



NEWS

AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

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Taxpayers Win in Georgia State Senate Runoff

Pro-taxpayer candidate wins seat.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Former state Representative John J. Wiles defeated Lance Cooper by a 52.9% - 47.1% margin to win the Republican nomination for the 37th Georgia state Senate seat on Tuesday. John Wiles signed the Taxpayer Protection Pledge, a written commitment to **“oppose and vote against any and all efforts to increase taxes.”** Lance Cooper refused to sign the Pledge.

This taxpayer victory follows a similar win in last month’s primary, when state Sen. Joey Brush (R-Martinez) lost his party’s nomination. Sen. Brush had signed the Taxpayer Protection Pledge, but then broke it by voting for a \$185 million tax increase in 2003. Brush’s primary opponent, Jim Whitehead, signed the Pledge.

“The taxpayers of Georgia can breathe a little easier today,” said taxpayer advocate Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. **“The hard-working families of Georgia are likely to have one more senator protecting their wallets from the big spenders in Atlanta. In light of the huge tax increase that passed in 2003, the principled stand against any and all new taxes was crucial to victory.”**

After being elected the first Republican governor of Georgia since Reconstruction, Gov. Sonny Perdue shocked his backers by proposing tax increases for FY 2003 and 2004. Though the FY 2003 proposal failed, the \$185 million tax increase for FY 2004 passed. In this aspect, Georgia was like many other states recently, which spent recklessly during the boom years of the 1990’s, then raised taxes in order to avoid tough budget choices when the economy cooled in 2001.

“New taxes are NEVER the answer to a state’s fiscal woes,” said Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. **“Taxes merely weaken the already-depressed state economy, and take resources away from families trying to plan for the future. Georgia’s voters know this, and have sent a clear message in both of these state Senate races – take a principled stand against taxes, or answer to the voters!”**

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.