



NEWS

AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

1920 L Street, NW • Suite 200 • Washington, DC 20036
202.785.0266 • Fax 202.785.0261

WWW.ATR.ORG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
16 SEPTEMBER 2004

CONTACT: Paul Proski
202-785-0266

Taxpayers Win in Key Wisconsin Legislative Races

Defeat of Senate Majority Leader Mary Panzer will change the face of legislative politics. Anti-TABOR Assemblyman defeated as well.

Wisconsin Senate Majority Leader Mary Panzer (R-West Bend) lost her party's nomination for another term by a shocking 4-1 margin on Tuesday. Her defeat, and the margin of defeat, is being heralded as a sign of a political shift in Madison. Another moderate Republican, Assemblyman Mickey Lehman (R-Hartford) also lost his primary.

Panzer was considered by many to be a moderate, old-time Republican, more interested in cutting deals than in promoting a conservative agenda. Her primary opponent, state Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-West Bend), is an anti-tax advocate and activist conservative.

“There are two clear breeds of Republicans these days, those who came of age in the age of Nixon and Ford, and those who came of age in the days of Reagan and Bush,” said taxpayer advocate Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax reform. **“With the Senate leadership shifting away from the Nixonian “business as usual” crowd to the small government, pro-growth, pro-taxpayer crowd, Wisconsin politics will never be the same.”**

While Sen. Panzer often articulated conservative positions in public, critics charged she killed reform behind the scenes. For conservatives, the decisive issue was a tax and budget reform called the Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR). According to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (July 28, 2004), Sen. Panzer **“refused to schedule a vote on the issue.”** Assemblyman Lehman also opposed TABOR, and voted for a sales tax increase.

“TABOR is the most important, most pro-growth reform Wisconsin could implement, and Mary Panzer killed it,” Norquist continued. **“States across the nation are trying to emulate Colorado’s successful TABOR – the reform that is credited with helping Colorado achieve the highest GDP growth and the second highest personal income growth in the nation, while avoiding budget crises and rebating \$3.2 billion back to taxpayers. If Wisconsin passes TABOR, it will become one of the vanguard states leading the 21st century economy. With new leadership, Wisconsin may be able to achieve that goal.”**

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.