



## Tax Hikes Ignore State's Windfall

By George Runner

It must be silly season in Sacramento. As the state receives billions in unanticipated revenues, liberal tax-and-spend lawmakers are proposing massive tax hikes, proving once again that they are out of touch.

One key measure of reality ignored by liberal lawmakers is Tax Freedom Day. Calculated annually by the Tax Foundation, Tax Freedom Day is the day Americans have earned enough money to pay their annual tax obligations at the federal, state and local levels.

This year, National Tax Freedom Day arrived on April 24, but Californians didn't achieve tax freedom until May 3. California's Tax Freedom Day is the fourth latest in the nation. Only Connecticut, New Jersey and New York have later dates.

By proposing higher taxes, liberal legislators are trying to make taxpayers work even longer to pay their tax bills.

The other reality ignored by would-be tax hikers is that due to the state's volatile tax structure, a booming tech sector and soaring stock market, state officials are now swimming in cash.

In the critical month of April, state income tax revenues exceeded projections by \$1.8 billion.

Just how much money is that? If state officials put the money in one dollar bills, they could string those bills together and have a chain long enough to travel the California coastline more than 200 times. It could even stretch more than seven-tenths of the distance to the moon.

And that's just counting unexpected revenue from April. Experts believe unbudgeted surplus revenues for the current fiscal year will exceed \$4 billion by June 30, an amount larger than the budgets of four states.

With state coffers overflowing, it's becoming increasingly bizarre that Sacramento spenders are proposing new taxes. Is their appetite for taxpayer dollars insatiable?

Among other schemes, they are plotting how to extend Proposition 30, the "temporary" sales and income tax increases voters approved in 2012.

Prominent Democratic legislators have proposed massive tax increases on driving, gasoline purchases and vehicle registrations, insurance policies, real estate documents and services that could include haircuts, movie tickets and many more.

In addition, big spending lawmakers have introduced two constitutional amendments aimed at making it easier to approve regressive local tax hikes, including parcel taxes on homeowners. The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association warns that these measures are a direct attack on Proposition 13.

It seems that in California, another day means another proposed tax increase.

Instead of ensuring taxpayers receive value for the dollars they send to Sacramento, lawmakers are taking the easy road by simply proposing new taxes. This allows legislators to avoid tough decisions and keep saying “yes” to special interest groups.

Let’s hope there are a few folks left in the state Capitol who have the good sense to say “no” to their proposals.

*George Runner is vice chair of the State Board of Equalization. For more information, visit [boe.ca.gov/Runner](http://boe.ca.gov/Runner).*