



NEWS

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Norquist Battles Tax-and-Spenders in North Carolina

Grover Norquist campaigns for taxpayers in North Carolina's gubernatorial race

WASHINGTON – Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform (ATR), the nations leading taxpayer group, will carry the group's pro-taxpayer message to Raleigh tomorrow. Norquist will campaign for taxpayers, highlighting Patrick Ballantine, the Republican gubernatorial candidate, who boasts a strong record in the state senate and recently signed the group's "Taxpayer Protection Pledge."

The pledge is a written commitment to the taxpayers in a candidate's state to oppose any and all tax increases. Ballantine joins President George W. Bush, 42 U.S. senators, and 218 Congressmen, eight governors, and over 1320 state legislators in signing the pledge. Ballantine's opponent Mike Easley refuses to sign the pledge; Easley has spent the majority of his term as governor hiking taxes.

"Ballantine's record in the state senate looks great, almost as good as his penmanship on the pledge," said Norquist. **"Easley seems to only find his pen when signing tax increases."**

Under Easley's leadership, North Carolina has seen three tax hikes in three years, the only state in the U.S. to see such increases. Easley has increased the sales tax, personal income taxes and corporate taxes. He continued to raise taxes while 125,000 jobs fled North Carolina. At first Easley attempted to ease the pain of increasing taxes by promising the sales and income taxes would be temporary. However, the original sunset date on those taxes has already been extended from fiscal year 2003 to 2005.

"Easley was elected governor saying he wouldn't raise taxes," continued Norquist, **"he raised them as soon as he posted his name on the office door. He claimed tax hikes would be 'temporary' but now they look permanent. What Easley needs is a psychiatrist, not four more years as governor."**

Ballantine would bring fiscal responsibility back to North Carolina, according to ATR. He has proposed a tax relief initiative that would save the state \$1.177 billion. In addition to fighting sales and income taxes, Ballantine would provide health insurance tax credits to individuals and small businesses. Plans to repeal hikes on the corporate income tax as well as capital gains taxes would enable North Carolina to be more competitive with other states and would attract new businesses as well as jobs.

"While Easley's messages seem to compete with each other, Ballantine guarantees to send one clear one: North Carolina is open for business," concluded Norquist.

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 Christopher Butler at (202) 785-0266 or at cbutler@atr.org.