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In California, No More Money for Gov. Davis to Spend

California taxpayers can hardly afford another term of Gray Davis' exorbitant spending

WASHINGTON — California's golden boy is not working for the taxpayers of the Golden State. Gov. Gray Davis (D) came into office with a budget surplus of \$10 billion, but after his four-year term, California faces a \$24 billion deficit. That amounts to 30 percent of the state's general budget, which has markedly increased from \$74 billion to \$101 billion during Davis' term.

"Gray Davis is the single most fiscally reckless governor in the United States," said taxpayer advocate Grover Norquist, who heads Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) in Washington. "Like a kid with his first credit card, Davis has created a disaster and shows no signs of stopping the irresponsibility. Instead, he asks the people to pick up his tab by attempting to enact higher cigarette taxes and vehicle license fees."

Importantly, Gray Davis has refused to take the Taxpayer Protection Pledge, which is a pledge to California taxpayers to "oppose and veto" any and all efforts to raise taxes. His opponent, Republican Bill Simon, has taken the "no new taxes" pledge, which could save taxpayers billions during the next budget cycle.

The overspending of the Davis administration far surpasses the inflation rate; during his first year in office, he increased spending by more than 15 percent and more than 17 percent the second year, while the inflation rate hovered around 2.5 percent. During those 2 years alone, the budget swelled from \$57.8 billion to \$78 billion, partially funded by the additional 8.6 percent income tax placed on every \$1,000 earned.

For his incredibly lax spending policies, the Washington, DC-based Cato Institute gave Davis an "F" for his fiscal performance, naming him one of the Top 10 Tax Hikers. **Luckily for taxpayers, the state has a two-thirds majority requirement in the Assembly to raise taxes, which has kept Davis' worst increases out of the budget.** Pro-taxpayer coalitions and state representatives critical of Davis' spending, examining the current situation and requiring the budget to be more reasonable and responsibly spent, will be the only way for Californians to avoid major tax increases in the future.

"Californians need someone who will act responsibly with their tax dollars, not someone who will dig deeper into their pockets for funds each year," continued Norquist. "California taxpayers cannot afford another term of Governor Davis."

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