



NEWS

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Sooner State Senate Sets Sights on Spending Surplus

Oklahoma senators reject governor's budget compromise

Washington, D.C. – On Wednesday, May 17th, Senate President Pro Tempore Mike Morgan (D-Stillwater) rejected the governor's compromise budget proposal on the grounds that it would cut the top income tax rate from 6.25 to 5.5 percent. In contrast to the Republican house budget, the senate Democrats seek higher levels of spending and an increase in the standard income tax deduction in what Sen. Glen Coffee (R-Oklahoma City) termed a "bloated budget proposal." All three budget plans eliminate the state death tax.

While Speaker Hiatt (R-Kellyville) has endorsed the governor's compromise budget, the Republican budget called for cutting the top rate to 4.9 percent. Oklahoma faces steep competition from lower income tax burdens in neighboring states including Missouri, New Mexico and from Texas, which does not impose an income tax.

"The governor's compromise proposal is a good step in the right direction towards boosting the Sooner State's competitiveness," said taxpayer advocate Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. **"Lowering the top marginal rate would send a clear signal that Oklahoma is open for business."**

Although a poll by SoonerPoll.com found that a majority of respondents favor the Henry-Hiatt plan, the state does have a process in place for those who wish to pay more in taxes. As referenced by the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs website, the Oklahoma statutes §60-383 state "Gifts of cash or the equivalent of cash shall be made to and receipted for by the Director of State Finance." This presents an opportunity for those who wish to be taxed more to send a check to the Office of State Finance, 2300 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Room 122, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105.

"The senate democrats' opposition to stimulating the state economy and job creation is absurd. However, luckily for those who don't think they pay enough in taxes, the state has a system in place to accept 'gifts,'" continued Norquist. "I urge the big spenders to send in their donations and I encourage the Oklahoma senate to return the surplus to taxpayers in the biggest and broadest tax cut possible."

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 John Kartch at (202) 785-0266 or jkarch@atr.org.

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