Article XXVIII. The People's Amendment

To restore integrity, fairness, and accountability in government by and for the People.

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Article XXVIII. The People's Amendment
To restore integrity, fairness, and accountability in government by and for the People.

Section 1. Purpose and Authority

We, the People of the United States, acting through our sovereign authority and petitioning Congress to propose this Article for ratification under Article V of the Constitution, do so to restore public confidence in government; to ensure the independent and ethical service of its officers; to guarantee that government serves the People rather than private interests; to ensure that disagreement does not become dysfunction, including dysfunction arising from failure to enact, complete, or perform mandatory constitutional duties within periods expressly prescribed; and to require that public office be exercised in service to the Nation rather than faction. We further act to secure equal voice and fair representation in elections and public decision-making; to establish a fair and transparent system of taxation; to affirm that the expenditure of money is not speech; to safeguard the earned benefits of Social Security, Medicare, and comparable programs essential to the well-being of the People; and to provide clear procedures for implementation, supported by enforceable accountability.

Section 2. Definitions and Meanings

(a) For purposes of this Article:

(1) "Catastrophe" and "extreme catastrophe" refer to the levels of destruction and disruption described in Sections 14(p) and 14(q), respectively, including the Gross Domestic Product thresholds specified in those subsections.

(2) "Contractor integrity risk" means any demonstrated history or pattern of fraud, overbilling, performance deficiencies, regulatory violations, or other conduct indicating elevated risk to public funds, as reported in the contractor-performance and integrity database required by this Article.

(3) "Defense-critical federal property" means property, facilities, or infrastructure essential to national defense, intelligence operations, homeland security, the security, integrity, reliability, or

resilience of federal information or operational systems, continuity of government, or any other mission vital to the protection of the United States, as defined by general law.

(4) “Discretionary appropriations” means those appropriations enacted through annual appropriations acts, excluding mandatory spending and essential programs as defined in paragraph (6) of this subsection.

(5) “Duplicative programs” means federal programs, offices, activities, or authorities that substantially overlap in function or purpose with other federal programs and whose consolidation or elimination would improve efficiency without reducing essential public services.

(6) “Essential programs” means Social Security, Medicare, veterans’ health care and benefits, national-defense readiness, and any additional programs expressly designated as essential elsewhere in this Article, together with any further programs that Congress may designate as essential by a three-fifths vote of each House. The term shall not be construed to permit the designation of discretionary or non-vital programs as essential for the purpose of evading the enforcement mechanisms required by this Article.

(7) “Extraordinary expenditures” means expenditures authorized under this Article in response to a catastrophe or extreme catastrophe that exceed ordinary annual appropriations and are necessary to preserve life, maintain essential operations, or reconstruct critical infrastructure.

(8) “Final enacted appropriations” means the total appropriations and monetary items that remain legally in force after completion of the presentment process under Article I, Section 7, including any line-item disapprovals exercised under Section 8 of this Article and any congressional reconsideration thereof.

(9) “Fiscal requirements” means the constitutional obligations established by this Article relating to balanced budgets, debt reduction, fiscal limits, surtaxes, proportional adjustments, and automatic enforcement mechanisms, including those set forth in Sections 8 and 10, together with any associated enforcement provisions of Section 12.

(10) “GAO” means the Government Accountability Office, and “GAO-certified list” means the list of appropriations and monetary items certified by the GAO pursuant to Section 8(k), identifying non-essential items eligible for line-item disapproval under this Article.

(11) “General law” means a law of general applicability enacted by Congress.

(12) “Independent Office of Public Integrity” or “IOPI” means the constitutionally established office vested with investigative, auditing, and oversight authority as provided in this Article, including power to verify compliance, publish findings, and enforce standards of integrity in the stewardship of public funds.

(13) **“**Inflation indexing” means the automatic adjustment of dollar thresholds required by this Article, from their respective baseline values, according to the **C**onsumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers published by the Department of Labor, or a successor Consumer Price Index designated by general law.

(14) “Improper payments” means payments that should not have been made or were made in an incorrect amount, including overpayments, underpayments, payments to ineligible recipients, payments lacking sufficient documentation, or payments resulting from fraud or abuse.

(15) “Itemized record of the appropriation” means the bill text, legislative tables, explanatory statements, committee reports, and public fiscal ledger entries that identify the purpose, amount, recipient, and statutory authority of an individual appropriation or monetary item.

(16) “Legacy system” means any federal information-technology, reporting, communications, or analytic system that lacks secure integration capability, imposes excessive maintenance costs, or substantially overlaps in function with modern systems.

(17) “Line-item veto” or “line-item disapproval” means the constitutional authority granted to the President by Section 8 of this Article to disapprove individual appropriations or monetary

items, while leaving the remainder of an appropriations bill in force, subject to congressional reconsideration as provided therein.

(18) “Ministerial duty” means a duty that is mandatory and nondiscretionary, requiring execution in strict accordance with the procedures and formulas established by this Article, without authority to alter, delay, waive, or substitute judgment.

(19) “Modernization” means the upgrade, consolidation, or replacement of federal systems, processes, or infrastructure to improve efficiency, reduce waste, strengthen the security, integrity, reliability, and resilience of federal information and information systems, ensure interoperability, or comply with standards established under this Article.

(20) “National-defense readiness” means the capacity of the Armed Forces and supporting agencies to maintain operational capability, force preparedness, and essential military infrastructure necessary to national security.

(21) “National emergency” means a condition formally declared by Congress pursuant to this Article and confirmed by an affirmative vote of not less than three-fifths (⅗) of each House.

(22) “Non-essential appropriations” means all appropriations and monetary items that are not essential programs within the meaning of paragraph (6) of this subsection.

(23) “Objective criteria” means standards that are factual, measurable, and verifiable by reference to the itemized record of the appropriation, GAO certifications, or the public fiscal ledger, and that do not require inquiry into subjective intent or motive.

(24) “Overbilling” means billing practices by contractors, providers, vendors, or managed-care entities that exceed authorized or documented costs, including inflated charges, improper coding, false claims, or any billing that fails to reflect accurate or lawful payment amounts.

(25) “Prohibited purpose” means any use of authority under this Article to target, penalize,

reward, or disadvantage any State, political subdivision, Member of Congress, political opponent, or lawful public or private entity, other than through the neutral application of objective criteria established by this Article.

(26) “Proportional adjustments” means uniform percentage reductions applied to non-essential appropriations to comply with the fiscal limits established by this Article.

(27) “Public fiscal ledger” means a publicly accessible, public-facing, understandable, machine-readable record, maintained pursuant to this Article, in which fiscal actions, certifications, findings, disapprovals, votes, funding determinations, enforcement notices, required public compliance statements, and other matters required by this Article are recorded as soon as practicable and, unless a shorter period is expressly required by this Article or by general law, not later than seven (7) calendar days after the occurrence of the relevant action, in a manner reasonably calculated to permit public inspection, verification, and accountability.

(28) “Public funds” means all federal revenues, appropriations, expenditures, loans, guarantees, tax expenditures, and any other financial resources of the United States committed, obligated, or disbursed under the authority of federal law.

(29) “Public trust” means public reliance on the honesty, integrity, reliability, and competence of government institutions and officers, including their faithful stewardship of public funds and their faithful performance of constitutional and statutory duties.

(30) “Real property” means land, buildings, structures, and permanent improvements owned, leased, or controlled by the federal government.

(31) “Realized income event” means any transaction, distribution, sale, exchange, or disposition that results in income realized by a taxpayer under federal income tax principles, including extraordinary or nonrecurring gains exceeding the thresholds established in this Article, whether or not such income is taxable in the year realized.

(32) “Reduction Percentage” means the lowest percentage that, when applied uniformly to all non-essential appropriations, brings total outlays within the limits required by this Article.

(33) “Social Security payroll contribution” means the contributions imposed on employees, employers, and self-employed persons with respect to wages or self-employment income under the Social Security Act, or any successor federal statute providing old-age, survivors, and disability insurance.

(34) “Sustained economic growth” means a period certified annually by the GAO during which multiple macroeconomic indicators, including real Gross Domestic Product, employment levels, and federal revenue stability, demonstrate consistent, non-transitory economic expansion under uniform standards established by GAO and published in the public fiscal ledger.

(35) “Uniform economic measurement standards” means objective, publicly disclosed, and generally accepted methods for measuring economic conditions, including real Gross Domestic Product, adopted and certified annually by the GAO pursuant to this Article and applied uniformly across all determinations required by this Article.

(36) “Unified federal accounting system” means the centralized federal accounting, reporting, audit, and financial-management platform required by this Article, integrating agency-level systems into a uniform structure to ensure transparency, interoperability, efficient oversight, and fiscal reporting that is updated as soon as practicable and, unless a shorter period is expressly required by this Article or by general law, not later than seven (7) calendar days after the occurrence of the relevant fiscal action, sufficient to support the enforcement mechanisms and public transparency required by this Article.

(37) “Uniform proportionality method” means an objective method applied by the GAO under which the selection of non-essential appropriations for certification reflects, in material proportion, the geographic distribution of non-essential appropriations contained in the bill and does not result in systematic overrepresentation or underrepresentation of any State, region, or congressional district.

(38) “Vendor lock-in” means a condition in which a federal agency becomes dependent upon a single private contractor or proprietary technology in a manner that materially restricts the agency’s ability to transition to alternative, interoperable, or competitively procured systems consistent with general law.

(39) “Wasteful expenditures” means federal expenditures that provide no commensurate public value, lack demonstrated necessity, or arise from inefficiency, duplication, mismanagement, or preventable loss, as determined under evidence-based standards established by general law.

(40) “Without undue delay” means as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any event within the outer time limits expressly stated in this Article.

(b) Economic Measurement and Certification.

(1) The thresholds, methodologies, and measurement standards referenced in this Article for determining sustained economic growth, economic underperformance, recession, or any comparable fiscal condition shall be objective, publicly disclosed, uniformly applied, and certified annually by the GAO.

(2) Except where this Article expressly provides for determination by a recorded vote of Congress, the existence or nonexistence of sustained economic growth, economic underperformance, recession, or any comparable fiscal condition shall be conclusively established by the most recent certification of the GAO issued pursuant to this Article, and shall not be subject to judicial reweighing, reinterpretation, or substitution of alternative economic indicators, models, or analyses.

(3) All certifications issued pursuant to this Section shall be published in the public fiscal ledger as soon as practicable and, unless a shorter period is expressly required by this Article or by general law, not later than seven (7) calendar days after issuance, and shall remain effective until superseded by a subsequent certification issued in accordance with this Article.

Section 3. Voting Rights

Every citizen of the United States who is eligible to vote in federal elections under this Constitution and laws enacted pursuant to it shall have an equal, meaningful, and nondiscriminatory opportunity to cast a ballot. No State shall enact or enforce any law, regulation, or practice that unduly burdens this right or results in the denial or abridgment of equal voting access. Congress shall have authority to enforce this Section by appropriate legislation establishing uniform, neutral, and nationwide standards for the administration of federal elections.

Section 4. Equal Representation and Federal Districting Standards

(a) Congress and the several States shall, by general law consistent with this Article, ensure the prohibition of partisan gerrymandering of congressional districts.

(1) All such districts shall be drawn by independent and nonpartisan commissions established within each State, using neutral, uniform, transparent, and measurable criteria based on approximately equal population, compactness, contiguity, and respect for existing political and community boundaries, in full compliance with federal law protecting minority voting rights.

(2) All criteria under this Section shall be applied uniformly and neutrally, using objective, non-discriminatory standards, and shall not be employed to favor or disfavor any political party, incumbent, geographic area, or class of voters, shall not dilute the voting strength of racial, ethnic, or language-minority communities in violation of federal law, and shall not be used to engage in geographic, political, or partisan targeting, such that no State, region, or constituency is singled out for adverse treatment.

(b) Each independent redistricting commission established pursuant to this Section shall:

(1) exclude from membership current federal, State, or local elected officials; candidates for such offices; officers of political parties; and any person who is, or has been within the preceding three (3) years, a registered federal or State lobbyist, as further defined by general law;

(2) be constituted so that no political party holds a majority of the seats, and include representation from voters unaffiliated with the two largest political parties, to the extent practicable;

(3) be selected through procedures that are transparent, publicly disclosed in advance, and based on neutral eligibility criteria; and

(4) conduct open public meetings for deliberation on maps, criteria, and public input; conduct other proceedings in public to the maximum extent practicable, while permitting nonpublic sessions for limited purposes consistent with general law; and make draft and final maps, together with supporting data, reasonably accessible to the public in a timely manner.

(c) This Section shall take effect upon ratification of this Article. Each State shall, within one hundred twenty (120) days after ratification, or within such shorter period as is practicable, enact such administrative laws and establish such commissions as are necessary to comply with this Section, including an independent-commission review of existing congressional districts. The redrawing of any districts that do not conform to the requirements of this Section shall be completed as soon as practicable and, absent extraordinary circumstances, in no case later than one hundred eighty (180) days after ratification.

(d) Temporary administrative measures consistent with this Section may be adopted immediately upon ratification to ensure compliance pending enactment of permanent legislation.

(e) Failure to act as required by this Section shall not excuse noncompliance, and no State may conduct congressional redistricting except in conformity with this Section after ratification of this Article.

(f) During the one hundred twenty (120) day period following ratification, no State shall enact, finalize, implement, or place into legal effect any congressional redistricting plan that does not conform to the requirements of this Section. Temporary measures consistent with this Section

may be used during this period as necessary to ensure timely elections. All congressional districts drawn or modified after ratification shall conform fully to the requirements of this Section.

(g) If implementation of this Section would require congressional district boundaries to be finalized fewer than ninety (90) days before a regularly scheduled federal general election, the congressional districts in effect immediately prior to ratification may be used for that election only.

(1) Any redistricting plan adopted pursuant to this Section shall take effect for the next regularly scheduled federal election following its adoption, except that it need not be implemented for any election held within ninety (90) days of the plan's effective date.

(2) Deadlines established by this Section shall be strictly enforced; however, where a court of competent jurisdiction finds that compliance within a specified period is impossible despite good-faith efforts to comply, such deadline shall be equitably adjusted only to the extent necessary to permit completion of the required action at the earliest practicable date.

(h) This Section shall be subject to judicial enforcement under this Article, and courts of competent jurisdiction may provide appropriate equitable and declaratory relief as necessary to secure compliance.

Section 5. Term Limits: House

(a) To preserve independence and statesmanship in the People's chamber, prevent entrenched power, and ensure a regular infusion of new leadership, this Section establishes limits on service in the House of Representatives, with narrow exceptions for partial terms filled by appointment or special election.

(b) No person shall serve in the House of Representatives as an elected Representative for more than twelve (12) years, except as follows:

(1) For Representatives serving on the date this Article is ratified, prior time in service shall be treated, for purposes of term limits, as provided in Section 9(b) of this Article.

(2) Any Representative whose service begins on or after the date of ratification and who serves one (1) year or less of a partial term by appointment or election to fill a vacancy may serve a maximum of thirteen (13) years.

(3) If a Representative serves more than one (1) year of any two-year term, whether by election or appointment, that term shall be deemed a full term for purposes of this Section.

(c) No resignation, delayed swearing-in, change in certification date, or other procedural action shall be used to alter how service is counted under this Section. Any attempt to manipulate the start or end of service for the purpose of extending a Representative's permissible years of service beyond the limits established herein shall be without effect.

(d) Failure to comply with any requirement of this Section shall constitute a violation of this Article subject to enforcement under Section 12.

Section 6. Term Limits: Senate

(a) To preserve deliberation while preventing entrenchment, and to sustain independence and public trust across generations, this Section establishes limits on service in the Senate, with narrow exceptions for partial terms filled by appointment or special election.

(b) No person shall serve in the Senate as an elected Senator for more than eighteen (18) years, except as follows:

(1) For Senators serving on the date this Article is ratified, prior time in service shall be treated, for purposes of term limits, as provided in Section 9(b) of this Article.

(2) Any Senator whose service begins on or after the date of ratification and who serves three (3) years or less of a partial term by appointment or election to fill a vacancy may serve a maximum of twenty-one (21) years.

(3) If a Senator serves more than three (3) years of any six-year term, whether by election or appointment, that term shall be deemed a full term for purposes of this Section.

(4) Service need not be continuous to be counted toward the limits established by this Section.

