



NEWS

AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

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Pro-Tax Republican Loses Special Election

Michael Ball refused to rule out tax increases, insulted taxpayers.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Second Congressional District Republican Party chair Michael Ball faced Norfolk television reporter Democrat Paula Miller in a special election yesterday to fill the vacant 87th House of Delegates seat. The seat has been vacant since its former occupant, Thelma Drake (R), resigned to run for an open Congressional seat.

Taxes played a major role in the special election, in light of the lingering divisions from last year's budget fight. While Ms. Miller was clearly a pro-tax candidate, Michael Ball refused to take a solid anti-tax position.

“Michael Ball’s campaign was incredibly stupid,” said Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. **“The taxpayers of Virginia were motivated as never before. Yet Ball refused to make the race a referendum on taxes by signing the Taxpayer Protection Pledge and ruling out all tax increases. Despite being advised to sign by elected officials and activists, Michael Ball refused to join Sen. George Allen, Thelma Drake, Joann Davis, Randy Forbes, Virgil Goode, Bob Goodlatte, Eric Cantor, Tom Davis, and 41 state legislators in signing the Pledge. ”**

In the 2004 budget session, Virginia’s Republican legislators split over the tax issue. A large majority held to a No-New-Taxes position, but a minority joined with Democratic legislators and Gov. Mark Warner (D) to raise taxes by about \$1.5 billion. Paula Miller came down on the side of the pro-tax legislators, and even received money from a PAC set up by the dissident pro-tax Republicans. But Michael Ball refused repeated requests to rule out tax increases by signing the Pledge. Historically, candidates who refuse to sign then try to raise taxes once in office.

“The voters of Virginia lost faith in the Republican ‘brand’ of No-New-Taxes when 15 GOP senators and 19 GOP delegates forted for the largest tax hike in Virginia history,” Norquist continued. **“Anti-tax voters demanded a written commitment that Michael Ball would not betray them, as they were betrayed last spring. Ball refused to rule out tax increases, so you essentially had two pro-tax candidates running against each other.**

“Surely, Michael Ball could have received 92 more votes if his anti-tax base had been mobilized!”

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 Chris Butler at (202) 785-0266 or by email at cbutler@atr.org.