



NEWS

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Do Not Blame The Virginia House

-- House Republicans submit compromise proposal, while Senate and Gov. Warner stall progress --

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In a move that even caught even many of their colleagues by surprise, House Republican leaders introduced a budget compromise, which would allow Virginia’s government functions to operate for one year even if lawmakers fail to reach agreement in the deadlock over taxes and spending by the end of June.

The plan seeks to adopt the 2005 budget immediately. Lawmakers would then resume their special session and continue to talk about taxes. In the meantime, local governments could pass their budgets instead of waiting for legislators in Richmond to reach agreement. House Republicans continue to push for a referendum in which voters could decide on whether they want a sales tax increase and new income tax brackets. Both the Senate and Gov. Mark Warner derided the compromise proposal.

“The Governor and the Senate should not ridicule the House’s willingness to continue to look for a way out of the crisis,” said Grover Norquist, President of Americans for Tax Reform in Washington, DC. **“While the Senate and the Governor have hardly shown any willingness to compromise, the House leadership demonstrates fiscal responsibility by looking for alternatives.”**

Legislators have been in special session since March 17, after they were unable to pass a budget in the regular session. Unless they draft a new budget by June 30, most state government functions will likely cease July 1.

“Should it come to a government shutdown, do not blame the House,” Norquist continues. **“We would not be in this mess had Gov. Warner not proposed the tax increase in the first place. Senator Chichester and his friends have been complaining about the unwillingness of the House to move on this issue. Yet, it is the Senate and the Governor, who abandon fiscal responsibility by brushing away the proposal without even talking about it.”**

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.