(c) No resignation, delayed swearing-in, change in certification date, or other procedural action shall be used to alter how service is counted under this Section. Any attempt to manipulate the start or end of service for the purpose of extending a Senator's permissible years of service beyond the limits established herein shall be without effect.

(d) Failure to comply with any requirement of this Section shall constitute a violation of this Article subject to enforcement under Section 12.

Section 7. Term Limits: Supreme Court

(a) To promote stability, independence, and public confidence in the Nation's highest Court, this Section establishes a regular, nonpartisan schedule of active service, structured appointments, and orderly transitions. It is designed to limit partisan swings in appointment authority, to ensure broad consensus for each Justice, and to uphold the People's trust in equal justice under law. The transitional designations used to initiate this rotation are necessary to establish the biennial schedule without altering the tenure, independence, or seniority of any sitting Justice.

(b) These provisions establish regular rotation, promote public accountability, and preserve continuity within the constitutional structure. They safeguard judicial independence by retaining life tenure while ensuring orderly appointment cycles that prevent any undue concentration of appointment authority.

(c) Each Justice shall serve a single active term of not less than eighteen (18) years and not more

than twenty-two (22) years, with the precise term length determined by the rotation schedule described in subsection (h) of this Section, except as otherwise provided in that subsection.

(d) The number of active Justices shall remain nine (9), except that Congress may alter this number only as provided in subsection (j).

(e) The tenure of the Justices of the Supreme Court shall be governed as follows, effective upon ratification of this Article:

(1) Upon completion of the active term, each Justice shall assume senior status, retaining judicial office during good behavior under Article III.

(2) One seat shall open every two (2) years by operation of law according to the rotation schedule established by this Section, in addition to any vacancy arising from death, retirement, incapacity, or removal. Procedures under this Section shall ensure timely consideration of each nominee and prevent prolonged vacancies or partisan obstruction.

(3) Each Justice shall serve a single active term as assigned under this Section, with transitional assignments governed by subsection (i)(2) of this Section, and shall thereafter continue in office as a senior Justice.

(4) A Justice completing an active term shall continue in office during good behavior as a senior Justice of the Supreme Court, with no diminution of compensation and with duties as provided by general law. Compensation and retirement benefits for senior Justices shall be no less than those provided to active Justices.

(i) A senior Justice shall not cast a vote in any decision of the Supreme Court or otherwise participate in the final disposition of any case, but may consult with, or review cases alongside, active Justices.

(ii) Senior status preserves the full constitutional tenure, title, and compensation of a Justice.

(iii) A senior Justice may sit by designation on the courts of appeals or the district courts as authorized by general law.

(iv) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to diminish the compensation of any Justice during active or senior service.

(f) Vacancies and Nominations

(1) Consistent with Article II, Section 2 of this Constitution, all vacancies on the Supreme Court shall be filled under this Section, including those arising from expiration of an active term, death, resignation, retirement, removal, or incapacity. Appointments made pursuant to this Section shall constitute appointments with the advice and consent of the Senate.

(2) Upon a vacancy, a Special Committee of the Senate shall be convened to prepare a list of qualified nominees. The Committee shall operate on a bipartisan basis and shall act within the time limits prescribed by this Section. The composition, selection, and procedural rules of the Committee shall be established by general law, provided that:
(i) the Committee shall have an odd number of Members and shall consist of not less than nine (9) Members;
(ii) representation of political parties shall be equal if the proportional representation of the Senate makes such composition possible;
(iii) if equal representation of political parties is not mathematically possible, the majority party may have one additional Member seated; and
(iv) nomination of any qualified person shall require the affirmative vote of not less than three-fifths (⅗) of the Committee, rounded up to the next highest whole number of Members.

(3) The Special Committee shall transmit a list of three (3) qualified nominees to the President within twenty-eight (28) calendar days after a vacancy occurs. The President may provide confidential written comment within ten (10) calendar days, after which the Committee shall finalize the list and present it to the President.

(4) The President shall select one (1) nominee from the list within ten (10) calendar days and submit that nominee to the Senate for confirmation. If the Senate does not confirm the nominee, the President shall select one (1) of the remaining nominees and submit that name for consideration. If neither nominee is confirmed, the Special Committee shall prepare a new list in

accordance with this Section.

(5) If the Special Committee fails to transmit a list within the required period, it shall be dissolved by operation of law and reconstituted under the rules provided by general law.

(6) If the President fails to act within the required ten (10) calendar days, the first-listed nominee on the most recent list shall be deemed selected by operation of law and submitted to the Senate for confirmation.

(7) The total period from the occurrence of a vacancy to final Senate confirmation shall not exceed one hundred eighty (180) calendar days. If no nominee has been confirmed by that time, the first-listed nominee on the most recent list shall be deemed confirmed by operation of law, and the President shall immediately issue the commission of appointment. Automatic confirmation under this paragraph shall be deemed confirmation with the advice and consent of the Senate for constitutional purposes. Automatic confirmation under this paragraph shall not apply where the Senate demonstrates by a recorded vote that extraordinary circumstances made compliance with the deadlines in this subsection impossible despite good-faith efforts to proceed.

(8) No adjournment, recess, filibuster, quorum call, boycott, or other procedural action or deliberate inaction of the Senate or the Special Committee shall delay or prevent the operation of the nomination and confirmation procedures under this Section. All timelines shall run notwithstanding such actions. Nothing in this paragraph limits the Senate's authority to set its own rules of procedure except to the extent that such rules would prevent compliance with the deadlines and requirements established by this Article.

(9) Upon transmission of a nominee's name to the Senate under this Section, the Senate shall be required to meet in session within twenty-one (21) calendar days and shall complete consideration of the nomination within forty-five (45) calendar days thereafter.

(10) A recorded vote of not less than three-fifths (⅗) of the Senate shall be required to confirm the nominee within the period prescribed in paragraph (9); if that threshold is not reached within

such period, a majority vote of the Senate shall be sufficient during any subsequent vote held prior to the deadline in paragraph (7).

(11) If the Senate fails to record a final up-or-down vote within the period prescribed in paragraph (9), the nomination shall be placed on the Senate calendar for a vote on the next legislative day and shall remain the pending question until a recorded vote is taken.

(12) Any Justice serving on the date of ratification shall continue as an active Justice until completion of their assigned active term, after which that Justice shall assume senior status under subsection (e).

(13) Deadlines established by this subsection shall be strictly enforced, and failure to comply with any requirement of this subsection shall constitute a violation of this Article subject to enforcement under Section 12. However, where compliance with a specified deadline is impossible despite good-faith efforts to comply, such deadline may be equitably adjusted only to the extent strictly necessary to permit completion of the required action at the earliest practicable date.

(g) Congress shall by general law provide procedures consistent with this Article to coordinate transitions, administer oaths, and ensure continuity of the Court's operations, including the administration of oaths for active and senior Justices.

(h) If more than one vacancy occurs within the same two-year period, successors shall be assigned staggered expiration dates for their active terms in order of their confirmation, such that the earliest-confirmed successor receives the earliest available expiration date and each subsequently confirmed successor receives the next expiration date in the biennial sequence.

(1) Expiration dates shall be assigned forward in two-year increments as necessary to maintain the biennial rotation schedule.

(2) A Justice may resign or retire at any time. Upon such resignation, retirement, or vacancy

from any cause, a successor shall begin a new active term of not less than eighteen (18) years and not more than twenty-two (22) years, assigned to the next expiration point in the biennial rotation schedule. Nothing in this Section shall:
(i) change or modify any Justice's assigned active-term expiration once established.
(ii) alter the lifetime appointment, judicial independence, or constitutional tenure of any Justice.

(3) In the event that a majority of the other Justices determine that credible evidence exists suggesting that a Justice may be permanently incapacitated, the Court shall initiate a formal incapacity review. Two independent licensed physicians shall be appointed by the two most senior Justices not under review to conduct independent evaluations and prepare written findings in accordance with clause (i) of this paragraph. Pending final determination, the Justice under review shall be temporarily recused from participating in the disposition of Supreme Court cases.
(i) Medical documentation shall include evaluations by at least two independent licensed physicians appointed by the two most senior Justices not under review. If the Justice under review is one of the two most senior Justices, the next most senior eligible Justice shall participate in the appointment. Temporary recusal pending determination shall be administrative in nature and shall not be deemed removal from office or diminution of judicial tenure.
(ii) The Justice under review shall have the opportunity to respond, with the assistance of counsel if desired, and may present medical or other relevant evidence.
(iii) A determination of incapacity under this paragraph shall be subject to expedited judicial review limited to constitutional and procedural compliance.

(4) Upon receipt of such findings, a majority of the other Justices may certify permanent incapacity through written findings supported by the medical documentation, which shall be confirmed by a three-fifths (⅗) vote of the Senate. Upon such confirmation, the Justice shall be deemed retired from active service and a successor shall be nominated pursuant to subsection (f) of this Section.

(5) Failure to comply with the procedures or timelines required by this subsection shall constitute a violation of this Article subject to enforcement under Section 12.

(i) To ensure fairness and continuity, upon ratification of this Article each Justice shall retain appointment during good behavior under Article III, and the following shall apply:

(1) These designations are administrative and are necessary to commence the regular rotation, preserving the independence and integrity of the Supreme Court.

(2) Upon ratification of this Article, each sitting Justice shall be assigned an active term, according to seniority, within the eighteen-year rotation established by this Section. The active term of the most senior Justice shall expire on January 1 of the year following ratification, and the active terms of each subsequent Justice shall expire at two-year intervals thereafter.

(3) These designations shall be for administrative scheduling purposes only, preserving each Justice's lifetime commission and compensation. Justices whose active terms expire shall hold senior status, retaining title, salary, and benefits for life but not participating in new Supreme Court cases except by designation to lower courts or completion of assigned opinions.

(4) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to remove any Justice from office. Senior status constitutes continued service during good behavior under Article III and preserves the full judicial tenure, title, and compensation of every Justice.

(j) The number of active Justices of the Supreme Court shall remain nine (9) and may be altered only by an Act of Congress approved by not less than two-thirds (⅔) of the Members of each House and signed by the President or enacted over the President's veto.

(k) The length and schedule of judicial terms established herein shall not be altered, extended, or curtailed for any sitting Justice during good behavior. No law altering the sequence of expirations or the timing requirements established herein shall have force or effect. Routine procedural or administrative measures adopted by Congress shall remain permissible only to the extent that they do not suspend, modify, delay, or otherwise impair the operation of the appointment rotation and confirmation deadlines mandated by this Article.

(l) Notwithstanding Article III of this Constitution, and solely to the extent necessary to implement the regular rotation and term structure established by this Article, this Section shall have controlling authority over the tenure and service of Justices of the Supreme Court. Nothing in this Section shall be construed to authorize delegation of the appointment power beyond the limits expressly set forth herein.

Section 8. Line-Item Veto Authority

(a) The President may disapprove any individual appropriation, monetary item, or distinct budget authority contained in a bill presented under Article I, Section 7, except for items expressly exempted by this Article.

(1) Any item so disapproved shall be returned to the House in which the bill originated, within fourteen (14) days after delivery of the GAO-certified list required by subsection (k) for that bill, together with written reasons for the disapproval.

(2) A disapproved item shall take effect only if re-enacted by three-fifths of each House.

(3) Deadlines established by this subsection shall be strictly enforced; however, where compliance within the specified period is impossible despite good-faith efforts to comply, the deadline may be equitably adjusted only to the extent strictly necessary to permit completion of the required action at the earliest practicable date.

(b) The President may exercise this authority solely for the purpose of eliminating non-essential, wasteful, unnecessary, or fiscally imprudent appropriations, and for enforcing the fiscal requirements established by this Article, including those set forth in Section 10.

(1) The President may exercise this authority only with respect to items certified by the GAO under subsection (k).

(2) This authority shall not be used to target or penalize any State, political subdivision, Member of Congress, political opponent, or lawful public or private entity.

(3) Any disapproval issued for a prohibited purpose, as defined in Section 2(a)(25), shall be void and unenforceable, ab initio, and any misuse of this authority shall constitute a violation of this Article subject to enforcement under subsection (j) of this Section and under Section 12.

(c) No disapproval issued under this Section shall have legal effect unless accompanied by a written explanation identifying the specific non-essential, wasteful, unnecessary, or fiscally imprudent basis for the disapproval, as defined by this Article and confirming that the item appears on the list certified by the GAO under subsection (k). A written explanation under this subsection shall be evaluated solely on the contemporaneous record at the time of disapproval and may not be supplemented by post hoc justification.

(1) A disapproval shall be void if its stated basis is not supported by objective criteria, meaning criteria that are factual, measurable, and verifiable as defined in Section 2(a)(23) and verifiable from the itemized record of the appropriation; if the disapproval is not included among the GAO-certified items; or if it contravenes the essential-program protections, meaning the protections applicable to "essential programs" as defined in Section 2(a)(6), set forth in this Article.

(2) For purposes of determining misuse, neither the IOPI nor any court shall inquire into the President's subjective motive; review shall be limited to determining whether the disapproval corresponds to a GAO-certified item and meets the objective procedural requirements of this Article.

(3) The President may exercise line-item veto authority only by selecting from the list of items certified by the GAO under subsection (k), and may not disapprove any item not appearing on the GAO-certified list. GAO shall certify only those items that:
(i) are non-essential within the meaning of Section 2; and
(ii) are identified, pursuant to objective fiscal criteria applied uniformly, as reasonably necessary, in whole or in part, to satisfy the fiscal requirements of this Article prior to activation of any automatic enforcement mechanism.
(iii) Certification under this subsection shall be ministerial in nature and shall not involve policy

discretion or evaluative judgment beyond the application of the objective criteria specified in this Article.

(d) All disapproved items, together with the President's written explanations and Congress's resulting actions, shall be recorded in the public fiscal ledger required by this Article as part of the final enacted appropriations record.

(1) All such records shall be entered into the public fiscal ledger without undue delay and in any event not later than ten (10) days after the occurrence of the relevant action, unless a shorter period is prescribed elsewhere in this Article.

(2) Failure to record such information, as constitutionally required by this subsection, shall render the purported disapproval procedurally defective and void.

(e) No sequestration, line-item veto, automatic reduction, or other fiscal adjustment authorized by this Article may delay or diminish, whether directly or indirectly, temporarily or permanently, Social Security, Medicare, veterans' care, national-defense readiness, or any other essential program identified in Section 2 or elsewhere in this Article.

(f) Congress may, by a three-fifths vote of each House, designate specific defense appropriations as essential for purposes of this Article.

(1) Such designations shall be published in the public fiscal ledger to the fullest extent consistent with national security.

(2) When details of a defense appropriation are classified, Congress shall publish an unclassified designation summary sufficient to identify the item for constitutional purposes while protecting sensitive information.

(3) No designation under this subsection may be used to evade or defeat the enforcement mechanisms established by this Article.

(g) The scope of line-item veto authority under this Section shall be limited to discretionary, non-essential, or wasteful appropriations as defined by this Article. It shall not extend to any mandatory expenditure expressly protected by this Article.

(h) Congress shall require itemization of all appropriations in every bill to permit separate review, disapproval, and public transparency of each appropriation or monetary item.

(1) No appropriation shall take effect unless itemized in compliance with this Section.

(2) For purposes of this Section, an appropriation or monetary item means a discrete allocation of funds for a specific program, project, activity, or purpose, as stated in the bill text.

(3) Congress shall not aggregate unrelated appropriations into a single item for the purpose of avoiding line-item review.

(4) Failure to comply with this subsection shall constitute a violation of this Article, enforceable pursuant to subsection (j) of this Section.

(5) Judicial enforcement of this subsection shall be limited to determining compliance with the requirements herein and shall not require a court to prescribe legislative procedures.

(i) The authority granted by this Section is conferred by constitutional amendment and supersedes any prior judicial interpretation holding that a line-item veto violates the Presentment Clause or otherwise exceeds the powers of the President, insofar as such interpretations are inconsistent with this Article. This authority shall be construed in harmony with Article I, Section 7, and shall not diminish the President’s existing veto authority.

(j) The IOPI, either House of Congress, or any Member of Congress in their official capacity may initiate an enforcement action in a court of competent jurisdiction to compel compliance with the requirements of this Section.

(1) Judicial review shall be limited to determining whether the President's disapproval complied with the procedural requirements and the objective criteria established by this Article, including whether the disapproval corresponded to a GAO-certified item under subsection (k).

(2) If a disapproval is found invalid, the underlying appropriation shall take effect as enacted.

