



NEWS

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04 FEBRUARY 2004

Taxpayers Win!!! Even in Liberal Oregon, Voters Reject Tax Hike 60-40%

By ballot initiative, Oregonians reject massive \$800 million tax increase, similar to one rejected last year.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – With almost all attention focused on seven presidential primary elections, yesterday's biggest win did not belong to John Kerry. **The biggest victory belongs to Oregon taxpayers, who defeated a massive \$800 million tax hike at the ballot box by 60 to 40 percent.** Their message to Gov. Ted Kulongoski (D) and the state legislature: **Don't even think about raising taxes.**

In August of 2003, the Oregon legislature passed a massive tax increase without public hearings and little debate. **Yesterday's vote rejected the tax hike.**

"The national trend against tax hikes is finally solidified at the state level," said taxpayer advocate Grover Norquist, who heads Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) in Washington, DC. **"With this Congress and President Bush, tax hikes in Washington are dead before the words are even uttered. And with massive taxpayer victories in Alabama, California and now Oregon, the national consensus against tax increases is firming up even in liberal states."**

Last January, Oregonian voters rejected Measure 28, a \$313 million tax increase by ballot measure. But even with the stamp of rejection, the legislature passed – with significant Republican support – a tax hike more than twice as big as the one rejected in January 2003, raising a total of seven different taxes. The bill passed late in the session, and was the result of legislative tinkering – stripping a related bill of all its contents and inserting the tax hike language – that outraged many of the state's political observers.

A broad coalition of taxpayer groups and concerned individuals, led by Jason Williams of the Taxpayer Association of Oregon, and state GOP chairman Kevin Mannix, rose in opposition to the new law. Groups collected signatures to put the tax hike to question as a ballot initiative.

The trend against state tax hikes began this year in Alabama, where voters defeated Republican Gov. Bob Riley's tax hike by an overwhelming 68-32% margin. In California, tax and budget issues led to the demise of former Gov. Gray Davis (D) and the rise of Arnold Schwarzenegger (R).

"Ninety five percent of Republicans in the U.S. House have sworn against tax increases," continued Norquist. **"Eighty-five percent of Republican Senators have, as well as President Bush. In the states, roughly 25% of Republicans have signed ATR's Taxpayer Protection Pledge against tax hikes. But as voters continue to tell their elected leaders to not even think about raising taxes, the ranks of taxpayer advocates in the nation's legislatures will continue to grow."**

Americans for Tax Reform is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all tax increases. For more information or to arrange an interview please contact Jonathan Collegio at (202) 785-0266 or by email at jcollegio@atr.org.