



NEWS

AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

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Cost of Government Day Report, 2004: Americans Worked 189 Days for the Gov't

Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) releases its annual Cost of Government Day report, which measures the total cost of government spending and regulations. Americans finish paying their share of the burden tomorrow.

WASHINGTON – Americans celebrated their independence from foreign government on July 4th. Three days later, on July 7th, they can celebrate their independence from the cost of their federal, state and local governments, as well.

According to an annual report of the Washington, DC based Americans for Tax Reform (ATR), July 7th, 2004 marks Cost of Government Day (COGD), the date in the calendar year when Americans have paid off their share of federal, state and local government spending and regulations. As COGD falls on July 7th, Americans now work more than half of the year – 189 days – to pay their share of the cost of government. Americans work one day less than last year, but after a 10 day jump between 2000-2003. 80% of that increase comes from federal spending.

“Taxpayers have lost a week of their working lives due to increases in federal spending,” said taxpayer advocate Grover Norquist, who heads ATR in Washington. **“After a series of increases, the cost of government has dropped by one day. The \$64,000 question is whether this is an aberration, or if we have turned a corner onto the path to smaller, more efficient government.”**

According to the report, COGD falls one day less in 2004 than it did last year and is the first decline after three straight years of increases. The decline in 2004 wipes out the increase that took place in 2003 and COGD is now at the same level it was at in 2002. The acceleration of economic growth in the wake of three major tax cuts increased income for Americans, and mitigated the large increases in spending and regulations in 2003 and 2004. The report, which can be found on ATR's website (www.ATR.org), details the following breakdown:

- Federal spending: 86 days
- State and local spending: 42.9 days
- Federal regulations: 36.7 days
- State regulations: 22.9 days

According to the report, which studied the economic plans of President Bush and Senator John Kerry, Americans will work one day less for the government if Bush is reelected, and two days more if Kerry wins.

“The next four years will see strong economic growth, which lowers the relative cost of government,” continued Norquist. **“Iraq will be a thing of the past. Congress can then move to rein in spending in a major way.”**

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.