(3) For purposes of this Section, essential-program protections shall be applied in accordance with the definitions set forth in Section 2 of this Article.

(k) Within seven (7) days after Congress transmits any appropriations bill to the President, the GAO shall publish and deliver to the President, Congress, and the IOPI a certified list of all appropriations and monetary items that:

(1) are non-essential within the meaning of Section 2; and

(2) constitute, in whole or in part, reductions reasonably necessary, as determined by objective fiscal criteria applied uniformly under paragraph (3), to satisfy the fiscal requirements established by this Article if exercised through line-item veto before activation of any automatic enforcement mechanism.

(3) GAO shall apply a uniform proportionality method requiring neutral application based on objective, non-discriminatory criteria, such that no State, region, congressional district, or constituency is singled out for adverse treatment or disproportionately represented among the certified items relative to its share of non-essential appropriations as reflected in the itemized record of the bill. No item may appear on the certified list unless its inclusion satisfies this requirement.

(4) Failure of the GAO to meet the deadline prescribed in this subsection shall not impair the President's authority to exercise line-item veto authority with respect to items subsequently certified on the list required by this subsection.

(5) The seven (7) day deadline prescribed in this subsection shall be strictly enforced; however, where the GAO demonstrates that compliance within this period is impossible despite good-faith efforts to comply, the deadline may be extended only to the extent strictly necessary to complete certification at the earliest practicable date.

Section 9. Transition and Fresh Start

(a) This Article shall take effect upon ratification.

(b) Service in the House, Senate, or Supreme Court completed before ratification of this Article shall not be counted toward the limits established by this Article**,** except as provided in Section 7(i)(2) for the sole purpose of assigning initial active terms on the Supreme Court**.**

(c) Within three (3) years after ratification, Congress shall by general law direct a national civic-education review to strengthen public understanding of the rights, duties, and constitutional principles set forth in this Article.

(1) Such review shall include a publicly released report, published in the public fiscal ledger, summarizing findings and recommended educational measures consistent with this Article.

(2) A subsequent national civic-education review shall be conducted at intervals of not more than five (5) years thereafter, with each resulting report published in the public fiscal ledger after completion.

(3) All such reports shall be entered into the public fiscal ledger without undue delay and in any event not later than ninety (90) days after completion of the review.

(d) Congress, the Archivist of the United States, and any officer responsible for legislative enrollment or publication may make only non-substantive formatting, typographical, or citation adjustments to this Article, or to any bill, joint resolution, or statute enacted pursuant to it, as necessary for enrollment, codification, or publication in general law, provided that no such

adjustment alters the substantive meaning, scope, or legal effect of any provision.

(e) Failure to comply with subsection (c) of this Section shall constitute a violation of this Article subject to enforcement under Section 12.

Section 10. Compensation and Ethics

(a) The salaries of the President, the Vice President, Members of the House of Representatives, Senators, and Justices of the Supreme Court shall be capped and adjusted only for cost-of-living changes from a baseline established at ratification. The salary caps shall be two million dollars (US $2,000,000) for the President, one million five hundred thousand dollars (US $1,500,000) for the Vice President, and one million dollars (US $1,000,000) for Members of Congress and Justices of the Supreme Court. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to mandate any increase in compensation.

(b) Congress shall enact, complete, or perform every act, vote, certification, and legislative action expressly required by this Article within the period prescribed by this Article, including but not limited to the enactment of appropriations, compliance with mandatory timelines, the provision of recorded votes, and the performance of ministerial duties under Sections 8, 11, and 14.

(1) Where Congress, or either House thereof, fails to enact, complete, or perform any requirement of this subsection within the period prescribed by this Article, the compensation, benefits, and discretionary privileges of Members shall be suspended until such compliance is achieved.

(2) Such suspension shall operate by force of this Article, shall not require further legislative action, and shall be implemented and enforced pursuant to this Article by the Independent Office of Public Integrity in accordance with general law. All such suspensions, reinstatements, and related determinations shall be recorded in the public fiscal ledger without undue delay and in any event not later than ten (10) days after the occurrence of the relevant action or receipt of the required information, as applicable, unless a shorter period is prescribed elsewhere in this

Article.

(c) Such officers shall receive no pension or other post-service benefit beyond their period of active service, except as otherwise provided in this Article for Justices of the Supreme Court.

(1) Officers covered by this Section shall not receive any health-care coverage, subsidy, or benefit during or after service that is not generally available on the same terms to other federal employees or to the public under general law.

(2) Officers elected or appointed before ratification may, at their discretion, upon written notice to the appropriate payroll and benefits office submitted within ninety (90) days after any pay change authorized by Congress following ratification:
(i) retain compensation and benefits authorized under prior law for the remainder of their service; or
(ii) elect to participate under the compensation system established by this Article.
(iii) Clause (i) of this paragraph notwithstanding, no benefit under prior law shall be retained by any officer who is convicted, after ratification, of corruption, bribery, or abuse of public office committed after ratification. This limitation is a condition on the retention of benefits under prior law and shall be applied only upon final conviction after due process of law.

(d) During service, no covered officer shall receive any gifts, compensation, honorarium, board position, or paid employment from any private or public source, or any indirect equivalent thereof, other than their lawful salary. This prohibition shall apply equally to any benefit conferred upon a member of the officer's immediate family where such benefit is offered, provided, or conferred **directly or indirectly** in connection with, or by reason of, the officer's public service, including any deferred, contingent, or third-party benefit so connected, and shall not be construed to prohibit benefits conferred upon immediate family members that are wholly unrelated to the officer's public service.

(e) Stock-Trading and Financial-Conflict Prohibition.
No Member of Congress, officer of the Executive Branch, or Justice of the Supreme Court shall,

while in office or for a period of ninety (90) days after leaving office, buy, sell, or trade individual securities, digital assets, real-estate ventures or investments, private business interests, or comparable financial instruments whose value could be materially affected by non-public information obtained through federal office or by the exercise of official power, including any position or financial instrument that gains value from movements in price, value, or performance of any asset. For purposes of this Section, such instruments are collectively referred to as "investment assets." The restrictions imposed by this subsection are conditions of holding federal office and do not constitute a taking, forfeiture, or deprivation of property.

(f) Permitted Diversified Holdings and Blind Trusts.

(1) Notwithstanding the prohibitions in subsection (e) of this Section, Members of Congress, officers of the Executive Branch, and Justices of the Supreme Court may buy, sell, or trade diversified mutual funds or exchange-traded funds that track broad market indexes, provided the covered officer exercises no control over the selection or management of underlying holdings.

(2) Covered officers may also buy, sell, or trade investment assets described in subsection (e) of this Section through fully blind trusts, established and operated under standards prescribed by general law, provided that such trusts are created, funded, and made irrevocable within a period prescribed by general law, and provided further that the covered officer exercises no control, direct or indirect, over trust assets thereafter. Any trust not created and made irrevocable within such period shall not qualify as a blind trust for purposes of this Article.

(3) For purposes of this subsection, prohibited investment assets shall include any such interests held directly or indirectly, including through immediate family members, controlled entities, or any entity owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by the covered officer, except as otherwise permitted under this subsection, including where such assets are held through diversified mutual funds, diversified exchange-traded funds, or placed in a qualified blind trust compliant with this Article and general law.

(4) Violations of this subsection shall render any resulting profit subject to forfeiture and to any

additional penalties as prescribed by general law.

(g) Post-Service Lobbying and Advocacy Prohibition.

(1) No person who has served as a Member of Congress, the President, or a Justice of the Supreme Court shall, for a period of three (3) years after leaving office, accept compensation for lobbying, paid advocacy, or advisory activity primarily intended to influence federal legislation, regulation, judicial decision-making, or any federal policy outcome, whether direct or indirect, including on behalf of any foreign government or foreign state-controlled entity.

(2) For purposes of this Section, lobbying and advocacy include any compensated activity intended to influence federal public policy, legislation, regulation, or judicial outcomes, regardless of whether compensation is deferred, contingent, or payable after the conclusion of service**.** Congress may by general law prescribe narrow and uniform exceptions for public service or academic teaching, provided that no such exception shall permit any paid activity on behalf of private interests.

(3) Violations of this subsection shall render any related compensation subject to forfeiture and penalties as prescribed by law.

(4) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to restrict or prohibit any uncompensated speech, expression, writing, teaching, testimony, or advocacy by a former officer, including speech on matters of public concern, provided that such activity is not undertaken for compensation or other thing of value.

(h) Post-Service Appointment Cooling-Off Clause.

(1) No person who has served as a Member of the House of Representatives or the Senate shall, for a period of two (2) years after leaving such service, accept appointment to any federal office requiring Senate confirmation, except during a time of declared war or a national emergency confirmed as such by a three-fifths (⅗) vote of both Houses of Congress.

(2) An appointment for service in any acting capacity that exceeds one hundred eighty (180) days, in a federal office requiring Senate confirmation, shall be deemed a prohibited appointment under this Section.

(i) Post-Service Contracting Restriction.

(1) No former officer covered by this Section shall, for three (3) years after leaving office, accept compensation from any person or entity that received federal contracts, grants, or regulatory approvals that the officer personally and directly influenced during their term of service, or that were the subject of any matter under the officer's official responsibility, including any compensation pursuant to an agreement entered into during the officer's term of service**.**

(j) Supreme Court Code of Ethics.

(1) The Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States shall be subject to a binding Code of Ethics established by Congress by general law consistent with this Article, incorporating the standards applicable to all other federal judges, including disclosure of financial interests, gifts, travel, and outside income.

(2) Such Code shall provide for independent investigation and enforcement of violations by a panel composed of retired federal judges and shall be publicly accessible.

(3) Any gift, benefit, compensation, or thing of value knowingly received in violation of the Supreme Court Code of Ethics established under this subsection shall be subject to mandatory disgorgement, restitution, or forfeiture, as provided by general law. Such remedies shall be remedial in nature, shall not constitute removal from office or criminal punishment, and shall be enforceable through civil proceedings initiated by the Independent Office of Public Integrity or such other authority as Congress may provide by general law.

(4) For purposes of this subsection, “gift, benefit, compensation, or thing of value” includes travel, transportation, lodging, hospitality, services, or in-kind benefits, whether provided directly or indirectly, and whether or not reported as income under federal tax law.

(5) Congress shall enact the Code of Ethics required by this subsection not later than one hundred eighty (180) days after ratification of this Article.

(6) In the interim period, upon ratification of this Article and until a Code compliant with this subsection is enacted, the Code of Conduct for United States Judges applicable to other federal judges shall apply by operation of law to the Justices of the Supreme Court, to the fullest extent consistent with Article III, and shall remain in effect until a Code compliant with this subsection is enacted**.**

(7) The Independent Office of Public Integrity shall certify, and publish in the public fiscal ledger, whether Congress has complied with the requirements of this subsection within the period prescribed by this subsection or by general law enacted pursuant to it. All such certifications shall be recorded in the public fiscal ledger without undue delay and in any event not later than ten (10) days after issuance.

(8) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to diminish judicial independence or the constitutional separation of powers.

(k) Outside Intellectual Property and Passive Income.

(1) A Member of Congress, the President, or the Vice President may author, write, or publish books or other expressive works during service.

(2) Any contract, advance, royalty arrangement, or other compensation related to such works shall be fully disclosed to the Independent Office of Public Integrity (IOPI) and entered into the public fiscal ledger. All such disclosures and entries shall be recorded without undue delay and in any event not later than ten (10) days after the occurrence of the relevant action or receipt of

the required information, as applicable, unless a shorter period is prescribed elsewhere in this Article.

(3) Any compensation earned or payable during the term of service of a covered officer under this subsection shall be placed in escrow and shall not be released, pledged, assigned, encumbered, or used as loan collateral until that officer has left office. Notwithstanding the foregoing, compensation derived solely from expressive works, inventions, or passive ownership interests created or acquired and substantially established prior to the covered officer's election or appointment may be received during service, provided that such compensation is fully disclosed pursuant to paragraph (2), that the covered officer exercises no management or operational control over such interests during service, and that such compensation is not enhanced, renegotiated, or influenced by the officer's public office or official acts.

(4) No such compensation may be provided by any foreign principal, federal contractor, regulated entity, or other person or entity with a direct financial interest in legislation, oversight, or official action of the covered officer, as defined by general law.

(5) The IOPI shall certify compliance with this subsection and refer any evidence of criminal conduct to the appropriate prosecutorial authority authorized by law. All such certifications shall be published in the public fiscal ledger without undue delay and in any event not later than ten (10) days after issuance or receipt of the required information, as applicable.

(6) Comparable disclosure and source-restriction requirements applicable to Justices of the Supreme Court shall be established by general law consistent with judicial independence and the separation of powers.

(7) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to restrict the content, viewpoint, publication, or distribution of expressive works, and judicial review shall be limited to determining procedural compliance with the requirements of this subsection.

(l) If any provision of this Section, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is

held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions or applications of this Section, which shall remain in full force and effect to the maximum extent permitted by this Article.

(m) Congress may by general law authorize administrative agencies or independent offices to issue rules, conduct investigations, and take other actions necessary to implement and enforce this Section, consistent with the limits and standards established by this Article.

Section 11. Stand-Alone Legislative Consideration

(a) Congress shall not intentionally obstruct the ordinary operation of government, including appropriations, confirmations, or the execution of duly enacted laws, for purposes of partisan advantage or political leverage unrelated to the merits of the legislation at issue.

(b) Upon a joint petition of not fewer than twelve Members of the House of Representatives or five Senators, any bill or joint resolution shall receive a stand-alone designation for purposes of this Article. A petition meeting the requirements of this subsection shall be deemed effective upon filing with the Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate, as applicable.

(c) A bill or joint resolution with a stand-alone designation shall be brought to the floor in each House under procedures consistent with this Section that prohibit unrelated riders and nongermane amendments.

(d) Each House shall bring a stand-alone bill or joint resolution to a recorded up-or-down vote within ten (10) legislative days after designation in that House, except during any period in which that House is objectively unable, as a practical matter, to convene or conduct recorded votes due to a declared war, catastrophic natural disaster, or comparable national emergency formally recognized by law, in which case the period shall be tolled solely for the duration of such incapacity and shall resume immediately upon restoration of the capacity to convene and vote, without omnibus packaging, and without:

(1) substitution amendments that alter the plain meaning of the bill;

(2) substitution amendments that replace its substantive provisions; or

(3) procedural devices whose primary purpose is to prevent a timely vote.

(4) Strategic adjournments, cancellations, or dilatory tactics shall not constitute incapacity for purposes of tolling under this Section, and mere political disagreement shall not be deemed impossibility.

(e) The Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate shall maintain public, machine-readable records identifying all petitions for stand-alone designation, their signatories, and the dates and outcomes of the resulting floor votes, and such records shall be made publicly available as soon as practicable and, unless a shorter period is expressly required by this Article or by general law, not later than seven (7) calendar days after the occurrence of each petition, signature submission, or vote.

(f) The Independent Office of Public Integrity (IOPI) shall establish procedures to:

(1) track petitions submitted under subsection (b) of this Section;

(2) verify the eligibility and number of signatories;

(3) certify the date of stand-alone designation; and

(4) monitor compliance with subsection (c) and subsection (d) of this Section.

(g) Congress shall enact, complete, or perform every act, vote, certification, and legislative action expressly required by this Section within the period prescribed herein, including but not limited to the designation of stand-alone legislation, the scheduling of floor consideration, and the provision of a recorded up-or-down vote as required by this Section.

(1) Where Congress, or either House thereof, fails to enact, complete, or perform any act, vote, certification, or legislative action expressly required by this Section within the period prescribed herein, such failure shall constitute a violation of this Article.

(2) The Independent Office of Public Integrity shall, within two (2) business days after determining that such failure has occurred, and except during periods in which it is not reasonably possible to perform such publication due to a declared war, catastrophic natural disaster, or comparable national emergency formally recognized by law, in which case publication shall occur as soon as practicable thereafter, publish a public notice identifying the nature of the noncompliance and the responsible leadership offices or officials, based solely on objective, ministerial facts.

(3) Persistent or repeated failure to comply with this Section shall constitute a pattern of obstruction for purposes of this Article and may be investigated and enforced pursuant to Section 12.

(4) Compliance with this Section shall be determined solely by objective, public, ministerial facts, including whether a recorded up-or-down vote occurred within the period required by this Section, and shall not require inquiry into legislative motive, debate, or deliberation.

