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## Gov. Pawlenty Stands Up for Minnesota Taxpayers

*Governor vetoes tax hikes for second consecutive session*

Washington, D.C. –As the week drew to a close on Friday, Gov. Tim Pawlenty's wielded his veto pen to strike down a \$6.6 billion transportation spending plan, scoring a victory for Minnesota taxpayers. Included in the bill were an 8.5 cent gas tax increase, new licensing fees for vehicles, and a sales tax increase on all counties in the metropolitan area.

In addition to putting a stop to the proposed 8.5 cent gas tax increase, Gov. Pawlenty again put out the fire on a number of tax increases proposed by Minnesota's DFL lawmakers. The governor thwarted efforts to increase \$6.6 billion in new taxes, meant to fund transportation spending, despite the state's projected \$373 million budget 'gap'. Revenue forecasts due out this week are expected to paint the state's budget picture as slightly bleaker.

**“Gov. Pawlenty’s veto of this horrendous tax hike bill sends a message loud and clear to Minnesota taxpayers- *he gets it,*”** said Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. **“In the face of trying economic times, rather than reach deeper into taxpayer wallets as the answer, the governor is making tough calls in the name of good governance and rejecting tax increases. He is right on the mark when he states that tax hikes would only dig the state into a deeper economic hole.”**

Last year, Pawlenty vetoed a tax-hike laden bill that was sustained by all Republican members of the house. In last year's proposal, \$5.5 billion in new taxes were proposed by the Minnesota DFL, including an income tax increase and new taxes on beer and real estate transactions. This year's transportation bill may hit the floor as early as Monday as DFL lawmakers attempt to override the governor's veto.

**“The DFL is proving their doggedness at seeking policy solutions with no reigns or accountability to the taxpayers- it's a good thing for Minnesotans that fiscally conservative lawmakers and the governor are putting their foot down on higher taxes,”** continued Norquist. **“This tax-and-spend approach was presented last year and rejected by the governor. The new plan is even 50 percent bigger than that! There is no excuse why lawmakers won't uphold the governor's veto again this session and continue working hard to find taxpayer-friendly solutions to the state's transportation woes.”**

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](mailto:jkartch@atr.org).

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