

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 16, 1987

Dear Senator Aklestead:

I am pleased to respond to your request for my views on the resolution now before the Montana Legislature, petitioning Congress to call for a constitutional convention for the purpose of drafting an amendment that would require a balanced Federal budget.

I have long supported an amendment to the Constitution that would require the Federal budget to be balanced. I have championed that cause in Congress on several occasions, calling on the public and State officials and legislators to make their views known. Thus far, all of these efforts have not been successful in persuading Congress, although last year such an amendment failed to gain the necessary two-thirds affirmative vote in the Senate by the slimmest margin of one vote. It has now become obvious that without further State initiatives Congress will not act to impose a limit on its own spending.

I therefore believe that further action by the States, and particularly by the Montana Legislature, in petitioning Congress to call for a constitutional convention for the sole purpose of writing a balanced budget amendment will go far towards convincing Congress to pass and submit to the States an amendment for this purpose. If your effort is successful, Montana would be the 33rd State to pass such a resolution, just one short of the 34 required to call a constitutional convention. I believe this may finally convince Congress to act on an amendment of its own, which has always been my goal.

I hope these views will be helpful to you as you continue your deliberations.

Sincerely,



The Honorable Gary Aklestead  
Minority Leader  
Montana State Senate  
Helena, Montana 59620