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Grover G. Norquist

President

To the Dallas Morning News, in response to editorial holding up Virginia's willingness to raise taxes as a model for the nation.

To the Editor:

I write to take exception with your March 1, 2004 editorial "The Way to Go: Virginia presents a path for Texas." The editorial suggests that Virginia is a model for how to deal with taxes and education funding.

If Virginia is a national model, then our democracy is in trouble. Gov. Mark Warner (D) promised during his campaign, "The fact is I will not raise taxes. My plan states it. I've said it through this campaign." (Oct. 10, 2001 gubernatorial debate) He further promised that any tax increase down the road ought to be put to the people to be approved by referendum. Republican state senate leaders, pushing an even larger tax increase proposal, ran on a no-new-taxes platform just four months ago.

Lying one's way into office is no model for the country. But it does show that tax increases are an unacceptable solution to budget problems today. Another indication: every state or locality that has been given the right to vote on a tax increase in the last 18 months – Northern Virginia in late 2002, Oregon, Alabama, California and Seattle in 2003, and Oregon again last month – has defeated the tax hike by margins up to 68-32%.

Tax increases do not solve the problems caused by a decade of fiscal mismanagement. And lying about tax increases during campaigns does not promote a healthy democracy.