



AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

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Dear Governor,

On behalf of the taxpayers in your state, I write to urge you to seriously consider following the examples of Minnesota, California and Texas with regard to membership in the National Governors Association (NGA).

Demonstrating fiscal leadership and budget prioritizing, Governor Pawlenty from Minnesota, and Governor Schwarzenegger from California are withholding their membership dues from the National Governors Association (NGA). Even better, Governor Rick Perry from Texas has set an example when he withdrew his state completely from the membership in the NGA, saving his state \$166,000 per year.

In times of tight budgets, all government spending should be scrutinized. The states' membership dues paid to the NGA cost taxpayers across the nation several millions of dollars annually. Of the NGA's \$13.2 million budget in 1997, \$8.1 million came from the pockets of taxpayers - \$4,181,900 from state membership dues and \$3,875,800 from federal grants and contracts.

The benefits of membership in the National Governors Association, which has been dubbed "the collective voice of the nation's governors" are doubtful. Due to rotating chairmanship and membership, decisions are not made by the leadership, but by the career staff, which is overwhelmingly liberal, and has taken over the organization's primary function, lobbying.

In essence, the NGA is a lobbying organization, pushing a mostly liberal agenda of higher government spending for the states and broader entitlement programs. It has lobbied against President Bush's income tax cuts, against capital gains tax cuts, and against welfare reform, ultimately seeking more money for the states. Other than that, the NGA holds two annual meetings, one summer meeting in Washington, DC, and a winter meeting in the state of the Chairman – all paid for by the American taxpayers.

I urge you to send a clear message that you are serious about eliminating waste from your state's budget by withdrawing your state's membership from the NGA. The taxpayers of your state deserve better than to finance the organization's strife for bigger government out of their own pockets.

Onward,

Grover G. Norquist