Tuesday March 28, 2017

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Financial Services, Constitution   
and Federalism and the Assembly Committee on Federalism and Interstate Relations,

I am writing today to express YWCA Madison’s strong concern with Assembly Bill 165 and Senate Bill 107.

The United States Constitution is the most sacred legal document in our nation: From the opening Articles outlining the duties and balances between the government branches and the promise of states’ rights; to the Bill of Rights establishing our core freedoms of speech, religion, and more; to the civil rights amendments promising that all rights of American citizenship are afforded to all Americans.

This document represents the ideals of a county we wish to live in. We are still fighting across this nation to achieve these ideals. Every day, YWCA Madison embraces, and aspires to, the promises of the 14th Amendment of equal rights to life, liberty, and property under the law.

The thought of a constitutional convention that could amend or delete these values is very scary.

We understand that members of the Wisconsin State Legislature have said they are pursuing a constitutional convention solely to require the federal government to maintain a balanced budget.  However, we also understand that a constitutional convention has no parameters and that the entire constitution will be open for change.  Current intent is irrelevant, and it does not bind the proceedings of a convention.  Nor does it bind other states or delegations.  The last time there was a constitutional convention in 1787, the delegates ignored parameters and scrapped the previously agreed upon ratification process. This is too big a risk to take.  If our elected leaders wish to amend the United States Constitution to require a balanced budget, they can pursue that change through the amendment process already afforded to the United State Congress.

We urge you to vote down AB 165 and SB 107. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Carousel Bayrd, our Policy and Partnership Coordinator, at (608) 395-2196.

Sincerely,

Vanessa McDowell  
Interim CEO