(5) No court shall have authority under this Section to direct the substance, outcome, or timing of any legislative vote, or to require the enactment, amendment, or rejection of any bill or joint resolution.

(6) All primary investigative, certification, publication, and referral authority under this Section shall be vested exclusively in the Independent Office of Public Integrity pursuant to Section 12 of this Article. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to limit the authority of courts of competent jurisdiction to provide judicial relief expressly authorized by subsection (i) of this Section.

(7) Failure to comply with the requirements of this Section shall constitute a violation of this

Article subject to enforcement under Section 12.

(8) Deadlines established by this Section shall be strictly construed and shall not be extended, tolled, or suspended except as expressly provided in this Section. Any tolling based on impossibility shall be limited to periods during which, due to a declared war, catastrophic natural disaster, or comparable national emergency formally recognized by law, it is not reasonably possible for the relevant House to convene or conduct recorded votes, or for the Independent Office of Public Integrity to perform the ministerial act at issue, and shall cease immediately upon restoration of such capacity. Strategic delay or calendar manipulation shall not constitute impossibility.

(h) Statement of National Purpose.

(1) Every bill or joint resolution introduced in Congress shall be accompanied, at the time of introduction, by a concise Statement of National Purpose identifying the specific national interests the legislation is intended to serve and the objective criteria by which its effects may be evaluated.

(2) The Statement of National Purpose shall be entered into the public fiscal ledger and shall identify, at a minimum, the purpose and material effects of the legislation**,** including:
(i) the public problem or condition the legislation seeks to address;
(ii) the national interest or interests implicated, including fiscal, economic, security, institutional, or civic interests;
(iii) any material fiscal impact, including anticipated costs, savings, or revenue effects, if applicable; and
(iv) any material class of primary beneficiaries, including whether the effects of the legislation are broadly distributed or are reasonably expected to be concentrated by geography, industry, sector, or other identifiable characteristic.

(3) No court shall have authority under this subsection to assess the wisdom, merits, or policy judgment reflected in a Statement of National Purpose. Judicial review shall be limited solely to

determining whether the statement was timely provided and contains the elements required by this subsection.

(4) The IOPI shall certify compliance with the requirements of this subsection. Failure to provide a Statement of National Purpose in compliance with this subsection shall constitute a procedural violation of this Article and shall render the legislation ineligible for floor consideration or recorded vote until cured.

(5) Compliance with this subsection shall be determined solely by the presence and public recording of the required statement and shall not require assessment of its accuracy, completeness, or substantive validity.

(i) The provisions of this Section are self-executing and judicially enforceable according to their terms. Where Congress or either House fails to perform a duty required by this Section, courts of competent jurisdiction shall provide appropriate relief sufficient to prevent frustration of the requirements of this Section, provided that no court shall direct the substance or outcome of any legislative vote.

Section 12. Independent Office of Public Integrity

(a) Establishment, Authority, and Funding.

(1) Congress shall by law establish and fund a permanent Independent Office of Public Integrity (IOPI).

(2) The IOPI shall be an inferior office established pursuant to the constitutional authority of Congress under Article I, consistent with the structure and independence of the GAO and other oversight offices established by law.

(3) The IOPI shall have authority to investigate violations of this Article and to enforce its provisions on behalf of the People, including through civil actions in federal court.

(i) Where criminal prosecution may be warranted for violations of this Article, the IOPI may

refer such matters, with a complete evidentiary record, to the Department of Justice or to any independent prosecutorial mechanism established by general law pursuant to this Article. Such referrals shall be reported in the public fiscal ledger.
(ii) In civil actions brought pursuant to this Article, courts of competent jurisdiction may grant declaratory and injunctive relief sufficient to secure compliance with this Article.

(4) Congress may by general law establish an independent prosecutorial mechanism**,** within the Executive Branch and consistent with Article II of this Constitution, for the prosecution of criminal violations of this Article. Such mechanism may receive referrals from the Independent Office of Public Integrity, shall exercise independent prosecutorial judgment, and shall be subject to procedural transparency, reporting, and oversight requirements established by general law and this Article.

(5) Congress shall enact the laws necessary to implement subsection (a) of this Section and to make the Independent Office of Public Integrity operational without undue delay, and in any event not later than eighteen (18) months after ratification of this Article, except where compliance within that period is impossible despite good-faith efforts to comply, in which case such laws shall be enacted as soon as practicable thereafter.

(6) Funding provided for the IOPI shall be maintained on an annual basis at levels sufficient to permit the Office to discharge its constitutional duties, with such funding determined by the most recent public assessment published by the GAO pursuant to objective, generally applicable criteria under this subsection (a). No law shall reduce such appropriations to a level that materially impairs, or is reasonably likely to materially impair, the Office’s ability to perform its constitutional duties.

(7) Congress may depart from the funding level determined under paragraph (6) only by an affirmative vote of not less than three-fifths (⅗) of each House, accompanied by written findings published in the public fiscal ledger explaining the basis for such departure.

(8) Failure to comply with paragraphs (5) or (6) of this subsection shall constitute a violation of

this Article subject to enforcement under this Section.

(9) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to permit the Independent Office of Public Integrity to direct, control, or interfere with prosecutorial discretion in any criminal matter.

(b) Director, Powers, and Independence of the IOPI.

(1) The Director of the IOPI shall be appointed for a single term of seven (7) years by the President from a list prepared by a bipartisan Special Committee of the Senate convened for that purpose.

(2) The composition, selection, and procedural rules of the Special Committee shall be established by general law, provided that no single political party shall hold a majority of its seats unless the proportional representation of the Senate makes such composition mathematically impossible. The Special Committee's role shall be advisory only and shall not constitute appointment authority within the meaning of Article II.

(3) The Committee shall prepare a list of three (3) qualified nominees and transmit that list to the President within thirty (30) calendar days after the position becomes vacant. The President shall select one (1) nominee from the list and submit that nominee to the Senate for confirmation.

(4) A recorded vote of not less than three-fifths (⅗) of the Senate shall be required to confirm the nominee. If the Senate does not confirm the nominee, the President shall select one (1) of the remaining nominees; if the Senate does not confirm that nominee either, the Committee shall prepare a new list in accordance with this subsection.

(5) If no nominee has been confirmed within ninety (90) calendar days after the vacancy occurs, the nominee first listed on the most recent list shall be certified by the Clerk of the Senate as confirmed for purposes of this Article, and the President shall immediately issue the commission of appointment.

(6) The Director of the Independent Office of Public Integrity shall be removable by the President only for neglect of duty, malfeasance, or incapacity. The reasons for removal shall be stated in the public fiscal ledger prior to, or contemporaneously with, the removal. Failure to record such reasons as required by this subsection shall render the removal procedurally defective and subject to judicial relief under this Article.

(7) Congress may enact general laws establishing uniform and generally applicable procedures governing the operation, administration, and oversight of the IOPI, consistent with this Article.

(8) Congress shall not direct, supervise, delay, approve, or disapprove, on a case-by-case basis, any investigation, civil enforcement action, or other exercise of authority by the Independent Office of Public Integrity within its investigatory or civil enforcement functions.

(9) The Director shall have authority to bring civil actions in federal court to enforce this Article and may, at his or her discretion, refer matters to any special tribunal established by general law pursuant to this Article or to the Department of Justice for further action. Nothing in this Section shall be construed to authorize any court to direct the substance or outcome of legislative votes.

(10) The authority of the IOPI shall be limited to auditing compliance with disclosure, transparency, and procedural requirements, and it shall have no power to regulate, assess, or evaluate the content, viewpoint, or merits of political expression in any form.

(11) The authority conferred by this subsection shall be exercised concurrently with, and not to the exclusion of, the powers of the Department of Justice and any other law-enforcement agencies established by law.

(12) The IOPI shall operate independently of executive or legislative control, except as expressly provided in this Article or by general law consistent with its purposes, and shall report annually to the People.

(13) An authorized officer or representative of the Independent Office of Public Integrity (IOPI),

acting pursuant to lawful authority under this Article and general law, shall attend, and shall be permitted to attend, any proceeding of either House of Congress, or any committee thereof, at which testimony is taken under oath, under uniform procedures established by general law consistent with this Article.

(i) Such representative shall have authority, for the purposes of this Section, to monitor responsiveness, administer oaths when requested, issue compliance directives as authorized by this Section, and ensure that answers provided are truthful, complete, and responsive.

(ii) No testimony taken under oath in such proceedings shall be deemed compliant with this Article unless such attendance has been permitted for the duration of such testimony, and the representative has not been excluded except for reasons of physical safety or bona fide classified national-security necessity. Where testimony is classified, an IOPI representative holding the appropriate security clearance shall be admitted to such portions to the maximum extent permitted by law, and any exclusion shall be narrowly tailored and certified in the public fiscal ledger.

(iii) Denial of access based on classification shall be supported by written justification specifying the national-security necessity to the extent consistent with classification law.

(iv) Any refusal to permit attendance as required by this paragraph shall constitute a violation of this Article subject to enforcement under this Section.

(14) The IOPI shall possess all powers necessary to obtain truthful, complete, and responsive testimony and evidence in the execution of its duties under this Article. These powers shall include the authority to issue subpoenas, to administer oaths, to question witnesses directly, and to require that any answer given be responsive to the specific question asked, and to seek judicial enforcement of such subpoenas and orders under expedited procedures.

(15) If a witness provides an evasive, misleading, or non-responsive answer, or refuses to answer a lawful question, an authorized officer or representative of the IOPI, acting within delegated authority, may first issue a verbal notice identifying the deficiency and affording the witness an opportunity to comply.

(i) If the witness fails to comply after such notice, the representative may issue a written compliance directive, acting pursuant to this Section.

(ii) These powers shall apply equally whenever the representative determines that testimony given in proceedings of either House of Congress, or before any committee thereof, is evasive, misleading, or non-responsive to a lawful question.

(16) If Congress fails to enact the expedited judicial procedures required by this subsection, a court of competent jurisdiction shall nonetheless give priority and expedited consideration to actions brought under this Article, sufficient to prevent delay, evasion, or frustration of enforcement.

(17) Upon continued refusal, the IOPI representative may apply to a federal district court under expedited procedures established by general law for an order of civil contempt and coercive measures, including temporary confinement, until the witness provides the testimony or evidence required. No confinement or coercive measure shall take effect except pursuant to an order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

(18) Any order of confinement issued under this subsection shall be subject to immediate appellate review under expedited procedures established by general law. Judicial review shall be limited to determining whether the Office acted within the scope of its constitutional authority and whether the witness has been afforded due process.

(19) Civil contempt under this subsection shall be coercive rather than punitive, shall be equivalent in nature and purpose to the civil contempt authority exercised by federal courts, and shall terminate immediately upon compliance. No confinement imposed under this subsection shall constitute criminal punishment.

(20) Criminal penalties for perjury or obstruction arising from any testimony before the Office shall remain enforceable under general law.

(21) No action taken by the Office under this Section shall be subject to alteration or interference by Congress on a case-by-case basis, except as provided by constitutional amendment.

(22) All other actions of the Office under this Section shall likewise be subject to judicial review to the extent required by due process and consistent with the limited scope of authority provided herein, and nothing in this Section shall be construed to preclude judicial relief for violations of constitutional rights**.** In any such review, courts shall accord substantial deference to the Office's findings of fact and to its determinations within its area of constitutional responsibility, and shall not set them aside unless arbitrary, capricious, or unsupported by substantial evidence.

(23) For the avoidance of doubt, the authority conferred by this Section may extend to matters of significant economic or political importance when clearly stated by general law pursuant to this Article, and shall not be deemed invalid solely by reason of the breadth or consequence of such authority.

(c) Whistleblower Protection and Reward Mechanism.

(1) Congress shall by general law establish clear, uniform, and enforceable protections for any officer, employee, or contractor of the United States who, in good faith, reports waste, fraud, abuse, corruption, or violation of this Article or of law.

(2) Such laws shall provide for confidentiality, protection from retaliation, and proportionate rewards for verified disclosures that result in recovery of public funds or correction of misconduct, and shall be enacted not later than one hundred eighty (180) days after ratification of this Article.

(3) These provisions shall be administered and enforced by the IOPI.

(d) Construction; Preservation of Legislative Authority.

(1) Nothing in this Article shall be construed to impair the authority of Congress to enact laws of general applicability or to delegate to executive departments or agencies the authority to implement and administer such laws, except as expressly limited by this Article.

(2) Congress shall establish by law clear objectives, standards, and limits governing the exercise of any such delegated authority.

(3) No delegation authorized pursuant to this Article shall be construed to transfer or diminish the legislative power vested in Congress by Article I of the Constitution, nor to authorize the exercise of core legislative judgment by any department or agency of the Executive Branch, except to the extent such judgment is expressly specified by this Article or by general law enacted pursuant to it.

(4) Failure to enact or implement any of the protections required by subsection (c) of this Section within the period prescribed shall constitute a violation of this Article subject to enforcement under this Section.

(e) Construction; Preservation of Validity. This Article shall be construed so as to preserve, to the maximum extent permitted by the Constitution, the validity, operation, and enforceability of each of its provisions and of their application to any person or circumstance.

Section 13. Fair Taxes

(a) Purpose. To ensure that the nation's prosperity serves all its people, this Article establishes a fair, simple, and transparent system of federal taxation designed to provide every American a fair start in life, apply uniform rules to all forms of income, and secure the long-term financial stability of the Republic.

(b) Principles:

(1) No tax shall be imposed on the first forty thousand dollars (US $40,000) of earned income.

(2) Income derived from labor and income derived from wealth shall be subject to the same rate structure and rules established under this Article.

(3) Federal taxation shall remain simple, limited, and fully disclosed to the public.

(c) Definitions, for purposes of this Section:

(1) “Taxable income” means all income, whether derived from labor or from wealth, as determined under uniform federal accounting standards prescribed by general law.

(2) “Income derived from wealth” has the meaning set forth in subsection (f) of this Section.

(3) “Highest marginal brackets” refers to the two highest marginal tax rates established by Congress as provided in subsection (d) of this Section.

(d) Rate Structure for the Fair-Share Tax Measure:

(1) Congress shall by general law establish a fair-share marginal rate schedule that applies progressively and uniformly to all taxable income, whether derived from labor or from wealth. The rate schedule established pursuant to this subsection shall be governed by the principles, limitations, thresholds, and caps expressly set forth in this Section and shall not be altered or expanded by implication or administrative interpretation.

(2) The following principles shall govern the rate schedule established under paragraph (1):
(i) The rate schedule shall reflect principles of equity, progressivity, and fiscal responsibility, ensuring that higher income ranges bear proportionately higher marginal rates.
(ii) For taxable income between forty thousand and one dollars (US $40,001) and one hundred twenty thousand dollars (US $120,000), adjusted for inflation or deflation as determined by reference to the baseline year established in subsection (d)(5) of this Section, the marginal tax rate shall not exceed eight percent (8%). No law, including laws enacted during war or national emergency, may authorize a higher rate for this income band unless this Constitution is amended pursuant to Article V.
(iii) Pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection, Congress shall ensure that income ranges determined to constitute middle-income for purposes of this Section remain subject to the lowest

rate tiers, and shall ensure that progressively higher marginal rates apply uniformly at higher income levels in a manner consistent with the fiscal-stability principles of this Article**.**
(iv) Nothing in subsections (d) or (e) of this Section shall be construed to authorize any tax rate exceeding the limitation established in paragraph (ii) of this subsection unless this Constitution is amended pursuant to Article V.
(v) Congress may apply more restrictive deduction and deferral limits where necessary to prevent erosion of the revenue base, provided that no such limits shall increase marginal tax rates or effective tax burdens, whether directly or indirectly, in the aggregate with respect to the protected taxable income band described in paragraph (ii) of this subsection.

(3) Congress shall ensure that marginal tax rates applicable to the highest income ranges are sufficient to maintain long-term fiscal stability, fund essential public obligations, and reduce deficits consistent with this Article. Congress may adopt higher marginal rates than those otherwise in effect under general law where necessary to achieve a balanced budget, reduce the national debt, or safeguard the fiscal integrity of the United States.

(4) Each rate shall apply incrementally to the portion of taxable income within its corresponding range.

(5) Dollar thresholds shall use January 1, 2026 as the baseline and shall be adjusted annually for inflation or deflation.

