



NEWS

AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

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SQUISHES IN THE LEGISLATURE? * TOBACCO TAXES THREATEN ANTI-TAX PLEDGE *

WASHINGTON – Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) strongly opposes efforts by Governor Mark Schweiker to increase tobacco taxes as part of his budget recommendation.

The Governor's budget includes a 69% increase to the per-pack cigarette tax and a 40% tax on all other tobacco products. The increases will cause per-pack taxes to leap from \$0.30 to \$1.00, and the per-can tax total for smokeless tobacco to reach \$1.03.

Increasing taxes on specified products like cigarettes and smokeless tobacco poses a proportionally greater burden for lower-income taxpayers. Regressive taxes like these do not constitute a permanent solution to budget problems because they do not address the real problem that states like Pennsylvania face: state spending.

"A \$1.2 billion shortfall is no reason to raise taxes," commented Grover Norquist, President of ATR. "In fact, the opposite is true: a budget deficit is every reason to cut taxes and cut spending.

"I strongly encourage all Taxpayer Protection Pledge signers in Pennsylvania to oppose these tax increases on tobacco products. To do otherwise would violate their promise to taxpayers that they will oppose and vote against any and all efforts to increase taxes," concluded Mr. Norquist.

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Americans for Tax Reform is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all federal and state 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.