

Virginia's New Tax Scam

Same politicians – new plan

Twelve Republicans in Virginia's Senate helped pass a \$2.6 billion tax increase. Last week, Republicans in the House of Delegates defeated that monster and the Democrat Governor's \$1.0 billion tax increase. Now the issue goes to closed committee meetings where the tax masters hope winning the compromise between 0 and \$2.6 billion – is \$1.0 billion. What will it take to help the House negotiators hold new taxes at 'Zero' in secret committee and again in a special session in the Spring? Maybe the past can speak to the present.

In early 2002 the overwhelming majorities of both Parties, their lobbyists, their business community buddies and all the media celebrated the Transportation Tax Referendums for Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads. Few citizens protested as the bills flew through the General Assembly. The war chest for selling the tax was millions. The polls looked good.

But, then a terrible thing happened. Citizens and a handful of legislators stood up against all the politicians, the power, the money, and the media. These nobodies did their homework on the details. Like the opponents of Hillary Healthcare in 94, they got the tax out in the open sunlight – and it immediately began to rot and stink. It was the wrong tax, for the wrong plan, for the wrong unelected regional government.

The high-priced media campaign spun nice numbers about how wonderful the sales tax would be. The grassroots activists spoke the whole truth – from the detailed analysis - at every public forum. The more Virginians saw the facts, the less they liked the tax. On The Peninsula, we 'gnats' were outspent \$2.2m to \$40k. Yet, the great Transportation Tax Referendum was soundly defeated in NoVa and crushed in Hampton Roads.

Only three Republicans rose to challenge the Tax cheerleaders in '03 primaries. Incumbents prevailed – running as low tax, fiscal conservatives. The voters took their word as Virginia Gentlemen. Now, Sen. John Chichester (R-28SD: the R = Raise your tax 2.6 times the Dems!) and his eleven little helpers in the Virginia Senate think they're bullet proof.

The Virginia Tax Scam for '04 is bigger than '02. Since the peasants (voters) won't raise their own taxes and, when sold a bill of goods ("John Chichester has been a top leader in the fight to reduce your taxes"), it appears they will re-elect any

incumbent, the pro-Tax politicians are going for the biggest tax increase in Virginia history.

They plan an increase income taxes with the new progressive rates from Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto (and our IRS code) instead of a fair, flat tax. Increase sales and gas taxes. Tax cigarette smokers. Give a break to relieve the whole car tax and expect the simpleton voters to kiss rings. Talk about the schools' "Standards of Quality" but don't explain what unbelievable spending that really is. Call the Republican Party leaders who oppose taxes names to marginalize them. The media will help.

If the House of Delegates, who faces the voters in '05, hang tough then we will have a dramatic budget stalemate in the Spring. The Governor will 'shut down' the government. It worked for Clinton in '95. It can work again, right?

Except, this is Virginia. The Good People, the citizens cited in the preamble to our Virginia Constitution, will get the facts sooner or later. Uh-oh.

Like, the average family personal income will increase about 4% this year. The state income **WITHOUT A TAX INCREASE** will go up 7%. Gov. Mark Warner wants to add \$1b and Sen. Chicester \$2.6b **ON TOP OF 7% GROWTH** to the State Treasury. Let's pretend the tax increase only costs you, good Virginian, \$100.00 out of pocket expenses. Okay, what are you going to give up? Name your personal sacrifice for more taxes. If it is more like \$1,000.00, then what will you give up?

If folks want to pay more taxes voluntarily in Virginia they may. How much extra have Mark Warner and John Chichester paid? None. Yet they demand you grow government twice as fast as your family income. Their greed for your money ignores the fact that taxes *kill* jobs. Loss of jobs lowers tax revenues. Loss of jobs hurts everyone's income. They don't get it and they will never have to – as long as they are unaccountable to their Party and at the polls.

This Spring every Republican Committee Chairmanship in the Commonwealth is open for election. Fifty-five per cent of the Good People of Virginia vote Republican. Let the People show up at the Party elections – there will be notices in the newspaper or find out online (www.vagop.com). If you want to increase taxes by \$2.6 billion bring a piece of yellow paper as your issue identification. If you want to hold the line on taxes bring a blue piece of paper. Let's see who is the Republican Party of Virginia – the people who are yellow or true blue to the Virginia Republican Creed.

Virginia Delegates, stand tall on no new taxes. Republicans who raise taxes will reap the whirlwind. The same Virginia voters, who shouted in '02, will speak in the Primaries and in the General Election in '05. And for twelve dear Virginia Senators, they'll be back in '07. Mark your calendar.

James Atticus Bowden

James Atticus Bowden has specialized in inter-disciplinary long range 'futures' studies for over a decade. He is employed by a Defense Department contractor for the Future Combat Systems. He is a retired United States Army Infantry Officer. He is a 1972 graduate of the United States Military Academy and earned graduate degrees from Harvard University and Columbia University. He holds two elected Republican Party offices in Virginia.