(6) To prevent erosion of the revenue base and ensure equitable compliance, Congress shall, by general law, limit the value of itemized deductions, timing deferrals, and preferential treatments for taxpayers with taxable income exceeding one million dollars (US $1,000,000).

(7) Congress shall apply uniform rules to prevent the artificial recharacterization of income for purposes of obtaining preferential treatment, including stock-based compensation, partnership distributions, and pass-through income, all of which shall be taxed under the rate schedule established by Congress pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(8) No law shall grant any Senator, Representative, President, Justice, or covered federal officer a preferential federal tax rate, exemption, or deduction not equally available to citizens generally under the same conditions.

(e) Temporary High-Income Minimum Tax:

(1) In any fiscal year following a four-quarter period of real gross domestic product (GDP) growth under one percent (1%), as measured using uniform economic measurement standards certified by the GAO, Congress may, by general law, impose a temporary high-income minimum tax ensuring that taxpayers with income exceeding two million dollars (US $2,000,000) pay an effective federal income tax at a rate Congress determines is sufficient to maintain fiscal stability during such periods of economic underperformance.

(2) Any such measure shall expire after two fiscal years unless renewed by a three-fifths vote of each House.

(f) Supplemental Fiscal-Stability Tax:

(1) Congress may impose a temporary supplemental income tax on taxable income subject to the two highest marginal rates established by Congress pursuant to subsection (d) of this Section. When first enacted in any fiscal year, such supplemental income tax may not exceed three percent (3%) on income subject to the second-highest marginal rate and six percent (6%) on income subject to the highest marginal rate.

(2) Such ceilings may be adjusted by Congress, by general law, upon a public finding of fiscal necessity, except that in no case shall the supplemental income tax in any fiscal year exceed nine percent (9%) on income subject to the second-highest marginal rate or twelve percent (12%) on income subject to the highest marginal rate.

(3) The supplemental income tax shall:
(i) be levied and collected like other income taxes;

(ii) take effect only upon a public finding of fiscal necessity;
(iii) expire automatically once revenues equal or exceed expenditures, including required debt-reduction sums;
(iv) not be construed as a tax upon wealth or property, but solely upon current taxable income.

(4) This authority shall sunset automatically when the national-debt-to-GDP ratio falls below forty percent (40 percent), except that Congress may extend its operation for up to five fiscal years by a recorded three-fifths vote.

(g) Income Derived from Wealth:

(1) Income derived from wealth, including realized capital gains, dividends, rents, royalties, carried interest, and comparable gains, whether foreign or domestic, shall be subject to the same rate schedule as income derived from labor.

(2) Congress shall prohibit the deferral, offshoring, concealment, transfer, or other artificial shifting of taxable income, and shall require annual reporting of foreign accounts, trusts, and controlled foreign entities, to ensure current-year taxation of income reasonably attributable to the taxpayer.

(3) Congress shall limit itemized deductions and timing deferrals, to the extent necessary, for the purpose of preventing erosion of the revenue base and ensuring fiscal compliance under this Article, with respect to taxpayers whose taxable income exceeds six hundred thousand dollars (US $600,000), adjusted annually for inflation or deflation using January 1, 2026 as the baseline**.**

(4) Congress shall expand the net investment income tax to high-income pass-through business income and shall adopt corporate base-broadening measures as necessary to align effective rates with subsection (c) of this Section, ensuring fiscal compliance under this Article, including the Fiscal Responsibility Guarantee set forth in Section 14.

(5) Equity-based compensation, including but not limited to stock options, restricted stock units,

profit-sharing instruments, and comparable awards, shall be taxed as ordinary income at the time such compensation is realized or becomes transferable, without regard to the form, label, or contractual structure of the compensation arrangement**.**

(6) Congress shall, by general law, prevent the use of debt or comparable financial arrangements to obtain sustained consumption or economic benefit without realization, where such arrangements operate in substance to defer the recognition of taxable income indefinitely for high-income taxpayers, consistent with the principles of this Article.

(7) Congress shall, by general law, prevent the artificial fragmentation of taxable income through the use of trusts, entities, or comparable arrangements where such arrangements operate in substance to divide, defer, or reassign income for the purpose of reducing effective tax liability. In cases where a taxpayer retains substantial control over, or receives substantial economic benefit from, income held in trust or similar arrangements, Congress shall ensure that such income is attributed to the taxpayer for purposes of taxation, consistent with the principles of this Article.

(8) Congress shall, by general law, ensure that charitable deductions, exclusions, and related tax benefits are reasonably aligned with the timely provision of public benefit and the relinquishment of donor control. Where a donor retains substantial control over donated assets or where public benefit is materially deferred, Congress may limit, defer, or condition the associated tax benefits, consistent with the principles of this Article.

(9) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to authorize a tax on net wealth, unrealized gains, property ownership, or asset holdings as such, rather than on income upon realization.

(h) Congress may by general law impose a supplemental tax on extraordinary realized income events exceeding one billion dollars (US $1,000,000,000) in a single taxable year, including events arising from sale, exchange, conversion, or comparable realization transactions, limited to realized gains or non-recurring compensation events whose magnitude materially exceeds ordinary income patterns, as determined by Congress, and applied at the time such income is

realized or becomes transferable, without regard to the form, label, or contractual structure of the compensation or transaction.

(1) Revenues derived from such supplemental taxation shall be applied exclusively to fiscal stabilization and debt reduction, consistent with this Section.

(2) No tax shall be imposed on net wealth or property holdings.

(i) Limitation on Permanent Exclusion of Unrealized Gains. No unrealized gain attributable to income derived from wealth shall be permanently excluded from taxation by reason of death.

(1) Congress shall ensure that taxation of such gains occurs only upon any subsequent sale, exchange, or other realization by an heir or successor, and shall prescribe reasonable exclusions and thresholds to protect ordinary inheritances and family-scale assets, consistent with the principles of this Article.

(2) Any such exclusions or thresholds shall be neutral in application, based on objective and non-discriminatory criteria, and shall not operate to restore, whether directly or indirectly, the permanent exclusion of unrealized gains for high-income or high-wealth taxpayers.

(3) For purposes of this Section, death shall not constitute a taxable event, and no tax liability shall arise or be assessed until such gain is realized through a sale, exchange, or other transaction described in this subsection.

(4) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to impose a tax upon death, inheritance, or net wealth, or to require the liquidation of inherited property.

(j) Judicial Construction. In construing this Section, no court shall have authority to prescribe tax rates, income thresholds, or fiscal policy judgments. Judicial review shall be limited to determining compliance with the objective requirements and limitations expressly set forth in this Section.

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Section 14. Fiscal Responsibility Guarantee

(a) Congress shall, by general law, enact and maintain statutes **that** require and are objectively sufficient **to** achieve annual net reduction of the national debt equal to not less than one percent (1%) and not more than two percent (2%) of gross domestic product (GDP) during years of sustained economic growth, as defined in Section 2 of this Article and certified annually by the GAO. Such statutes shall be enacted not later than twelve (12) months after ratification of this Article. These statutes, together with the enforcement provisions of this Section, constitute the Fiscal Responsibility Guarantee.

(b) Not less than seventy-five percent (75%) of all revenues, savings, or other fiscal measures enacted for the purpose of satisfying subsection (a) of this Section shall be dedicated to debt reduction, except in time of war, national emergency, or recession, as confirmed by a three-fifths vote of each House.

(c) Failure by Congress to enact the statutes necessary to implement this Section or to achieve the fiscal outcomes required herein shall not suspend enforcement, notwithstanding any omission, delay, or inaction by Congress. The Department of the Treasury shall, as a ministerial duty required by this Article, carry out all duties required by this Section strictly in accordance with the constitutional formulas and certifications established herein.

(d) The annual budget of the United States shall be a balanced budget in each fiscal year, as determined in accordance with the formulas and certifications required by this Section, except as provided in subsection (e).

(e) In time of declared war or national emergency confirmed by a three-fifths vote of each House, total federal expenditures for any fiscal year may exceed total revenues, inclusive of required debt-reduction sums, solely in an amount determined by Congress to be strictly necessary to fund war efforts or address the national emergency.

(f) An automatic enforcement mechanism shall take effect if, in any fiscal year other than a fiscal year in which a declared war or national emergency exists pursuant to subsection (e) of this

Section:

(1) total federal outlays are projected to exceed total federal revenues by more than three percent (3%) of GDP, as projected using uniform economic measurement standards certified by the GAO pursuant to Section 2 of this Article; or

(2) Congress fails to enact final appropriations consistent with the requirements of this Section.

(g) The enforcement mechanism shall remain in effect until Congress enacts appropriations in compliance with this Section.

(h) Before applying the enforcement mechanism required by this Section, the President shall have the opportunity to exercise the line-item veto authority established by Section 8 of this Article with respect to any appropriations bill for the fiscal year.

(1) The enforcement mechanism shall apply only after the President has returned any disapproved items to Congress and Congress has acted upon them, or after the period for exercising such authority has expired.

(2) For purposes of this Section, “final enacted appropriations” means the total appropriations that remain legally in force after completion of the presentment process, including any line-item disapprovals and any congressional reconsideration thereof.

(3) Final enacted appropriations shall serve as the appropriations levels used to calculate the fiscal imbalance, the surtax, and the Reduction Percentage.

(i) The enforcement mechanism shall first impose a temporary surtax on taxable income exceeding one million dollars (US $1,000,000).

(1) The surtax shall equal the percentage necessary to eliminate the fiscal imbalance, but shall not exceed six percent (6%). Treasury shall apply the surtax as a ministerial duty, applicable only

for the duration of the fiscal imbalance, without discretion and without regard to policy considerations, using the constitutional formula.

(2) Any surtax imposed pursuant to this subsection as a result of the enforcement mechanism shall operate independently of, and shall not be aggregated with, any tax authorized under Section 13, except as expressly provided by general law consistent with the rate limitations of this Article.

(j) Treasury shall execute all surtax calculations, fiscal assessments, and proportional reductions as a ministerial duty, using the constitutional formula and the uniform economic measurement standards issued annually by the GAO.

(1) GAO shall publish these standards in the public fiscal ledger and may not alter the constitutional enforcement mechanism.

(2) Treasury shall have no discretion to modify, waive, delay, or suspend any enforcement action required by this Section.

(k) If the surtax required under subsection (i) is insufficient to achieve the fiscal limits established by this Section, the enforcement mechanism shall impose proportional reductions to non-essential appropriations in accordance with the Reduction Percentage.

(1) Treasury shall apply the Reduction Percentage uniformly to all non-essential appropriations as a ministerial duty using the constitutional formula.

(2) No reduction under this subsection shall delay, diminish, or impair Social Security, Medicare, veterans' care or benefits, national-defense readiness, or any other essential program identified by this Article.

(3) Any proportional reductions applied under this subsection shall be applied uniformly and neutrally, using objective, non-discriminatory criteria, and shall be subject to the proportionality

principles set forth in Section 8(k)(3) of this Article.

(4) Treasury shall apply proportional reductions strictly in accordance with, and using the same proportionality methodology, data inputs, and allocation framework certified by the GAO under Section 8(k)(3), and shall have no authority to alter, reinterpret, supplement, or substitute any element of that methodology.

(l) No officer or employee of the United States shall take any action to waive, delay, or obstruct the enforcement mechanism required by this Section. Any such action shall be void and of no legal effect.

(m) All expenditures, appropriations, sequestration adjustments, revenue measures, enforcement actions, GAO certifications, and Treasury implementations required by this Section shall be recorded in the public fiscal ledger as soon as practicable and, unless a shorter period is expressly required by this Article or by general law, not later than seven (7) calendar days after the occurrence of each action described in this subsection, except during periods in which it is not reasonably possible to perform such publication due to declared war, catastrophic natural disaster, or comparable national emergency formally recognized by law, in which case publication shall occur as soon as practicable thereafter.

(n) Failure to publish required records, or failure to implement the automatic enforcement mechanism when triggered, shall constitute a justiciable violation subject to enforcement under Section 12 of this Article.

(o) Courts may order ministerial implementation of the enforcement mechanism required by this Section consistent with the limitations set forth in this subsection.

(1) Courts may not adjudicate specific program reductions, substitute their judgment for that of Congress, reallocate appropriations, or require approval or disapproval of any particular item.

(2) Congress shall, by general law, provide for expedited judicial procedures applicable to

actions brought under this Section and Section 12, including accelerated filing, hearing, and appellate review schedules, provided that no such law shall authorize a court to prescribe fiscal policy, substitute its judgment for that of Congress, or alter the constitutional enforcement mechanism established by this Article.

(p) Notwithstanding subsection (o), in the event of a national catastrophe causing physical destruction or economic disruption equal to or exceeding seven percent (7%) of GDP, confirmed by the required vote of each House, Congress may authorize extraordinary expenditures and borrowing necessary to preserve life, maintain essential operations, and reconstruct infrastructure, on a temporary and non-precedential basis, subject to the reporting, limitation, and repayment requirements of this Article.

(q) If such a catastrophe results in GDP contraction of eleven percent (11%) or more, Congress may enact a temporary emergency stabilization levy on extraordinary realized income events exceeding one billion dollars (US $1,000,000,000), not to exceed five percent (5%), for the duration of the emergency. No provision of this subsection, nor any action taken pursuant to it, shall constitute precedent for future income levies.

(r) The Department of the Treasury shall annually publish in the public fiscal ledger an illustrative example showing the application of the constitutional enforcement formula for the upcoming fiscal year, including any year in which the enforcement formula is not applied.

Section 15. Clean Politics

(a) To affirm that expenditure of money shall not be construed as speech, nor as an equivalent proxy for speech, for purposes of elections, and that all citizens stand equal in political voice; to ensure that elections reflect the will of the People rather than the wealth of the few; to guarantee that government serves people, not power; to restore public confidence through transparent, fair, and accountable democratic processes; and to establish clearly defined procedures for implementation, this Section is adopted to secure clean and independent elections in the United States.

(1) Except as expressly provided in subsection (e), no candidate for federal office shall, directly or indirectly, solicit, accept, or knowingly receive any campaign contribution or thing of value from any corporation, political action committee, labor organization, or other entity that is not a natural person who is a citizen of the United States.

(2) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the voluntary aggregation of contributions made by individual citizens, provided that such funds consist solely of amounts contributed by natural persons who are citizens of the United States, each within the limits prescribed by this Article, and are fully disclosed in accordance with this Section.

(b) No candidate for federal office, nor any committee acting on their behalf, shall solicit or receive any campaign contribution from any person who is seeking, or who within the preceding one (1) year has sought, any federal contract, grant, subsidy, license, loan guarantee, or regulatory approval.

(c) All contributions to and expenditures by candidates for federal office shall be publicly disclosed through the system established under subsection (f) of this Section. Contributions shall be disclosed within five (5) days of receipt, and expenditures shall be disclosed within five (5) days after disbursement. All expenditures shall be made solely from funds raised and reported in accordance with this Article.

(d) No campaign contribution from any person shall exceed such limits as Congress may by general law prescribe, provided that such limits are set at levels that are objectively calibrated, based on empirical evidence and neutral criteria, to prevent the financial resources of any citizen from conferring significantly disproportionate influence upon federal elections. Failure by Congress to review or adjust such limits at least once every ten (10) years shall constitute a justiciable failure to comply with this Article.

(e) Except as expressly permitted by this Article, no corporation, political action committee, labor organization, or other entity that is not a natural person who is a citizen of the United States shall make, directly or indirectly, any contribution or coordinated expenditure in connection with

any campaign for federal office.

(1) Any such contribution or expenditure made in violation of this subsection shall be void and subject to penalties and forfeiture as prescribed by law.

(2) No foreign state, foreign state-controlled entity, or person acting on behalf of a foreign principal shall, directly or indirectly, establish, control, or finance any entity whose primary purpose is to influence federal elections or legislation. Congress shall by general law provide for registration, transparency, and penalties for violations of this subsection.

(f) Congress shall by law, within ninety (90) days after ratification of this Article, establish and maintain a consolidated, publicly accessible database serving as the single official record of all campaign finance activity related to federal elections, including: contributions and expenditures for candidates for President, Vice President, the Senate, and the House of Representatives; independent expenditures related to such federal elections; aggregated citizen contributions; nonprofit and tax-exempt entity filings related to political activity in federal elections; media-related disclosures; and any additional information required by this Article.

(1) The database shall be freely searchable by every citizen and shall be updated within twenty-four hours of each reportable event.

