

TESTIMONY
OF
DAVID COPELAND
KANSAS SENATE
FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 14, 2018

My name is David Copeland. I live in Overland Park. I am a registered professional engineer, an Army veteran, the father of three and grandfather of three. By education and experience, I am a structural engineer. I have designed and built power plants, office buildings, schools and heavy structures around the world. I am most proud of my kids and grandkids. And they are one reason I am here today.

I am here today to ask this committee to move SCR 1611 to the full Senate because I believe an Article V amendment convention is the only reasonable way we can address the greatest threat to the future of my children and grandchildren. That threat is a runaway, unaccountable federal government. I have no confidence in any branch of the federal government being capable of creating accountability. In fact, they appear willing to go to great lengths to avoid accountability whenever possible.

This lack of accountability has allowed the passage of sweeping legislation with significant impact on our economy, spending trillions of dollars borrowed from future revenues. Congress exempts themselves from the laws they write and conducts their business to make it almost impossible to repeal or address problems. Laws are passed creating more federal government and allowing executive branch rulemaking to go unchecked.

What has this unaccountable federal government given us? According to US Debt Clock.org, the current national debt is 20.6 trillion dollars. During the terms of each of the last two presidents our national debt was roughly doubled. This comes to \$63,000 per citizen and \$170,000 per taxpayer. We now have 112 trillion dollars of unfunded future liabilities. The total assets of all US households is about \$100 trillion.

Fiscal restraint, along with limiting the scope and jurisdiction of the government are necessary to keep from continuously piling on to the current debt. How long do we allow the government to kick the debt can down the road? As our economy expands we will probably see a rise in interest rates. Our debt service will soon exceed military spending. You don't have to be an economist to know that this cannot continue indefinitely. Maybe it will take a generation to impose fiscal restraint on government, but today we have no effective constraint on any branch of government. The career politicians and bureaucrats in Washington will never get it done.

Passage of SCR 1611 allows Kansas to eventually join at least 33 other states impelling Congress to call an Article V convention of states for proposing amendments to the Constitution addressing three areas—fiscal restraints on the federal government, limits on the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and imposing term limits on federal officials and members of Congress. As you have heard or will hear today, these amendments would be *valid to all Intents and Purposes, as ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States or by Conventions in three fourths thereof...* I believe that amendments

are necessary in all three areas in order to create an environment of government fiscal responsibility and accountability to the governed.

Article V appears to be the ultimate check and balance on our federal government available to the governed. The men who wrote it in adopted the Constitution knew what it was like to be governed without the ability to make things right.

I take the Constitution of the United States very seriously. I do not accept the idea from anyone that a Convention of States is a threat to this Constitution or to my country. It is a far greater risk to do nothing and let Washington kick the debt can down the road.

As an Army officer I took an oath. I watched my son take that same oath and as he is preparing his unit to join the Global War on Terror I will remind you of the oath we each so solemnly swore, "*that I will support and defend the **Constitution of the United States** against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God.*"