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ATR Opposes Prince George's County Ballot Question F

Question F Will Hike Taxes on Cell, Cable, and Landline Phone Services

Washington, D.C. – Today Americans for Tax Reform, a non-profit taxpayer advocacy organization that opposes all tax increases, announced its opposition to Question F that will appear on the Prince George's County, Maryland November ballot. Question F would increase the current sales and use tax on virtually all telecommunication services, including cell phones, cable voice, and landlines phones from 8% to 11%, amounting to a \$17 million tax increase.

When combined with the current 6% state sales tax and additional emergency 9-1-1 fees, an 11% sales and use tax would push the state and local telecom tax burden to 19% in Prince George's County. The Center for Fiscal Accountability and Americans for Tax Reform have calculated that after accounting for the Universal Service Fund, federal, county and state telecommunications taxes, corporate income taxes, and other federal, state and local taxes, consumers spend 51.8% of their landline phone bill and 46.4% of their wireless bill paying for government taxes and fees.

“At nearly 20%, Question F would slam Prince George's County taxpayers with one of the highest combined state and local telecom tax rates in the entire country,” said Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. **“At a time of high food and fuel prices, now is simply not the time to be raising the cost of utilities on families and businesses.”**

The \$17 million in extra tax revenue is earmarked for the Prince George's County public school system. However, after overspending their budget by \$30 million in 2008, county education officials approved a \$24 million increase for the 2009 fiscal year, bringing the operating budget to a staggering \$1.7 billion. This comes as enrollment is projected to drop by 5,300 students this year.

“The Prince George's public school system has a serious overspending problem. The county's education budget is half the size of the budget for the entire neighboring state of Delaware and now they are expecting to pay for it with an unrelated tax increase on phone services,” added Norquist. **“Voting against this tax hike will send a clear signal to county and education officials that it's time to put their profuse spending habits in check.”**

Vote NO on Prince George's County Question F on November 4th!

*Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all tax increases.
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