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Critics attempt to demonize effort to address huge debt

I am writing in response to the letter by Judy Stahl in the Dec. 26 Forum. ("Con-Con bad idea for country"). Her letter was obviously prompted by media coverage of the resolution I will be introducing in the 2011 legislative session. The resolution is part of a nationwide effort by Restoringfreedom.org to convene an amendments convention under Article V of the U.S. Constitution.

By: **Sen. Curtis Olafson**, INFORUM

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Article V gives state legislatures the power to convene a convention for the sole purpose of proposing amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The resolution I have drafted specifies that the convention is limited to the consideration of one proposed change. The National Debt Relief Amendment would specify that "an increase in the federal debt requires approval from a majority of the legislatures of the separate states."

In any discussion of Article V, critics of efforts by the states to seek amendments immediately launch the phrase "con-con," which is short for "constitutional convention." In using this phrase, these critics imply that you are being conned, not once, but twice, by reckless extremists who are hell-bent on rewriting the entire Constitution.

Nowhere in Article V is there mention of a "constitutional convention." Article V clearly specifies the process is intended for the purpose of "proposing amendments." Extensive historical research by the Goldwater Institute, an independent watchdog based in Arizona, documents the undeniable fact that Article V does not give states the power to rewrite the entire U.S. Constitution. Instead, the states have a right equal to that of Congress to propose amendments.

It is important to remember that unless and until 38 states ratify the results of a convention, nothing changes.

We must act now. A runaway Article V amendments convention is a myth. A runaway national debt of \$13.9 trillion is reality.

Olafson, R-Edinburg, serves North Dakota District 10.

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