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Taxpayers Association Says NO to New Taxes & Fees Until Economy Recovers from COVID19 Pandemic

Association Supports Bold Leadership in Fixing Long-Term Problems

SAN DIEGO – March 17, 2021 – The San Diego County Taxpayers Association announced its fundamental opposition to new taxes or fees by any local agency until economic growth, employment, and per capita income return to pre-COVID19 levels.

The Association has been the watchdog of local governmental performance for over 75 years, and it consistently polls as one of the most trusted household names in the San Diego region.

Normally, the Association considers new tax or fee proposals one-by-one with a thorough vetting against pre-established criteria, and its membership has a track record of supporting well-designed bonds to build infrastructure projects, including for school children. It even supported the recently-failed Measure A in the City of San Diego, a tax increase to grow the inventory of low-income housing in order to reduce more expensive public spending on chronic homelessness.

But the recent deluge of proposals around the region has made the Association's recent communications to local leaders very urgent. The Association has asked for truly bold leadership in addressing the structural problems in local finance.

"Recently, some of our local elective officeholders have been too quick to try to reach into the wallets of taxpayers to patch holes in their budgets," said Mark Nelson, chairman of the board of the San Diego County Taxpayers Association. "As local governments are about to receive millions of dollars of Federal taxpayer monies, our local leaders should be bold and propose solutions that address the long-term financial structural flaws plaguing their budgets."

Local governments expect to receive \$350 billion in aid of the \$1.9 trillion of Federal stimulus, funded by taxpayer dollars, and the City of San Diego alone will receive approximately \$300 million. San Diego Unified School District has received \$150 million of Federal taxpayer dollars and expects more through the state of California, yet inequities for students of color continue to grow.

The Association fears that local leaders will use stimulus dollars to delay the tough choices they need to make and use these one-time funds to keep supporting poorly structured public services.

“We’ve paid a heavy price for past shortsighted decisions. Let’s not make those same mistakes again,” says Haney Hong, president and CEO of the Association. “One-time funds that are coming from the American Rescue Plan and State coffers should be used for deferred maintenance and unfunded pension liabilities, not for artificially propping up ongoing services and enhancing salaries, which will further exacerbate structural deficits.”

The Association will consider removing its initial opposition and review/endorse a tax or fee as it would normally do if it is unanimously supported by all members of the applicable governing body, as such unanimity would be an unambiguous statement of priority and emergency need. The Association asserts that each jurisdiction must prioritize needs, and if the Association considers removing its opposition and reviewing/endorsing a tax or fee proposal in a jurisdiction, it will only do so for one proposal per jurisdiction.

ABOUT THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

San Diego County Taxpayers Association (SDCTA) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization, dedicated to promoting accountable, cost-effective and efficient government and opposing unnecessary new taxes and fees. For the last 75 years, SDCTA has served as “*San Diego’s Taxpayer Watchdog Group*” by educating the public and helping save the region’s citizens millions of dollars. Public opinion polls consistently rate SDCTA as the most “influential” and “trusted” public policy institution in San Diego. The 150 member-strong organization is led by President & CEO Haney Hong. SDCTA envisions a future where San Diego citizens receive a better return on investment in public assets and services. For more information, please visit www.sdcta.org, [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or call 619-234-6423.

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