



February 22, 2010

An Open Letter to the Utah Legislature: Oppose Tax Hikes in HB 383

Dear Legislator:

On behalf of the National Taxpayers Union's (NTU's) nearly 3,200 Utah members, I urge you to oppose HB 383, which would heap new taxes on utilities at the local level. Utahns should be spared further burdens as the state attempts to pull itself out of this economic downturn.

In facing the \$700 million budget deficit, Utah should avoid the tired prescription of higher taxes and persistently high government spending. The state should join with legislatures across the country in confronting the "new normal": that previous levels of spending cannot be maintained, and that targeted budget cuts are necessary to restore government to its proper, sustainable size.

Rather than make these difficult decisions, Rep. Wayne Harper authored HB 383, which would raise taxes on hard-working Utah families through their water, electricity, landline telephone and cellular phone bills. Some would be hit with four new taxes simultaneously on these vital services if the bill was to pass. In the middle of a recession, it makes no sense to raise the cost of these or any other services. This is a regressive tax increase that will disproportionately impact poor Utahns already struggling to make ends meet.

The government, on the other hand, has no such concept of fiscal discipline. Some in the legislature seek to maintain its size, while individuals, families, and every other sector of the economy rein in spending and debt. Last week we saw proposals to raise taxes on income, gasoline, and cigarettes. HB 383's new targets are water, electricity, and telephones. Politicians in Salt Lake City should confront the tough decisions on spending, rather than continuing to cycle through a list of tax increases that are unpopular for different reasons but will have the same ultimate effects: overburdened taxpayers, job losses, and a bloated and oblivious state government.

I urge you to stand up for NTU's nearly 3,200 members in Utah and strongly oppose HB 383.

Sincerely,

Joshua Culling
State Government Affairs Manager