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23 JANUARY 2008

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## Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa Named “Enemy of the Taxpayer” *Mayor seeks to levy phone tax on city residents*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today Americans for Tax Reform named Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa “Enemy of the Taxpayer” for his efforts to levy a new telephone utility tax upon L.A. residents. A February 5<sup>th</sup> ballot question will ask Los Angeles voters to approve a new 9 percent telephone utility users tax.

The mayor’s office claims that the new utility tax is needed to replace a decades-old 10 percent levy that has been unable to withstand legal challenge. Los Angeles citizens rejected the city council’s attempt last year to extend the contested levy. Mayor Villaraigosa and Los Angeles Police Department Chief William J. Bratton have threatened that public safety will be jeopardized if the tax enacting ballot measure is rejected by voters.

“When all else fails, big spenders resort to fear mongering and scare tactics to quench their insatiable thirst for higher taxes,” said Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. “Rather than raiding taxpayer wallets, city officials should consider making Los Angeles government expenditures available online, giving taxpayers the opportunity to identify savings that could be directed towards public safety.”

In 2007, five states passed legislation that mandates the creation of comprehensive websites for state expenditures. Several other states have already taken executive action or are looking to do so. But the transparency in government spending movement is not limited to federal and state-level efforts. Currently 58 Texas school districts are posting their check registers online, with more districts expected to follow. Other states like Florida, Delaware and Utah are also considering local transparency efforts, which are expected to help eliminate fraud, waste and abuse.

“Los Angeles taxpayers can make better use of their money than city hall.” continued Norquist. “I urge Los Angeles residents to stand up against this latest assault on their hard-earned dollars by voting down this ballot question on February 5th.”

*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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