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Taxpayer Group Commends Gov. Tim Pawlenty for Pledging to Balance Budget Without Tax Increases

Washington, D.C. – Americans for Tax Reform commends Gov. Tim Pawlenty (R) for upholding his Taxpayer Protection Pledge and vowing to balance Minnesota’s budget without any tax increases passed by the legislature.

Gov. Pawlenty is a signer of the Taxpayer Protection Pledge, a written commitment to Minnesotans to “oppose and veto any and all efforts to increase taxes.”

Minnesota lawmakers have pushed for over a dozen new tax increases this year. The Senate proposed \$2.2 billion in higher income taxes, while the House proposed \$1.5 billion in higher taxes on resident and small business income, digital goods, cigarettes, and alcohol beverages, as well as eliminating a number of tax deductions. Legislators recently approved a bill proposed by the Tax Omnibus Conference Committee that would raise \$1 billion in higher taxes on income, alcohol beverages, and credit card companies. However, Gov. Pawlenty quickly vetoed the bill last week.

“Raising the income tax would destroy small businesses that are the state’s primary job creators,” said Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. **“Additionally, taxing declining revenue sources like alcohol or cigarettes will only lead to more tax increases in the future to compensate. I applaud Gov. Pawlenty for his leadership and dedication to the taxpayers and consumers of Minnesota by maintaining his steadfast opposition to higher taxes.”**

On Wednesday, the legislature finished passing a series of budget bills that authorize \$34 billion in spending over the next year. However, the passed budget overspends anticipated revenues by nearly \$3 billion. Gov. Pawlenty yesterday announced he would use a line item veto to trim and balance the budget without raising taxes.

“It is fiscally irresponsible for the legislature to approve a budget that overspends revenues for the next year, while continuing to press for tax hikes on small businesses, residents, and consumers,” added Norquist. **“Thankfully, Gov. Pawlenty understands that you do not raise taxes and take more money out of Minnesotans’ pockets during a recession. By vetoing tax increases and vowing to trim the bloated state budget, Gov. Pawlenty has shown he is truly a hero of the taxpayer.”**

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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