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Survey Shows Floridians Looking to Spending Cuts, Not Tax Hikes for Budget Fix

Washington, D.C. – As the Florida legislature returns this week to solve the state's \$5 billion-plus spending overage, a new poll sponsored by Americans for Tax Reform, in partnership with Americans for Prosperity, has found that Florida voters believe state spending is too high and that any tax increase would leave families worse off.

Amidst the budget negotiations, lawmakers are considering raising the state's cigarette tax, taxing internet transactions, and eliminating current tax exemptions. Yet, the poll shows that 59% of Floridians disapprove of the way the Legislature is handling the state's budget. Further, 63% of those surveyed believe they would be worse off if taxes in the Sunshine State were increased. 85% oppose taxes that affect those making less than \$40,000, such as an increase in the cigarette tax.

Additionally, the poll found that a plurality 43% of respondents said that they would vote to reelect a legislator if the legislator signed a written pledge to oppose tax increases. Currently, Gov. Charlie Crist (R) has joined 8 state Senators and 22 House members in signing the Taxpayer Protection Pledge, a promise to Floridians that they will "oppose and vote against any and all efforts to increase taxes."

"Lawmakers who are seeking tax hikes to fix Florida's overspending problem should take heed," said Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. **"Floridians rightly believe that higher taxes and unsustainable spending are simply not options during an economic downturn. Spending cuts – not tax hikes – is the solution to Florida's budget trouble."**

In the survey, 53% of those polled believe that Florida's spending is too high. Between 2003 and 2007 total state expenditures increased by 20.8%, when adjusted for inflation. As a result of the current economic downturn 72% of respondents stated they had to cut back their personal expenses.

"When a child overspends their allowance and comes begging for more money, you don't say the kid has a revenue problem – the kid has a spending problem. Likewise, Florida does not have a revenue problem – Florida has a spending problem," added Norquist. **"Lawmakers should take a hint from the overwhelming majority of Florida families that are cutting back their spending habits during this downturn."**

The poll of 607 Floridians was conducted by Voter / Consumer Research between February 2nd and 5th. For a copy of the results, visit <http://www.atr.org/survey-shows-floridians-looking-spending-cuts-a2958>.

Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) 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 John Kartch at (202) 785-0266 or by email at jkartch@atr.org.

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