(2) The responsibility to file, transmit, and update such reports shall rest solely with the candidates, campaigns, committees, organizations, entities, and media outlets that are subject to disclosure under this Article, in accordance with rules prescribed by Congress and enforced by law. Individual citizens who are not acting in any such capacity shall have no reporting obligations under this subsection.

(3) Congress shall ensure by general law that all information required to be disclosed under this Article is reported through this database in standardized, machine-readable form to ensure transparency and accountability in federal elections.

(4) This subsection shall take effect upon ratification of this Article, and Congress's duty to implement the database shall be enforceable beginning ninety days thereafter and shall be subject to judicial enforcement for failure to comply.

(5) Disclosures required under this Section pertain solely to financial contributions, expenditures, ownership interests, and monetary relationships or transfers related to federal elections, and shall not regulate, restrict, burden or condition the content of speech, expression, commentary, or editorial judgment.

(g) No law or judicial interpretation shall construe the expenditure of money as speech for purposes of elections, nor shall any artificial entity be afforded the constitutional rights of natural persons with respect to participation in federal elections, except to the limited extent expressly and unambiguously provided by this Article.

(1) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to restrict individual, voluntary political expression, issue advocacy, independent editorial content, news reporting, or any other form of individual commentary regarding matters of public concern, nor to limit the right of any citizen to speak, write, or publish on such matters.

(2) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to authorize censorship, content approval, prior restraint, or governmental interference with editorial judgment, nor to require disclosure of sources, editorial processes, or internal decision-making by any news or media organization.

(h) To promote equal participation by all citizens in the political process and to ensure that participation in federal elections is open to all and not limited by wealth, Congress may by law provide tax deductions or credits for lawful contributions to campaigns for federal office made in accordance with this Article, provided that such deductions or credits are equal in amount for all persons and fully disclosed in the public campaign-finance database established under subsection (f) of this Section.

(1) The maximum individual contribution limit established under subsection (d) shall be set at a

level reasonably affordable to a significant portion of citizens of ordinary means, meaning an amount not exceeding a reasonable multiple of the national median household income, adjusted annually for inflation.

(2) Any law adjusting contribution limits established under subsection (d) shall be consistent with its purpose and, if increasing such limits by more than ten percent (10%) within any two-year election cycle, shall require approval by not less than three-fifths (⅗) of the Members of each House of Congress.

(3) Congress shall by general law, within one hundred eighty (180) days after ratification of this Article, establish the framework for such deductions or credits and the contribution-limit standards prescribed by this subsection.

(i) A candidate for federal office may expend personal funds in support of their own campaign, subject to the limits of this subsection, provided that all such expenditures are publicly disclosed within twenty-four (24) hours through the database established under subsection (f) of this Section.

(1) Prior to receiving one thousand (1,000) individual contributions, personal expenditures shall not exceed fifty (50) times the individual contribution limit established by law.

(2) Upon receiving at least one thousand (1,000) individual contributions, that limit shall increase to one hundred (100) times the individual contribution limit.

(3) Congress may by law adjust these limits for inflation or verified campaign-cost increases, ensuring that personal wealth confers no disproportionate advantage, as provided by law.
(j) Congress and the several States shall, by general law consistent with this Article, prohibit tax-exempt entities, charitable foundations, and nonprofit organizations from circumventing or undermining its intent, including the prohibitions on unequal political influence, undisclosed campaign financing, or indirect coordination with candidates, parties, or political committees.

(1) Such laws shall provide for transparency of major donors, expenditures, and affiliated entities where such organizations engage in advocacy or communication intended or reasonably expected to influence federal elections or legislation.

(2) Congress and each State shall, within one hundred eighty (180) days after ratification, enact such laws as necessary to comply with this subsection. During that period, and thereafter, this subsection shall be subject to judicial enforcement, including immediate injunctive relief to prevent continued violations or evasion of its provisions.

(3) Failure by Congress to act within such period shall constitute a justiciable failure to comply with this Article. Provided, however, that nothing herein shall be construed to restrict bona fide charitable, educational, or humanitarian work unconnected to electoral or legislative influence.

Section 16. Electoral Integrity and Democratic Safeguards

(a) Any entity that regularly publishes or distributes election-related content to a measured and independently verified annual audience exceeding ten million (10,000,000) persons, as determined by neutral, content-agnostic metrics under uniform measurement standards prescribed by general law, is subject to the disclosure requirements of this Section. An entity is covered if, within one hundred fifty (150) days preceding a federal election, it publishes, broadcasts, transmits, or otherwise distributes material concerning a candidate for federal office. Any such entity shall, within twenty-four (24) hours of each reportable broadcast, publication, or digital posting, disclose in the public campaign-finance database established under Section 15(f) its ownership and controlling interests, and any financial relationships with candidates, political parties, or campaign committees.

(1) Such disclosure shall identify beneficial ownership and any paid relationships with candidates, political parties, or campaign committees relevant to the covered content; nothing herein shall require disclosure of editorial processes, sources, or exposure tallies.

(2) This subsection shall take effect upon ratification of this Article and shall be subject to judicial enforcement for failure to comply. Congress and the several States shall, within one

hundred eighty (180) days thereafter, and consistent with the First Amendment, enact general laws to ensure full implementation of these requirements.

(3) For purposes of this Section, a digital-platform publisher, and publishers using any other form of media distribution, shall be deemed to "publish, promote, or distribute" material when it knowingly and systematically, through algorithmic means, amplifies, curates, recommends, or provides paid placement of content concerning a candidate for federal office, whether such content is generated internally or by users.

(4) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to apply to individual users or private persons engaging in citizen posted commentary on digital platforms, nor to impose any disclosure or reporting obligation on such expression.

(5) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to authorize censorship, prior approval of content, content control, or interference with editorial judgment by any government entity, nor to require disclosure of confidential sources, editorial processes, or internal decision making by any news or media organization.

(6) Congress shall by general law provide a safe harbor for media organizations acting in good faith compliance with the disclosure requirements of this Section.

(b) Every citizen retains the right, consistent with the freedoms of speech and press guaranteed by the First Amendment, to speak about, question, or criticize matters of public concern, including elections.

(1) No person shall knowingly publish or distribute any audio, visual, audiovisual, or other distributed media that is materially deceptive, whether created by synthetic, technological, or manual means, including artificial intelligence or other technology, and that is intentionally designed or deployed, with actual malice or with reckless disregard for the truth, and with a clear and demonstrable likelihood of causing material electoral harm, to falsely depict or impersonate a real candidate for federal office, a public officer, or a campaign-related entity,

with intent to influence the nomination, election, or defeat of any candidate, or to impair public confidence in the electoral process.

(2) Media outlets that, upon credible notice, verify such deception shall promptly disclose to the public that the media in question was synthetically altered or generated and shall remove it unless the distributor demonstrates that the material includes clear labeling identifying its synthetic nature and purpose.

(3) This subsection shall not apply to satire, parody, commentary, artistic works, or clearly labeled fiction, provided that such materials are not presented as authentic depictions of real persons or events.

(4) Congress shall by general law establish enforcement mechanisms, including penalties and remedies for violations, and safeguards for free expression consistent with the First Amendment.

(5) For purposes of this subsection, "synthetic media" means any audio or visual content, or combination thereof, created or substantially altered by any means, including artificial-intelligence or other computational means, so as to misrepresent real persons, places, or events.

(6) Congress may by general law require the several States to adopt equivalent measures applicable to State and local elections to ensure uniform standards of transparency, truthful communication, and electoral integrity throughout the United States.

(7) Any State laws inconsistent with these principles shall be amended within one hundred eighty (180) days of ratification or enactment of corresponding federal law to conform to this Article, and each State that does not have such laws shall within the same period enact laws of similar purpose and effect governing candidates and officeholders in State and local government.
(8) This subsection shall be subject to judicial enforcement for failure to comply.

(9) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to authorize censorship, content approval, or content control by any government entity.

(c) This Section shall supersede any prior judicial interpretation or statutory provision inconsistent with its intent or application.

(d) Congress shall by law establish an Independent Election Integrity Commission composed of equal representation from the major political parties and unaffiliated citizens, with authority to audit campaign-finance disclosures, monitor recall petitions, and oversee compliance with transparency requirements.

(1) The Commission shall operate publicly, report annually to Congress, and have no authority to regulate content, censor expression, or determine electoral outcomes.

(2) The Commission's authority shall be limited to auditing compliance with disclosure, transparency, and procedural requirements of this Article, and it shall have no power to regulate or evaluate the content, viewpoint, or merits of political expression.

(3) In carrying out its duties under this subsection, the Commission shall operate independent of partisan influence and free from day-to-day executive or legislative direction, subject to the structural safeguards, reporting obligations, and judicial review expressly provided by this Article and by general law.

(e) To ensure that every federal election accurately reflects the will of the People, all voting systems used for federal contests in the United States shall produce a voter-verifiable paper record of each ballot cast and shall employ software whose source code is open to public inspection and independent audit. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to require public disclosure of system components whose release would demonstrably compromise election security, provided that such components remain subject to independent, nonpartisan audit.

(1) No voting system used in federal elections shall rely solely upon proprietary or unverifiable technology such that its core tabulation processes cannot be independently audited or verified.

(2) No voting system, tabulator, or election-management device shall be certified for federal use unless its hardware and software have been tested, verified, and certified by an independent, nonpartisan commission established by Congress under this Article.

(3) All federal election results shall be subject to a post-election audit sufficient to confirm tabulation accuracy, and all findings shall be made publicly available within ninety (90) days after each election.

(4) The requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of this subsection shall be implemented and enforced through laws enacted by Congress and the several States within such time as is reasonably necessary to permit nationwide compliance, with implementing laws enacted not later than two (2) years after ratification of this Article and full compliance required for all federal elections occurring after the second regularly scheduled general election following ratification. Failure to comply with this subsection shall constitute a justiciable violation of this Article.

(f) Congress shall by general law update definitions of campaign-related technologies and disclosure standards as new forms of digital and other types of communication emerge, consistent with the limitations and protections of this Article, ensuring continued protection of electoral integrity.

(g) The Independent Office of Public Integrity shall have authority, as provided in Section 12 of this Article, to investigate violations of this Section and to bring civil actions to enforce its provisions, operating free from day-to-day executive or legislative direction; subject only to the structural safeguards, reporting obligations, and judicial review expressly provided by this Article; and reporting annually to the People. Any evidence of criminal conduct uncovered in the course of such investigations shall be referred to the Department of Justice or to any independent prosecutorial mechanism established pursuant to Section 12 of this Article.

Section 17. Interpretation and Construction

(a) Purpose. This Article shall be interpreted and applied in a manner faithful to its declared purposes:

(1) To establish term limits for federal service.

(2) To ensure clean, transparent, and ethical politics free from unequal influence.

(3) To secure fair and simple taxation that treats income from labor and wealth on equal terms.

(4) To promote balanced and responsible federal budgets and long-term fiscal stability.

(5) To prevent corporate or financial bailouts at public expense except under strict safeguards.

(6) To uphold a binding Supreme Court Code of Ethics and an orderly, nonpartisan schedule of judicial appointments.

(7) To preserve fiscal and governmental integrity for future generations.

(8) To preserve the authority of the several States to administer federal elections, except where uniform national standards are expressly required by this Article for its implementation.

(b) In construing this Article or any law enacted pursuant to it, every court, agency, and officer of the United States shall give effect to those purposes and shall not interpret any provision in a manner that materially defeats, diminishes, or circumvents them. In giving effect to this Article, no court, agency, or officer of the United States shall construe any provision of this Article in a manner that converts a mandatory constitutional duty, deadline, or enforcement mechanism into a discretionary, aspirational, or otherwise unenforceable norm.

(1) Any citizen of the United States alleging concrete or particularized injury, including the loss of legally protected interests arising from governmental inaction in failing to carry out the requirements of this Article, shall have standing to seek judicial relief to enforce this Article against such governmental inaction, evasion, or contrary interpretation, provided such citizen alleges specific facts that, if true, would constitute a material violation of this Article.

(2) The Independent Office of Public Integrity (IOPI) and the Department of Justice shall each have authority to bring civil actions in federal court to enforce this Article and any law enacted pursuant to it, consistent with their respective jurisdictions as established by this Article and by general law.

(3) Courts may dismiss petitions that are frivolous, immaterial, or brought in bad faith.

(c) Where ambiguity arises, interpretation shall favor the fulfillment of the declared purposes of this Article and the restoration of the People's equal sovereignty in self-government. In any case of doubt, the reading that best prevents undue influence over public decision-making and preserves the integrity of public trust shall prevail, and courts shall construe this Article liberally to effectuate its remedial purposes and to preserve the public trust.

(d) In applying any provision of this Article requiring proportional, uniform, or evenly distributed treatment:

(1) Courts shall construe any requirement of proportionality, uniformity, or non-discrimination in fiscal enforcement to prohibit the use of constitutionally granted budgetary authorities in a manner that targets, burdens, or disadvantages any State, region, congressional district, or political constituency.

(2) Courts shall construe such provisions to prevent geographic, political, or partisan targeting and to require neutral application based on objective, non-discriminatory criteria, such that no State, region, or constituency is singled out for adverse treatment.

(3) For purposes of Section 13, no court or agency shall construe limitations on deductions, deferrals, or supplemental taxes, or their combined effect, in a manner that effectively circumvents explicit marginal-rate caps or protected income thresholds established by this Article.

(e) Nothing in this Article shall be construed to permit any reduction of protected baseline benefits lawfully earned under Social Security, Medicare, or comparable federal programs, nor to restrict citizens' access to essential health care or to protections vital to their life, dignity, or well-being. Such obligations are solemn commitments of the Republic to its people and shall be maintained in good faith under the principles of fairness and public trust embodied in this Article. For the avoidance of doubt, no provision of this Article shall be construed to authorize, directly or indirectly, any reduction in earned Social Security benefits protected under Section 19, or in basic Medicare benefits and access to medically necessary care protected under Section 20, including reductions in the amount, timing, eligibility, or scope of such benefits.

(f) No law enacted pursuant to this Article shall narrow, delay, or otherwise dilute the substantive rights, duties, or prohibitions established by this Article, and any such law shall be void to the extent of its inconsistency.

(g) If any provision of this Article or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remaining provisions and their applications shall not be affected thereby, to the fullest extent consistent with this Article's purposes.

(h) All powers, duties, standards, and enforcement mechanisms established by this Article shall be applied uniformly and neutrally, without regard to ideology, belief, or affiliation, and nothing in this Article shall be construed to alter, expand, or diminish any right or limitation established by the First Amendment to the Constitution.

Section 18. Fiscal Integrity and Public Stewardship

(a) For the better stewardship of the Republic, to preserve the earned benefits of the People, to uphold the public trust, and to ensure that the Nation's resources are managed with clarity, discipline, and integrity, the People hereby affirm the principles of fiscal honor set forth in this Section.

(1) Redundant or obsolete federal programs and operations shall be identified and addressed through the elimination, consolidation, or modernization measures established in this Section.

(2) These provisions are ordained to identify and eliminate wasteful, duplicative, and inefficient practices across government; to strengthen accountability in every department and program; and to safeguard the essential services upon which the People rely, thereby securing the long-term stability, solvency, and welfare of the United States.

(3) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to authorize reductions in essential public services, earned benefits, or public-safety programs except where duplication, inefficiency, or waste is conclusively demonstrated.

(4) No law enacted pursuant to this Article shall impose unfunded mandates on State or local governments of substantial cost, as defined by general law, without providing commensurate federal funding or revenue authority.

(b) To promote clarity, accessibility, and democratic accountability in federal law, Congress shall, by general law, consolidate, reorganize, and simplify the Internal Revenue Code and related federal tax statutes.

(1) The consolidated Code shall be set forth as a unified structure reasonably comprehensible to citizens of ordinary means, without specialized legal or accounting training, under objective formatting, pagination, and organizational standards prescribed by general law.

(2) Such consolidation shall eliminate redundant, obsolete, duplicative, or narrowly tailored provisions; reorganize remaining provisions into a coherent and transparent framework; and employ plain statutory language to the maximum extent practicable, consistent with the substantive requirements of this Article.

(3) Congress shall enact the general law required by this subsection, and shall complete the consolidation and simplification required herein, not later than two (2) years after ratification of this Article unless the Independent Office of Public Integrity (IOPI) certifies that a brief extension is necessary to prevent material disruption of essential federal operations, in which

case Congress shall complete such consolidation as soon thereafter as practicable.

