



Dear Friends,

This is my first newsletter of 2014. I hope that you and your family had a great holiday season and a Happy New Year. At the Brandenburg home in Harrison Township, we sure did! Before I get into the main topic of the newsletter, I have a bit of an announcement to make. For the second time in three years, the Michigan Information and Research Service (MIRS) ranked me the number one conservative vote in the Michigan State Senate for 2013. MIRS is a daily publication, located in Lansing, but sent to readers all over the state about what happens in Lansing on a daily basis. I take a good deal of pride in the ranking because I have said forever that we need more conservatism in all levels of government. (Now so more than ever).

Today, I would like to talk with you about our national debt and the negative ramifications created by it. I also want to talk with you about a vote I recently took on legislation known as Senate Joint Resolution V. You know, I have always prided myself on being a guy who is pretty good with numbers. A while back, a friend of mine asked me right out of the blue how many millions were in one billion. I have to admit that I was stunned because I did not know the answer right off the top of my head. The answer is that there are 1000 millions in just 1 billion. There are 1000 billions in just 1 trillion. Our national debt now rests at 17 trillion dollars (\$17,000,000,000,000), and the debt grows at 1 ½ billion dollars a day.

Who owns this debt? Who has to pay for it? It is simple, we do! To get a real grip on just how much money \$17 trillion really is, please consider the following: When Jack Kennedy was President, our national debt was 9% of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Today, our debt is a stunning 107% of our GDP. China's national debt is 22% of its GDP. Russia is only at 11%. No matter how you cut it, the United States is not performing well financially when compared to its global competitors.

This is not a joke: Our debt is more money than all the stars in the sky. If you were to combine the sum total of our national debt, it would still be greater than the total debt of all the European Union nations combined. The world has 182 nations and only twelve of them have a national debt that is greater than their economy. We are one of the twelve. Right now, every man, woman and child, who is a U.S. citizen, is on the hook for over \$90,000 for their part of our national debt.

My tremendous concern is: Why is the United States, the most productive, the most technological, the most innovative nation in the history of mankind, going down the same destructive path as Greece, Italy, France, Portugal, Spain and Cyprus? These nations are one step from becoming socialistic. Look at the civil unrest in these nations. They have borrowed money and printed money to support massive entitlements. They have enacted massive tax increases to try to pay off their debt, but they cannot. They have reached the point where they can no longer borrow. This is not what we want for our country! Ask any responsible economists and they will tell you that borrowing of this magnitude and the printing of money to pay off debt is an act of a desperate nation.

Continued on back

"I AM WORKING FOR YOU!"

Office: 517-373-7670 • Toll-Free: 866-229-4211

senjbrandenburg@senate.mi.gov • www.SenatorJackBrandenburg.com

Considering everything that I have mentioned above, this is why I voted yes on Senate Joint Resolution V. SJR V applies under Article V of the United States Constitution for a convention of states to propose a FEDERAL BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT. We need to have 34 state legislatures to call for a Constitutional Convention (Con-Con) and 17 state legislatures have already approved. Just recently, we passed it out of the State Senate and the State House will deliberate on it shortly.

For me, a Con-Con regarding our national debt, spending and taxing, and the expansion of government, is long overdue. It seems to me that government never reduces its size voluntarily, we the people have to do it. Debt does not occur because we are taxing too little, it occurs because we are spending too much. One of the golden rules of finance is to live within your means. I thoroughly agree.

I would like to share with you some ideas that I have come across through my research for this letter. It would be my hope that a Con-Con would embrace some of these concepts. I believe these ideas are what it is going to take to put our country back on the path to fiscal responsibility. The sooner we start to reduce our national debt, the better.

First, total spending outlays of the U.S. government for any fiscal year shall not exceed its receipts for that fiscal year. Not a bad start! Second, adjust spending so that it is 4% less than total receipts. Then apply the 4% savings to pay down the debt. Third, the total spending outlays of our government should not exceed 17.5 percent of our Gross Domestic Product for the previous calendar year. Fourth, total receipts should include all receipts from the government, but will not include those derived from borrowing or printing money. Fifth, the debt ceiling of the U.S. Government should not be increased unless three-fifths of both houses of Congress agree.

I am sure that there will be many other points of debate if and when there is a Con-Con. However, why not start to embrace solid conservative ideas at once? The longer we wait, the more difficult the problem becomes. If you have any ideas, comments or suggestions, please contact me. If you would like be a friend on Facebook, just email me at senjbrandenburg@senate.michigan.gov. As always, it is my pleasure and my honor to be your State Senator.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jack Brandenburg
State Senator - District 11