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What's Another Penny to Virginia Taxpayers, Right? (and another, and another, and another, and another)

Gas tax hike passes through Virginia state senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Before heading into a long weekend, the Virginia state senate voted to approve a 5 cent per gallon gasoline tax increase on a 25-15 vote. Sponsored by State Senator Richard Saslaw (D-Fairfax), the bill would raise an additional \$52 million per year, siphoning money into state coffers for transportation projects.

Senate Bill 713 calls for a one-cent increase of the gas tax over the next 5 years to help pay down a \$390 million 'budget hole' for transportation. In addition to all 21 Democrat senators voting in favor of SB 713, 4 Republicans crossed party lines to support the tax hike: Harry Blevins (Chesapeake), Emmett Hanger, Jr. (Mount Solon), Frederick Quayle (Suffolk) and John Watkins (Midlothian).

"I'm floored at the arrogance of tax hikers- the message they are sending to their constituents is 'not only can we not handle your tax dollars to begin with, we'll just send you the bill when we overspend!," said Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. "By raising the gas tax at a time when gas prices are already extremely high, State Senator Saslaw and his tax-and-spend cohorts are digging a deeper hole for taxpayers."

The passage of SB 713 comes only weeks after the repeal of the abusive driver fees implemented in 2007, which cost Virginia residents up to \$3,000 in fines for speeding and drunk driving charges. At the time of repeal, legislators had already begun calling for gas tax increases or other revenue raisers to fill the gap left by the fees. Gov. Tim Kaine has long been a proponent of tax increases, despite his promise not to 'tax and pave our way out of traffic.'

"As usual, Virginia taxpayers are being taken for a ride," continued Norquist. "If the governor and his cronies have their way in the transportation funding debate, taxpayers are going to find themselves flattened like road kill on the highway under the weight of new taxes."

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 John Kartch at (202) 785-0266 or at jkartch@atr.org.

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