



NEWS

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Historic Tax Increase Passing Mountaineer State

State legislature caves to pressure from Gov. Wise on Senate Bill 105, which raises \$60 million in new taxes.

Washington – Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) strongly opposes efforts to raise new taxes in West Virginia.

The new tax would increase the current cigarette excise by over 200% and would mark the first increase in the state cigarette tax since 1978. **It passed the House 60-38 on Friday.**

The tax cleared its toughest hurdle two weeks ago when the Senate Finance Committee advanced Gov. Wise's bill with surprising ease. Historically, the Senate Finance Committee has been the burial ground for new taxes. Only recently has the committee assumed the role of rubber stamp for Governor Wise's ambitious agenda aimed at raising revenues.

Opponents of the tax increase say the new excise will affect the economy in a negative way by reducing sales in border counties and eliminating hundreds of retail jobs in the process.

“Trying to live too much on taxes like the cigarette levy is regressive, and inevitably ends up hurting the poor and convenience store owners most,” stated Grover Norquist, President of ATR.

Though the measure has passed both houses of the legislature, slight differences between the two bills require a conference committee between the House and the Senate to work out the details. **Therefore, one more vote is required before the measure becomes law.**

“There is still time for state budgeters to lead sensibly by looking for alternative revenue sources or by re-prioritizing existing revenues to responsibly deal with past overspending problems,” concluded Norquist. **“The people of West Virginia should put their legislators on notice – they want the budget balanced without placing new burdens on the already over-taxed workers of the Mountaineer State.”**

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.