



NEWS

AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

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Oklahoma Gov. Race Boils Down to Tax Issue

As election day nears, voters find increasing differences between Steve Largent (R), who has pledged 'no new taxes,' and Brad Henry (D) on the dicey tax issue.

WASHINGTON — With election day less than two weeks away, Oklahoma voters face a choice for their next governor between Republican Steve Largent (R) and Brad Henry (D). But as each new day passes, one issue is finding its way more and more in the campaign limelight: taxes.

Largent has signed the Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) Taxpayer Protection Pledge, which is a promise from elected officials to their constituents to “oppose and veto any and all efforts to increase taxes.” Currently, President George W. Bush, eight governors, 249 members of Congress and over 1,250 state legislators have signed the Pledge, including 33 Oklahoma legislators.

“Everyone pays taxes, which makes the tax issue the most important issue in state and local politics,” said taxpayer advocate Grover Norquist, who heads Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) in Washington. **“By taking the Pledge, Largent has shown his commitment to all Oklahoma taxpayers,”** he continued.

Meanwhile, state senator Brad Henry has repeatedly refused to sign the No New Taxes pledge. And on the issues page of his campaign website, he only mentions taxes once, in a passing reference to senior citizens.

Largent, who served in Congress from 1995 through the current session, consistently sided with taxpayers during his years in the U.S. House. On the ATR Congressional Scorecard, which monitors votes in Congress on important taxpayer issues, Largent averaged a 96% score between 1996 and 2001. The scorecard, along with explanations of all of the votes, can be found on ATR's website at www.atr.org.

The tax issue is particularly timely in Oklahoma, which currently is the state with the second lowest cost of government in the nation. Cost of Government Day (COGD), which is measured by ATR in its annual COGD report, is the date in the calendar year when taxpayers have paid the cost of their government in both taxes and regulation. In Oklahoma, that date fell on June 19th, 2002.

“Taxes are an imposing issue in campaigns, because candidates have to take sides between the taxpayers who elect them and the spending interests who run rampant at the state house,” continued Norquist. **“Largent has made clear he sides with Oklahoma taxpayers, but Brad Henry can't seem to take that step.”**

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