



March 28, 2017

Senate Committee on Financial Services, Constitution and Federalism
Senator David Craig, Chair
State Capitol, Room 104 South
Madison, WI 53708

Assembly Committee on Federalism and Interstate Relations
Representative Tyler Vorpapel, Chair
State Capitol, Room 127 West
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Senator Craig, Representative Vorpapel and members of the committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on the Senate and Assembly Joint Resolutions calling for a Constitutional Convention on a Balanced Budget Amendment. BPDD opposes SJR 018 and AJR 021.

BPDD believes a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution could affect people with disabilities in many ways. Perhaps the most important would be to force historic cuts to federally-funded programs—including Medicaid, Social Security, housing, education, employment, transportation, and other programs people with disabilities rely on to stay healthy, maintain independence in their own homes and stay out of expensive institutions, participate in the workforce, and be productive members of our community.

A balanced budget amendment could result in thousands of lost jobs, and drastic cuts to public schools, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, which would hit children and adults with disabilities, and their families, disproportionately hard.

BPDD is charged under the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act with advocacy, capacity building, and systems change to improve self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life for people with developmental disabilities.

Our role is to seek continuous improvement across all systems—education, transportation, health care, employment, etc.—that touch the lives of people with disabilities. Our work requires us to have a long-term vision of public policy that not only sees current systems as they are, but how these systems could be made better for current and future generations of people with disabilities.

Thank you for your consideration,

Beth Swedeen, Executive Director, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities