



AMERICANS for TAX REFORM

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President

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Dear Senator,

I write to urge you to reject HB 4672, a bill that increases taxes by nearly \$400 million. As the stewards of taxpayer dollars, it is imperative that you recognize the flawed logic in approving any tax increases, specifically the \$1 per pack cigarette tax hike targeted to fund so-called "healthcare priorities."

In general, higher taxes will deter businesses from thriving in Massachusetts. Higher taxes on consumers will threaten a strong economy and only further disable one that is weak. Experience shows that tobacco tax increases encourages illegal activities, including tax avoidance, smuggling and buying and selling on the black market.

Beyond the negative implications of *any* tax increase, utilizing a tobacco tax hike to fund health care is playing Russian roulette with taxpayer's hard-earned dollars. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, tobacco use declines at a rate of 1-2% per year. Because tobacco products are a declining revenue source, higher excise taxes will only serve as a placeholder for future tax increases to maintain healthcare spending levels.

Bay Staters are relying on you to govern responsibly. A study conducted by Fabrizio, McLaughlin & Associates just last week shows that over 70% of Massachusetts' voters would favor cutting spending to solve the state's budget woes.

Increasing the tax burden to paper over state budget troubles or choosing to fund healthcare programs with a declining revenue source would defy the trust your constituents have placed in you. As HB 4672 comes to your chamber for a vote, I urge you to protect the best interests of taxpayers and reject the call for higher taxes in Massachusetts.

Onward,

Grover Norquist