



NEWS

AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

1920 L Street, NW • Suite 200 • Washington, DC 20036
202.785.0266 • Fax 202.785.0261

WWW.ATR.ORG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
17 SEPTEMBER 2003

CONTACT: Christopher Butler
Jonathan Collegio
202-785-0266

Hope in Ohio: Blackwell Moves to Overturn Taft Tax Increase

In another sign that the tide is turning against tax-and-spend governors, an initiative process begins in Ohio

WASHINGTON—Today Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) applauded Ken Blackwell for his new campaign to repeal the sales tax increase backed by Governor Bob Taft (R) and supported by the Ohio legislature. The 20% increase in the state sales tax has been called “temporary,” but the organization noted that few tax increases called “temporary” at their inception actually leave the books.

“Ohio is another example of a state that met fiscal problems and ran away. Instead of making fiscal restraint a priority, Ohio chose to hike taxes by \$2.5 billion over just two years. Ken Blackwell has the full support of Americans for Tax Reform in his effort to roll back this tax on Ohio business and families,” said taxpayer advocate and ATR President Grover Norquist.

Ohio Secretary of State Ken Blackwell is trying to create a new culture of fiscal restraint in Ohio by actively involving Ohioans. Following the certification of 100 signatures, Blackwell must gather 98,870 signatures by December 20th in order to issue his ultimatum to the Ohio General Assembly: either repeal the 20% increase or face the voters next November in an election on the issue.

“Ohio is in need of a new culture of fiscal restraint and taxpayer-friendly policies,” said Norquist. **“We’re pleased but not surprised that the chickens are coming home to roost in Ohio. The anti-tax revolt in the states reached full strength this month when Alabamians sent down a record tax hike to a lopsided defeat, and we think Ohioans will issue their new tax a similar death sentence if only given a chance,”** he added.

ATR has been extremely active in lobbying governors and state legislatures to restrain spending to the rate of growth rather than demand more from taxpayers. **“In the last several years with state government costs growing faster than population and inflation, many governors have been more willing to fight the taxpayers than the special interests swarming around the state capitals,”** said Norquist.

ATR points out that in spite of Ohio’s budget problems, the governor and state legislature increased spending an average annual rate of 5.93% from 1999 to 2004, while Ohio’s population has been growing by only 0.46% per year. The inflation rate from 1999-2003 was only 2.46%. If spending increases had been held to the level of inflation over the last ten years, Ohioans would be getting a rebate check, instead of a new tax.

“Ohio leaders would be wise to look at the example in Alabama and get down to the business of governing. They should admit that Ohioans are taxed too much, not too little. The problem in the Buckeye State is spending,” Norquist concluded.

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 Jonathan Collegio at (202) 785-0266 or at jcollegio@atr.org.