(c) The Independent Office of Public Integrity (IOPI) shall certify, and publish in the public fiscal ledger, whether Congress has complied with the requirements of subsection (b), including the enactment of the required general law and the completion of the consolidation and simplification within the period prescribed therein, and shall recertify such compliance not less than once every five (5) years thereafter, and upon any comprehensive revision of the Internal Revenue Code enacted by Congress. Such certification or recertification shall constitute prima facie evidence of compliance for purposes of judicial review under this Article.

(d) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to authorize any court to review, evaluate, or prescribe the substance, structure, organization, clarity, or policy content of the Internal Revenue Code. Judicial review shall be limited solely to determining whether the procedural requirements, deadlines, and certifications expressly required by this subsection have been satisfied.

(e) To protect Medicare and Medicaid while ensuring long-term solvency, Congress shall reduce documented waste, fraud, abuse, and overpayments within these programs as a first resort, and shall employ revenue measures or efficiency improvements as necessary to secure solvency without reducing earned benefits. To that end, and prior to adopting any revenue or program-integrity measures:

(1) Program integrity shall be strengthened to prevent, detect, and recover improper payments.

(2) Documented overbilling by providers, contractors, and managed-care organizations shall be eliminated.

(3) Oversight of managed-care plans shall be strengthened to ensure accurate reporting, fair contracting, and compliance with federal standards.

(4) Low-value, duplicative, unnecessary, or inefficient services shall be identified and reduced

consistent with evidence-based clinical standards.

(5) Payment and billing systems shall be modernized and regularly updated, as provided in subsection (ab)(3) of this Section, to reduce administrative waste, simplify claims processing, and prevent avoidable costs.

(6) Nothing in this Section shall authorize reductions in medically necessary care, nor shall this subsection be construed to authorize private entities to reduce such care indirectly through non-medical barriers, delays, network restrictions, or administrative burdens.

(f) A bipartisan Commission on Government Waste and Modernization shall be established to identify and evaluate wasteful, inefficient, duplicative, or obsolete federal spending and operations across all agencies and departments. The Commission shall issue annual public reports containing specific recommendations for cost reductions, program consolidation, modernization, and improved accountability. Congress shall consider such recommendations promptly.

(g) Medicare and Medicaid shall implement full pricing transparency for hospitals, insurers, and service providers, and shall negotiate fair and reasonable prices for high-cost procedures, prescription drugs, and managed-care contracts.
(h) Medicare and Medicaid shall substantially reduce administrative waste by simplifying billing requirements, eliminating duplicative reporting systems, and curbing unnecessary or inefficient administrative practices by insurers, providers, and contractors.

(i) No Medicare or Medicaid funds shall be used for procedures or interventions that provide no meaningful medical benefit, as reflected in nationally recognized clinical guidelines or standards adopted pursuant to general law, including services that are ineffective, duplicative, or demonstrably non-therapeutic, as determined by evidence-based clinical standards and the independent judgment of licensed physicians. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to deny or delay medically appropriate care, emergency treatment, or patient access to clinically indicated services, including services for the elderly and for terminally ill patients.

(j) The Department of Defense shall reduce wasteful contracting, cost overruns, and duplicative procurement by enforcing competitive bidding standards, strengthening audit and oversight authority, and eliminating redundant, outdated, or improperly justified programs. Nothing in this subsection shall diminish military readiness, the safety or support of service members, or the defensive capacity of the United States.

(k) Federal procurement practices shall prioritize competitive bidding, cost transparency, and efficiency. Agencies shall eliminate redundant contracting offices, prevent unnecessary contract extensions, and ensure that goods and services are purchased at fair and reasonable prices.

(l) Existing federal auditing, oversight, program-evaluation, and efficiency offices with substantially overlapping functions shall be consolidated into a unified oversight structure administered under the authority and verification of the Independent Office of Public Integrity (IOPI) and empowered to detect, prevent, and reduce waste, fraud, abuse, inefficiency, and duplication across all federal agencies and programs.

(1) This unified structure shall employ government-wide analytic tools and modern data-integration methods to identify and prevent improper payments, fraudulent claims, contractor overbilling, and comparable abuses. It shall utilize data-matching, anomaly-detection, and risk-scoring techniques consistent with contemporary audit and oversight standards.

(2) The unified oversight structure shall improve interagency coordination, strengthen public accountability, and support the verification responsibilities assigned to the Independent Office of Public Integrity (IOPI).

(3) The unified oversight structure shall be reviewed at least once every five years under the verification and oversight of the IOPI to ensure continued effectiveness, modernization, and accountability.

(m) Federal agencies shall identify, consolidate, sell, or repurpose federal real property and facilities that are underused, vacant, obsolete, or no longer needed in order to reduce wasteful spending and improve the efficiency of government operations. To that end:

(1) Agencies shall minimize reliance on leased space where government-owned property is available and suitable, ensuring that leasing decisions are cost-effective and consistent with the public interest and the long-term stewardship of public assets.

(2) When federal agencies lease new space while federally owned property within reasonable proximity is vacant, underused, or available for repurposing, the agency shall provide publicly available justification demonstrating cost-effectiveness and operational necessity.

(3) Each federal agency shall publish, in a standardized and publicly accessible format, an annual report identifying federal real property currently in use and properties the agency has sold, transferred, consolidated, or repurposed under this subsection, including associated proceeds or cost savings.

(4) Notwithstanding the foregoing, no essential or defense-critical federal property shall be sold, transferred, or otherwise disposed of.

(5) Net proceeds from the sale of federal real property under this subsection shall be returned to the Treasury and applied to deficit reduction in accordance with subsection (ac).

(6) Compliance with the reporting and disposition requirements of this subsection shall be subject to verification by the Independent Office of Public Integrity (IOPI).

(7) Upon verification by the Independent Office of Public Integrity (IOPI) that federal real property has been properly identified, under this subsection, as underused, vacant, obsolete, or no longer needed and is not excluded as essential or defense-critical, Congress may by general law designate the IOPI as the exclusive agent of the United States for the disposition of such

property. Actions taken by the IOPI pursuant to such designation shall be deemed actions of the United States for all constitutional purposes.
(i) In such capacity, the IOPI shall conduct the sale or other authorized disposition of the property on behalf of the United States, consistent with objective standards and procedures established by general law, and shall seek to obtain fair market value without undue delay, presumptively not to exceed eighteen (18) months when taking into account title defects, pending litigation, environmental review requirements, and prevailing market conditions, and absent genuine, documented market, legal, or operational constraints that necessitate a longer period.
(ii) Title to such property shall remain vested in the United States until disposition, and all net proceeds shall be returned directly to the Treasury as provided in subsection (ac).
(iii) Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to authorize the IOPI to determine property eligibility, override statutory exclusions, or retain proceeds.
(iv) In carrying out such disposition, the IOPI may retain, through competitive procedures established by general law, licensed real-estate brokers, auctioneers, or other qualified professional agents to market and sell such property on behalf of the United States, subject to transparency, conflict-of-interest, and compensation limits prescribed by general law.

(n) Federal agencies shall modernize information-technology systems, eliminate redundant or incompatible software and data platforms, and strengthen the security, integrity, reliability, and resilience of federal information and information systems, subject to appropriations and the protection of critical-infrastructure security. To that end:

(1) Legacy systems that cannot be securely integrated, that substantially overlap in function, or that impose excessive maintenance costs shall be retired.

(2) All information-technology acquisitions, including hardware, software, cloud services, and related support, shall comply with uniform procurement standards established by general law and applicable to all federal agencies to ensure interoperability, cost efficiency, and consistent protection of federal information, and shall be structured to prevent vendor lock-in or contractor capture of federal systems.

(3) Security incidents, breaches, vulnerabilities, or compromises affecting the integrity, confidentiality, availability, or reliability of federal information, data, or information systems shall be reported in a timely manner to the Independent Office of Public Integrity (IOPI), according to procedures established by general law, to ensure coordinated response and effective oversight.

(4) All modernization activities under this subsection shall support secure integration with the unified federal data, financial, and audit systems established under this Section and shall comply with federal standards governing the security, integrity, reliability, and resilience of federal information and information systems, as defined by general law, and shall remain reasonably current with generally accepted federal technology and information-security standards.

(5) All modernization activities under this subsection shall conform to federal accessibility standards for public-facing systems.

(6) Modernization under this subsection shall not preclude scheduled update requirements established in (ab)(3) of this Section.

(7) Information-technology systems implemented under this subsection shall be designed for practical and intuitive use by ordinary federal employees and members of the public interacting with federal services, without requiring specialized technical training, and shall employ clear, plain-language interfaces and instructions. Usability shall be verified through user-testing and shall include reasonable accommodation and accessibility for persons with disabilities, consistent with federal accessibility standards.

(o) Federal agencies shall consolidate and modernize substantially overlapping data systems, reporting platforms, analytics tools, public-information systems, communication systems, citizen-service platforms, and agency-level accounting systems to eliminate unnecessary duplication, reduce administrative costs, and improve internal efficiency, information security, system integrity, reliability, and resilience, and public access to government information.

(1) All agency systems shall be fully interoperable with, and electronically integrated into, a unified federal accounting and financial-management platform consisting of a centralized core processing and reporting system.

(2) The unified platform shall include a public-information portal and related citizen-service interfaces sufficient to ensure transparent tracking, auditing, reporting, and communication of public funds and federal operations.

(3) Legacy or incompatible systems, platforms, or communication channels that substantially overlap in function or cannot be securely or efficiently integrated shall be retired.

(4) The unified platform shall be regularly maintained, updated, and modernized to remain reasonably current with generally accepted federal technology and information-security standards and federal standards governing the security, integrity, reliability, and resilience of federal information and information systems, as defined by general law, and shall be structured to avoid vendor lock-in or undue contractor control.

(p) A public transparency dashboard, maintained by the IOPI, shall provide information, updated monthly or more frequently as needed, regarding the implementation of the waste-reduction, modernization, integration, and savings measures required by this Section.

(1) The dashboard shall draw from the modernized accounting, financial, audit, and reporting systems established under this Section and shall present such information in a clear, accessible, and publicly understandable format.

(2) At a minimum, it shall report aggregate savings achieved, modernization milestones completed, reductions in improper payments, and progress toward the fiscal-stability objectives of this Article.

(q) Federal agencies shall take actions to protect the integrity of all federal payments, including preventing improper, erroneous, fraudulent, or otherwise unauthorized disbursements. To that end:

(1) Federal agencies shall reduce improper payments by improving identity verification, eligibility determinations, data matching, and program oversight. Agencies shall employ modern verification and oversight practices, updated as needed, to identify and prevent erroneous or fraudulent payments in all federal programs, while maintaining safeguards to ensure that eligible beneficiaries are not denied the services or payments to which they are lawfully entitled.

(2) The federal government shall take appropriate measures to reduce fraud, identity theft, improper claims, and erroneous payments in refundable tax credits and other tax-refund programs. Modern and regularly updated verification, identity-authentication, and data-matching systems shall be employed to ensure that refunds are issued only to eligible taxpayers.

(3) All federal grant-related payments shall be subject to effective oversight, monitoring, and verification practices consistent with due process and applicable privacy protections, applied in coordination with the grant-accountability and transparency provisions established in subsection (r) of this Section

(r) Federal grant programs shall be administered with full accountability, transparency, and fiscal integrity. To that end:

(1) Federal agencies shall monitor all grant programs to identify unused, unmonitored, duplicative, or inefficient grants.

(2) Unspent or improperly allocated grant funds shall be returned to the Treasury for deficit reduction and fiscal stabilization.

(3) Grant administration systems shall be consolidated or modernized to improve efficiency and reduce wasteful expenditures.

(4) A unified federal grant reporting and transparency portal shall be established to track the allocation, expenditure, performance, and status of all federal grants.

(5) Federal agencies shall report grant awards, obligations, expenditures, unspent balances, and performance indicators through this portal in a standardized and publicly accessible format, except where disclosure would compromise national security.

(6) The portal shall interface with the modernized data, financial, and audit systems established under this Section to ensure accurate tracking, reduce duplication, and strengthen public accountability.

(s) Contractors, vendors, or entities repeatedly found, after final administrative determination pursuant to procedures established by general law, to have overbilled, defrauded, or attempted to defraud federal programs shall be subject to mandatory debarment from eligibility for federal contracts, grants, or procurement agreements for a period established by general law.

(1) Agencies shall report such findings to the IOPI, which shall verify the accuracy of the determinations and maintain a public registry of debarred entities.

(2) Debarment actions shall be enforced uniformly across all federal departments and programs and shall be imposed only after appropriate due-process procedures, as established by general law.

(t) Federal employees, contractors, grantees, and other individuals with lawful access to federal program information who report, in good faith, evidence of waste, fraud, abuse, mismanagement, improper payments, or violations of this Section shall be protected from retaliation.

(1) No agency, officer, employee, contractor, or other agent of the United States shall discharge, demote, intimidate, harass, or otherwise retaliate against any person for making such a report,

participating in an audit or investigation, or providing information to the IOPI or to any inspector general.

(2) Congress shall by general law establish procedures to ensure timely investigation of such reports, remedies for retaliatory actions, and confidential reporting channels accessible to all whistleblowers.

(u) A unified federal contractor-performance and integrity database shall be established and maintained as the central record of contractor performance, audit findings, debarment actions, overbilling incidents, fraud determinations, and other indicators relevant to the stewardship of public funds.

(1) All federal departments and agencies shall report contractor evaluations, performance deficiencies, contract terminations, audit findings, and substantiated violations to this database in standardized and publicly accessible form, except where disclosure would compromise national security.

(2) The IOPI shall verify the accuracy of reported information, maintain a public registry of suspended or debarred entities, and ensure the integrity of the database through periodic audit and review.

(3) No federal contract, grant, or financial award shall be issued without documented review of this database. Entities with repeated violations, demonstrated integrity risks, or unresolved performance deficiencies shall not receive federal funds absent written justification and approval as established by general law.

(v) Federal programs, authorities, or expenditures established for temporary emergencies shall be reviewed annually and shall sunset unless affirmatively justified as necessary for ongoing public safety or national resilience. Emergency programs that are no longer warranted shall be reduced, consolidated, or terminated.

(w) Federal agencies shall not increase or accelerate spending solely to exhaust annual appropriations. Unused appropriated funds shall automatically revert to the Treasury unless obligated for essential operations or justified by documented public need. Agencies shall report end-of-year expenditures to strengthen accountability and prevent wasteful spending.

(x) Medicare Advantage plans shall be subject to strengthened audit and oversight procedures to identify and prevent inflated risk scoring, improper upcoding, and other practices that increase federal costs without improving patient care. Recoveries and savings resulting from improved oversight of risk-scoring practices shall be treated as savings under subsection (ac) of this Section.

(y) The federal vehicle fleet shall be modernized, consolidated, or reduced where appropriate to eliminate unnecessary or outdated vehicles and lower maintenance and fuel costs.

(z) A unified federal marketplace or comparable centralized purchasing mechanism for commonly procured equipment, supplies, and materials shall be employed to reduce duplicative procurement, secure favorable pricing, and ensure cost-efficient stewardship of public funds.

(aa) Federal programs shall be reviewed, evaluated, and assessed under uniform standards to ensure effectiveness, efficiency, fiscal responsibility, and public value. To that end:

(1) Every federal program shall undergo a comprehensive review at least once every five years to assess effectiveness, duplication, efficiency, continued necessity, and public value. These reviews shall be supervised and verified by the IOPI to ensure consistent application of review standards and transparent, accountable evaluations. Programs unable to demonstrate ongoing necessity or measurable public benefit commensurate with their current level of funding shall be reduced, consolidated, returned to prior funding baselines, or eliminated when appropriate.

(2) A zero-based review pilot program shall be conducted at least once every ten years within selected federal departments or agencies designated by general law. Under such review, the

selected departments or agencies shall justify each program, activity, and expenditure from a zero baseline, independent of prior-year funding levels.

(3) Findings from zero-based reviews shall be integrated into the five-year reviews required by paragraph (1) and shall guide congressional determinations regarding program continuation, consolidation, reduction, or elimination.

(4) Federal departments and agencies shall employ evidence-based analytic methods, appropriate to the scale and nature of each decision, to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, and necessity of major federal programs and their associated expenditures, the scope of which shall be defined by general law. The results of such analyses shall inform the reviews required by paragraph (1) but shall not supersede statutory mandates, public-safety considerations, or national policy objectives.

