



NEWS

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Congressman Petri Nominated for "Enemy of the Taxpayer"

*Leading national taxpayer group nominates Rep. Thomas E. Petri (R-Wis., 6th) for support
of automatic gas tax increases*

WASHINGTON— Today, Americans for Tax Reform (ATR), America's leading taxpayer advocacy organization, announced that Congressman Thomas Petri (R-Wis.) had been nominated for the group's "Enemy of the Taxpayer" award, given to lawmakers and other public officials for particularly egregious offenses. ATR has nominated Rep. Petri for his support of indexing the federal motor fuels tax to inflation, which will amount to a new and ever-repeating automatic tax increase.

"The Republican Party is the party of lower taxes and smaller government," ATR President Grover Norquist said in a letter to Petri today. "The federal motor fuels excise tax is a tax, and indexing the tax to inflation represents a tax increase." Taxpayer advocate Norquist has in the past called the low-tax stance of the Republican Party its "brand," and said that a GOP official who raises taxes is like the "rat in the Coke bottle," destroying this brand.

American taxpayers are currently paying more than \$50 billion annually in taxes on gasoline. This amounts to an annual gas tax of \$660 for the average family, and every penny increase in the gas tax increases that family's annual tax bill by \$25. Automatic, regular increases in this tax burden would become a reality if indexing, as supported by Petri, were to become a reality.

"If it's highway funding you're after, then spend the highway funds on highways," Norquist said. "Highway dollars are being doled out on all kinds of projects other than highways, such as 'beautification' and other pork not at all related to moving cars around. Not to mention, Davis-Bacon drives up the cost of any new projects beyond what they would otherwise be. You can free up more dollars by eliminating Davis-Bacon and highway beautification."

Congressman Petri is in line for the chairmanship of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee when Chairman Don Young steps down, but ATR believes that an anti-taxpayer position, such as one supporting automatic gas tax increases, may put Petri's future chairmanship in doubt.

Recent recipients of the "Enemy of the Taxpayer" award include Gov. Bob Riley of Alabama for his failed record tax hike, and Gov. Mark Warner of Virginia for his current effort to saddle Virginia with record tax increases.

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