



**AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM**

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# NEWS

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## Taxpayers Win in Virginia Primaries

*Republican legislators lose seats over pro-tax votes.*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – After Democrats teamed up with a minority of “Republican” tax hikers in 2004 to pass the largest tax increase in Virginia history, taxpayers across the commonwealth were fuming. Yesterday’s primary elections were the first test of voter reaction since that fateful tax vote.

Anti-tax candidates won open races across the Commonwealth, in statewide and legislative contests. And most heartening to taxpayer advocates, two of the GOP delegates who crossed the aisle to vote for the Democrat tax hike will not be returning to Richmond next January.

**“The people have spoken, and they have yet again rejected tax hikes and tax hikers,”** said Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. **“To win governor or lt. governor nominations in the Commonwealth, you had to sign the no-tax Pledge – no one was willing to risk another Mark Warner who claimed to oppose tax increases in 2001, but refused to sign the Pledge and then raised taxes. The two anti-tax Republican legislators who were challenged by pro-tax forces easily survived. Two of the seven anti-tax legislative challengers defeated pro-tax incumbents.”**

Taxpayer advocates believe the two scalps they claimed last night – those of Gary Reese (H-67), who was defeated by newcomer Chris Craddick, and James Dillard (H-41), who retired rather than face a strong challenge from Michael Golden – are only their latest wins against the pro-tax “Republicans.” Last September, Sen. Ken Stolle (S-8) was denied a seat in Congress because of his pro-tax vote; anti-tax Delegate Thelma Drake took the seat in Congress instead. In the special election to succeed Thelma Drake, Republican Michael Ball lost by less than 100 votes because he tried to finesse the tax issue. