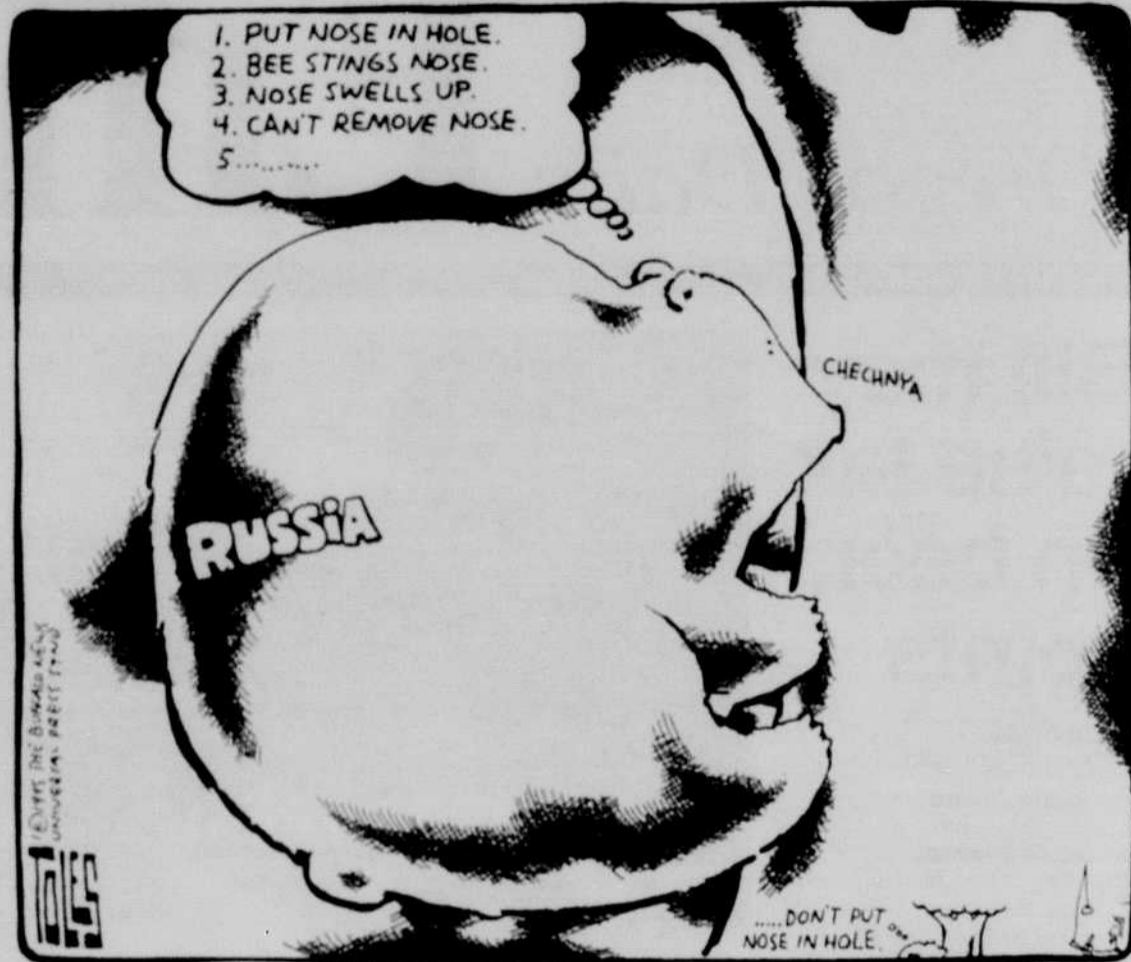
Americans should take the pressure off of Congress to pass a bad bill and let them look for the right answers, not the easy ones.

Although huge deficits are outrageous, a balanced budget amendment is equally unacceptable. Supporters are depicting the deficit as an urgent problem that will destroy the country if it is not dealt with in the next few months. However, no one is imminently trying to foreclose on the United States, so what's the hurry?

A better approach to reconciling the nation's books would be to take a more gradual approach. There is no need to go from large deficits to a balanced budget in a year or two. If the transition was spread over many years, it would be more palatable and acceptable to the economy and would give Congress the necessary time to piece together solutions for funding programs that might otherwise be cut in a knee-jerk slashing of budgets with the balanced budget amendment.

It looks likely that Congress will pass the balanced budget amendment at any cost because it is a politically popular idea. Constituents and members of Congress alike, looking for answers to the problem of a ballooning deficit, favor the idea of a seemingly quick and simple answer to a perplexing problem. On the other hand, members of Congress who don't support the amendment feel they will be in trouble back home for their opposition, and might support the idea despite their convictions. Americans should take the pressure off of Congress to pass a bad bill and let them look for the right answers, not the easy ones.

The federal government must take steps to ensure that no more money is spent than is taken in. The way to do this is through logical, gradual cuts in spending. This process will not be easy or quick, nor will it give the dramatic effect of an instantaneously balanced budget. However, it will give Congress the flexibility it needs to solve the budget problem the balanced budget amendment will not.



COMMENTARY

Clinic violence committed by radicals

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The Jan. 23 editorial in the *Oregon Daily Emerald* announced that the question on legalized abortion in the United States has already been decided. For the editors it was no longer worthy of discussion. Rather, violence at abortion clinics is the only remaining issue. Yet such dismissals of the anti-abortion position as irrelevant are in fact the true cause of the clinic violence the editorial deplors.

Americans consistently fail to understand the roots of terrorist acts such as the murder of abortionists. Refusing to understand the causes of terrorism, we dehumanize the terrorist and fail to acknowledge that we ourselves are implicated in the terrorist act. Terrorism is not a first resort. In the case of abortion this should be obvious. Anti-abortion sentiment and political action began well before Roe vs. Wade when several states legalized abortion in the early 1970's. Two decades passed before Dr. Gunn was shot. In spite of the beating and jailing of anti-abortion protesters, their protests remained peaceful for nearly twenty years.

Why has violence now appeared? Violent protest has appeared for the same reason it always appears: a growing perception by a radicalized group of dissenters that their legitimate voice has been silenced and that peaceful change is impossible because of its adversaries' monopoly on power. In the case of anti-abortion protest, this dynamic should be obvious to the impartial observer. When the Supreme Court ruled on Wade and effectively legalized abortion on demand up to the day of birth, this decision was opposed by the vast majority of Americans.

Statistics have remained con-

stant for two decades: about one-fourth of Americans support abortion on demand at any point in pregnancy; about one-fourth reject abortion under nearly all circumstances; over half would allow abortion only under certain circumstances, especially for danger to the life of the mother or during the first months of pregnancy.

Clinic violence, like terrorism generally, is the product of a sense of powerlessness and exclusion.

Yet, of the more than one million abortions performed in the United States each year, less than one in a hundred is performed to save the mother's life. When the actual effect of Roe is spelled out to those being polled, they reject it by a large margin.

The Pro-Abortion Movement has much to fear from people hearing such statistics about Roe and current practice. Those who oppose abortion also know these figures very well. They also know that prestige media ignores them, and the courts and Congress have proved unwilling or unable to modify the current practice of abortion on demand. They also know their support of "pro-life" candidates — e.g. Reagan, Bush and countless members of Congress — has been rewarded with no reform legislation at all and by judicial appointments unsympathetic to changing Roe.

They also correctly sense that the information managers of our society are hostile to the anti-

abortion message. This hostility is symbolized by the media's near universal use of the Pro-Abortion Movement's jargon of "pro-choice" and "anti-abortion-rights" and by the regular presentation of opposition to abortion as the "ideology" of the "celibate Catholic clergy" or of yahoo fundamentalists.

The violence at the clinics did not come from labeling abortion murder: the anti-abortion movement made that connection for more than 20 years without any violence. Clinic violence, like terrorism generally, is the product of a sense of powerlessness and exclusion. The linking of clinic violence to the labeling of abortion as murder is plainly another attempt to silence the voice of anti-abortion dissent. Some would even suggest laws to forbid those who oppose abortion from speaking their convictions publicly "because it will incite violence."

That such attempts at repression are reported without critique by journalists implicates them in a subtle by pervasive silencing of the real voices of those who oppose abortion. The Pro-Abortion attempt to forbid dissent will only prove to others who oppose abortion that they are being silenced and that peaceful means of dissent have become futile.

Unless this is recognized, the future bloodshed at abortion clinics will be on the hands of the Pro-Abortion Movement, whose tactics of exclusion have created the very terrorism it now hypocritically denounces.

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CORRECTION

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* regrets etc. The *Oregon Daily Emerald* regrets etc. The *Oregon Daily Emerald* regrets etc. Etc.

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