(5) Federal programs shall adopt measurable performance benchmarks aligned with the modernized data, financial, and analytic systems established under this Section. These benchmarks shall provide objective indicators of program effectiveness, efficiency, duplication, compliance, and public value. Benchmark results shall be integrated into the five-year reviews required by paragraph (1) and shall guide determinations regarding program continuation, consolidation, reduction, or elimination.

(ab) Implementation of the modernization, consolidation, integration, property-management, and anti-fraud measures required by subsections (l), (m), (n), (o), (p), (q), and (r) shall begin within eighteen (18) months of ratification, except for any system for which the Independent Office of Public Integrity certifies that commencement within that time would materially endanger essential operations or system security, and shall proceed according to phased schedules certified by the Independent Office of Public Integrity.

(1) These schedules shall help ensure secure integration of federal systems and minimize disruption to essential operations.

(2) They shall also strengthen data and financial integrity, and assist the maintenance of sound stewardship of federal real property.

(3) Federal information, audit, financial, analytic, information-security, and system-integrity systems established under this Section shall undergo scheduled modernization and security updates as needed, and in all cases not less than once every five (5) years, as certified by the Independent Office of Public Integrity. Modernization under this subsection may include incremental updates or security enhancements and does not require full system replacement unless necessary to preserve system integrity or protect against significant security risks.

(ac) All savings achieved under this Section shall first be applied to meeting the balanced budget requirement of this Article and thereafter to reducing the federal deficit and long-term federal debt. By reducing federal borrowing, these savings shall lower the Nation's long-term interest obligations and strengthen fiscal stability for present and future generations.

Section 19. Social Security Solvency and Protection

(a) Purpose. To secure the long-term solvency of Social Security; to protect the full benefits of all beneficiaries, including the great majority of retirees whose benefits will not exceed the protected monthly amount established in subsection (b) of this Section; and to ensure that the program is fully funded for future generations, Congress shall, by general law, implement the provisions of this Section.

(b) Protection of baseline benefits.

(1) Social Security benefits up to a protected monthly amount not less than two thousand seven hundred dollars ($2,700), indexed to inflation with a January 1, 2026 baseline, shall not be reduced.

(2) The protected monthly amount shall be annually adjusted to maintain equivalent real value.

(3) Earned Social Security benefits shall not be reduced for any beneficiary, whether currently

receiving benefits or becoming eligible following ratification of this Article, including those nearing retirement.

(4) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to reduce disability benefits under the Social Security Act or to narrow eligibility for such benefits.

(c) Solvency shall be achieved without reductions in earned benefits for any beneficiary, whether current or future.

(d) Waste, fraud, and abuse reduction.

(1) Congress shall by general law establish and maintain a continuous program to identify and eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse in the Social Security system, including improper payments and administrative inefficiencies.

(2) The Independent Office of Public Integrity shall have concurrent authority to audit compliance, issue subpoenas, and bring civil actions to enforce this subsection, in coordination with the Inspector General of the Social Security Administration, and may refer matters for criminal prosecution to the Department of Justice or to any independent prosecutorial mechanism established pursuant to this Article.

(3) Any resulting savings shall be applied to strengthen the solvency of the program and reduce required contribution increases, but such measures shall not be relied upon as a substitute for the revenue adjustments necessary to achieve actuarial balance under subsection (f) of this Section.

(e) Revenue adjustments shall secure solvency.
(1) Solvency shall be achieved primarily through graduated contribution adjustments established in this subsection, without benefit reductions.

(2) On annual earnings up to one hundred twenty thousand dollars ($120,000), indexed to maintain equivalent real value from a January 1, 2026 baseline, payroll contributions under the

Social Security Act shall not be increased.

(3) On annual earnings between one hundred twenty thousand dollars ($120,000) and two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000), indexed as above, modest contribution increases shall apply, as provided by general law.

(4) On annual earnings between two hundred fifty thousand dollars ($250,000) and one million dollars ($1,000,000), materially greater contribution increases shall apply, as provided by general law.

(5) The cap on wages subject to Social Security contributions is eliminated. On annual earnings above the contribution-and-benefit base in effect under prior law, a flat contribution rate of not less than ten percent (10%) shall apply.

(6) Investment income of high-income individuals shall be subject to contribution at a flat rate of not less than ten percent (10%), as defined by general law.

(7) Very high capital gains, as defined by general law, shall be subject to contribution at a flat rate of not less than five percent (5%).

(8) Pass-through business income.
(i) The pass-through income of large businesses shall be subject to contribution at a flat rate of not less than five percent (5%), as defined by general law in a manner that prevents avoidance or recharacterization of such income.
(ii) To promote fairness between business owners and wage earners, and to avoid undue burdens on genuine small enterprises, nothing in this subsection shall be construed to impose additional contributions on small businesses as defined by general law.

(f) Actuarial sufficiency and certification.

(1) The revenue adjustments required by this Section shall, in combination, be in amounts

sufficient to achieve actuarial balance for not less than seventy-five (75) years while preserving full benefits for beneficiaries at or below the protected monthly amount.

(2) The Chief Actuary of the Social Security Administration shall, at least annually, certify and publish whether the program, as implemented pursuant to this Section, is projected to remain in actuarial balance for not less than seventy-five (75) years, and shall identify any deficiency requiring corrective action under this Article.

(3) Upon a finding of deficiency by the Chief Actuary, Congress shall enact corrective legislation consistent with this Section within twelve (12) months, including revenue adjustments authorized under subsection (e) of this Section, or the default adjustment mechanisms established by general law pursuant to this Section shall take effect.

(4) In the absence of such general law, or during any period in which Congress has failed to enact corrective legislation within the time prescribed in paragraph (f)(3) of this Section, a default corrective rule shall apply automatically, consisting of:
(i) proportional adjustments in payroll contribution rates above the thresholds specified in subsection (e) of this Section; and
(ii) automatic supplemental transfers from general revenues in such amounts as are certified by the Chief Actuary to be sufficient to pay full scheduled benefits, in amounts certified by the Chief Actuary to be sufficient to maintain actuarial balance while preserving the protections of subsection (b) of this Section.

(g) Trust Fund integrity.

(1) Payroll contributions dedicated to Social Security shall be used exclusively for the payment of earned benefits and the administration of that program.

(2) Obligations issued to the Social Security Trust Funds shall be fully disclosed in the public fiscal ledger as binding obligations of the United States.

(3) Congress shall by general law provide automatic mechanisms to redeem such obligations as needed to pay scheduled benefits.

(4) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to require reductions in earned Social Security benefits in order to offset past use of trust-fund surpluses for other federal purposes, and any changes to benefit formulas shall remain subject to the protected-benefit guarantees of this Article.

(h) Construction.

(1) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to authorize any reduction in disability benefits provided under the Social Security Act, whether directly or indirectly, including through changes to eligibility standards, benefit formulas, cost-of-living adjustments, or administrative procedures.

(2) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to authorize any reduction in survivor benefits payable under the Social Security Act to widows, widowers, or dependent children, whether directly or indirectly, including through changes to eligibility standards, benefit formulas, cost-of-living adjustments, or administrative procedures.

(3) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to narrow eligibility or reduce benefits for child, young-survivor, or student benefits payable under the Social Security Act, except as may be required to prevent fraud or ineligibility determinations supported by substantial evidence and adjudicated under fair procedures.

(4) Courts, agencies, and officers of the United States shall construe this Article liberally to preserve the protections described in this subsection and shall not interpret any provision of this Section to diminish disability, survivor, or children’s benefits except as expressly required by this Constitution.

(i) Enforcement.

(1) Any increase in the age of initial or full eligibility for Social Security benefits, or other measure that delays the commencement or receipt of earned benefits for individuals otherwise eligible under prior law, shall be deemed a reduction in earned benefits for purposes of this Section and is prohibited.

(2) Beneficiaries, individuals reasonably likely to become beneficiaries, Members of Congress, and States shall have standing to bring actions to enforce this Section in a court of competent jurisdiction.

(3) Actions brought pursuant to this Section shall receive priority on the dockets of all courts and shall be resolved on an expedited basis sufficient to prevent evasion of the protections of this Section.

(4) No doctrine of political question or sovereign immunity shall bar adjudication of claims arising under this Section.

Section 20. Medicare Solvency and Protection

(a) Purpose. To secure the long-term solvency of the Medicare program; to preserve essential benefits for current beneficiaries and individuals nearing eligibility; and to ensure that Medicare remains capable of providing necessary medical care to future generations, Congress shall by general law implement the provisions of this Section.

(b) Protection of baseline Medicare benefits.

(1) Basic Medicare benefits for any current beneficiary shall not be reduced below the levels in effect on the date of ratification of this Article, adjusted thereafter as needed to maintain equivalent real value. No reduction in basic Medicare benefits, whether direct or indirect, that is made for the purpose or with the effect of evading the protections of this Section shall be valid.

(2) No law enacted pursuant to this Section shall reduce basic Medicare benefits for any individual who, on the effective date of such change, is within ten (10) years of eligibility for

Medicare.

(3) Basic Medicare benefits protected under this subsection shall include hospital, physician, and medically necessary outpatient services and other core program benefits, as defined by general law consistent with this Section and not in a manner that narrows the existing scope of such benefits through redefinition.

(c) Disability beneficiaries. Nothing in this Section shall be construed to reduce, restrict, or otherwise diminish Medicare coverage for individuals eligible by reason of disability, or to deny medically necessary care to such beneficiaries, including through changes to eligibility standards, benefit formulas, cost-sharing, or administrative procedures.

(d) Waste, fraud, and abuse reduction.

(1) Congress shall by general law establish and maintain a continuous program to identify and eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse in the Medicare program, including improper payments, billing abuse, and administrative inefficiencies.

(2) The Independent Office of Public Integrity shall have concurrent authority to audit compliance, issue subpoenas, and bring civil actions to enforce this subsection, in coordination with the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services, and may refer matters for criminal prosecution to the Department of Justice or to any independent prosecutorial mechanism established pursuant to this Article.

(3) Any resulting savings shall be applied to strengthen the solvency of the program and reduce required revenue adjustments, but such measures shall not be relied upon as a substitute for the revenue measures necessary to achieve actuarial balance under subsection (f).

(e) Revenue adjustments shall secure solvency.

(1) Any premium or cost-sharing adjustments made pursuant to this Section shall be progressive

in structure and shall apply only at higher income levels, in a manner that imposes materially greater adjustments on higher-income persons, and no such adjustment shall reduce, directly or indirectly, the amount, timing, eligibility, or scope of basic Medicare benefits.

(2) No adjustment may be made that increases out-of-pocket costs for low-income beneficiaries or reduces their access to medically necessary care, whether directly or indirectly through cost-shifting, prior authorization barriers, or administrative delay. Any law, regulation, or administrative action inconsistent with this paragraph shall be null and void, and without legal effect.

(f) Revenue measures shall secure solvency.

(1) Revenue adjustments necessary to secure the long-term actuarial solvency of Medicare shall be consistent with the graduated-contribution principles set forth in Section 19(d), and may include supplemental transfers from general revenues as certified necessary by the Chief Actuary.

(2) Any such adjustments shall place the heaviest burden on the highest-income individuals.

(g) Actuarial sufficiency and certification.

(1) The Chief Actuary of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services shall, at least annually, certify and publish whether Medicare, as implemented under this Section, is projected to remain in actuarial balance for not less than seventy-five (75) years, and shall identify any deficiency requiring corrective action.

(2) Upon a finding of deficiency by the Chief Actuary, Congress shall enact corrective legislation consistent with this Section within twelve (12) months, or the default adjustment mechanisms established by general law pursuant to this Section shall take effect.

(3) In the absence of such general law, a default corrective rule shall apply automatically,

consisting of:
(i) progressive revenue adjustments consistent with subsection (e); and
(ii) progressive premium or cost-sharing adjustments only at higher income levels and not affecting low-income beneficiaries, together with supplemental transfers from general revenues as necessary, in such combined amounts as are certified by the Chief Actuary to be sufficient to restore actuarial balance while preserving the protections of subsections (b), (c), and (d)(2) of this Section.

(h) Trust Fund integrity.

(1) Payroll contributions, premiums, and dedicated revenues collected for Medicare shall be used exclusively for the payment of earned Medicare benefits and the administration of that program.

(2) Obligations issued to the Medicare trust funds shall be fully disclosed in the public fiscal ledger as binding obligations of the United States.

(3) Congress shall by general law provide automatic mechanisms to redeem such obligations as needed to pay scheduled Medicare benefits.

(4) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to require reductions in earned Medicare benefits in order to offset past use of trust-fund surpluses for other federal purposes, and any changes to benefit formulas or cost-sharing shall remain subject to the benefit protections of this Section.

(i) Construction.

(1) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to authorize reductions in medically necessary care or the narrowing of access to such care, including through the narrowing of provider networks, excessive prior-authorization barriers, or administrative burdens whose foreseeable effect is to restrict access.

(2) Courts, agencies, and officers of the United States shall construe this Section liberally to preserve the protections described in this Section and shall not interpret any provision of this Section to diminish basic Medicare benefits or disability coverage except as expressly required by this Constitution.

(3) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to permit any reduction in health care benefits, services, or eligibility for veterans under programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Department of Defense, nor to shift costs to, or restrict access within, such programs.

(4) Nothing in this Section shall prevent demonstration projects or innovation models that improve quality or reduce costs without reducing protected benefits or restricting access to medically necessary care.

(j) Veterans' health care protections.

(1) Veterans' health care benefits provided under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Department of Defense, including TRICARE and VA health care, shall not be reduced by any law, regulation, or administrative action taken pursuant to this Section.

(2) Reforms adopted under this Section shall be coordinated so as not to increase out-of-pocket costs or reduce access to medically necessary care for veterans, including veterans who are dually eligible for Medicare and veterans' health programs.

(k) Enforcement.
(1) Any increase in the age of eligibility for Medicare benefits, or other measure that delays access to covered services for individuals otherwise eligible under prior law, shall be deemed a reduction in basic Medicare benefits for purposes of this Section and is prohibited.

(2) Beneficiaries, individuals reasonably likely to become beneficiaries, Members of Congress, and States shall have standing to bring actions to enforce this Section in a court of competent

jurisdiction.

(3) Actions brought pursuant to this Section shall receive priority on the dockets of all courts and shall be resolved on an expedited basis sufficient to prevent evasion of the protections of this Section.

(4) No doctrine of political question or sovereign immunity shall bar adjudication of claims arising under this Section.

Section 21. Interpretation and Construction

(a) The provisions of this Article are self-executing to the fullest extent practicable. The rights, duties, prohibitions, and structural requirements it establishes do not depend on additional legislation to have legal force or effect.

(b) Where Congress, or any officer or agency of the United States, fails to carry out a mandatory duty imposed by this Article, any court of competent jurisdiction shall provide appropriate relief. Such relief shall, as appropriate, include mandamus, declaratory judgment, injunctive relief, or other orders necessary to give full effect to the requirements of this Article and to prevent their frustration by delay, inaction, or evasion, provided that no court shall direct the substance or outcome of any legislative vote.

(c) Congress is expressly authorized to enact general laws to facilitate the implementation and enforcement of this Article, and may vest administrative agencies or independent offices with such powers and responsibilities as are necessary and proper to carry its provisions into execution, including the authority to promulgate rules, conduct investigations, and impose appropriate administrative remedies, consistent with the standards and limits established by this Article.

(d) For the avoidance of doubt, delegations of authority made pursuant to this Article may extend to matters of substantial economic or political significance, when such authority is clearly conferred by general law enacted under this Article, and shall not be deemed invalid solely by

reason of the breadth or consequence of the authority so conferred.

(e) In resolving questions arising under this Article, courts shall, where reasonably possible, adopt constructions that give practical effect to the duties, limitations, and protections it establishes rather than interpretations that would render them illusory, aspirational, or incapable of enforcement.

(f) For the avoidance of doubt, any office, agency, or independent body created or recognized pursuant to this Article, including the Independent Office of Public Integrity, shall be deemed an instrumentality of constitutional dimension, established under this Constitution itself. Its independence, removal protections, and investigative and civil-enforcement authorities are hereby affirmed as consistent with, and not in derogation of, the executive power, and shall not be invalidated on the ground that such authorities are significant, novel, or of substantial economic or political importance.

Respectfully submitted for adoption
by the citizens of the United States of America.

G. Patrick Dague — Author
