



NEWS

AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

1920 L Street, NW • Suite 200 • Washington, DC 20036
202.785.0266 • Fax 202.785.0261

WWW.ATR.ORG

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CONTACT: Paul Prosocki

Sandra Fabry

202-785-0266

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Schwarzenegger Quits Funding of Taxpayer-Financed Junkets

-- California sets right priorities by withholding membership fees to national groups --

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Unlike so many of his colleagues, who do not explore all options available short of tax increases and simply reach into their constituents' pockets to fix budget holes, Governor Schwarzenegger seems very sincere in his attempts to solve California's fiscal crisis without raising taxes. With the intention to save money where possible, the Governor's budget proposal for next year does not include any payments in membership fees to a number of national groups such as the National Governors Association.

According to California Department of Finance spokesman H.D. Palmer, the membership dues do not rank as high priority to fund next year at a time when virtually every aspect of state government is asked to provide savings.

"Most of these groups are little more than perks for office holders, providing them with free trips national conventions at the expense of the taxpayers. They do not fall into the category of key government functions," said Grover Norquist, President of Americans for Tax Reform. **"The Governor deserves credit for this decision. He understands the meaning of 'governing' – making decisions on behalf of and for his constituents."**

California is struggling with a \$14 billion budget gap, which Gov. Schwarzenegger for the most part inherited from his predecessor Governor Gray Davis, who indulged in profligate spending and tripled the state's car tax. Since taking office, Gov. Schwarzenegger has been working tirelessly to restore fiscal sanity without raising taxes.

"At times like these, what it boils down to is setting the right priorities. This kind of governing has worked elsewhere," Norquist continued. **"Texas successfully managed to close a \$10 billion budget gap by defining budget priorities, cutting spending and withholding their membership fees to these national groups. There may be a long way to go, but California obviously is on the right track."**

Americans for Tax Reform is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all tax increases. For more information or to arrange an interview please contact Jonathan Collegio at (202) 785-0266 or by email at jcollegio@atr.org.