

## Why States Are Losing Their Checks & Balance Voice (012514)

There is currently a push for Amendments to the U. S. Constitution as a means to curb Federal Government's Size, Spending, and Regulations. Lobbyists are making the claim that an Article V Convention is actually a Convention of States and are pressing State Legislators to call for such a Convention. Historical facts and careful inspection of the Constitution saying this interpretation of an Article V is not correct and moreover there is one over-riding reality that has neutered the Voice of States in Federal Matters. That reality was captured in an April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 WND headline: "Feds Becoming Biggest Part of State Budgets", click [HERE](#). So like so much in life, if you want to understand the situation simply follow the money.

The year 2011 was the first in which Federal Aid to States became the largest individual part of State budgets, so stated in the lead paragraph of the WND article, which is based on the findings of the [Wyoming Liberty Group](#) and the Pelican Post, click [HERE](#).

The number of Federal Aid-to-State Programs was 1122 in 2010 according to the Cato Institute and amounted to \$654 billion, click [HERE](#). That was 43 % of the \$1.5 trillion 2010 spending by State government, click [HERE](#). Most of those Federal dollars, 55 %, were for Health and Human Services while another 13 % was for education, 6.5 % for HUD, and 11 % for Transportation, click [HERE](#). So do you really think States have the long-end of the stick? Of the total 2010 State Revenue sources, 36 % came from general funds, 34 % from Federal Funds, and 28 % from Other, click [HERE](#).

For a State-by-State listing of percentage of State revenues from Federal aid click [HERE](#). It might come as surprise that States thought to be conservative, such as Oklahoma and Texas, are as dependent on Federal funds as any. That is not to say liberal States, such as California, are not right up there with them. Virginia was ranked 44 out of 50 with 23 % of its 2010 spending coming from Federal funds. Surprisingly, Massachusetts was ranked last at 11 %. Before we get into what this means, a reference for Federal, State, and Local spending, starting about 1800, can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

There is no doubt that Federal spending is out of control, and that with spending there is a coincidence in the size of the Federal government. But stop and consider the fact that of the \$3.5 trillion spent in 2010 by the Federal Government \$654 billion, 19 %, was money contributed to State spending. So when States demand Amendments to the U. S. Constitution to control Federal spending you have to wonder if they understand how that affects their own spending, some 43 % of which was from the Federal government and of that money 55 % was for Health and Human Services. Are the States so naive as to not understand the responsibilities they will face if indeed Federal spending is reduced as they wish?

As an analogy, imagine you are holding out your hand for an individual to give you money and at the same time you are yelling at them that you want them to spend less. Would you be acting responsibly if you behaved in such a manner? So ask yourself if the States are behaving responsibly. And also ask what will be the response of those of us who are accustomed to receiving money and aid by way of Health and Human Services, those of us who want better-repaired and more highways, and those of us who receive educational benefits? Those three groups of individuals enjoy about 79 % of those Federal dollars, or about 34 % of State spending. So if there is to be a reduction in Federal spending then how would States adjust their spending? Could they make such adjustments or would they instead have to increase their taxation on their citizens? No – don't even begin to pretend that somehow the States could simply reduce, much less stop, the amount of spending in those categories. Oh they could – but frankly it is unlikely they would have the fortitude or conviction when the howls of the recipients began. You wish they could. You want them to. They should. But what are the chances, given the confrontations they would face, that they would?

The hard truth is that to solve the problems States should attempt a more fundamental approach than simply attempting to regulate Federal Spending by means of Amendments to the Constitution. They need to understand that their voices have long been compromised by the Federal dollars they are willing to take. Their attempt to check Federal behavior by regulating the Federal spending by means of Constitutional Amendments and at the same time ignoring their own role in the problem is naive. Their expectation they will solve the problem with such Amendments is juvenile and ignores their own responsibilities. Their attempt is compromised by their own behaviors as they greedily seek more Federal dollars.

In the end there is only one way to solve the problems with Federal spending and that is for States to correct their own. It is a challenge that requires responsibility for their own behaviors. The question is whether or not they can rise to that challenge. If they cannot then they have lost their power of checks and balance in their relationship with the Federal government. Consequently the Federal government will continue its reckless and unconstitutional behaviors until there is no more, no more money and no more Republic.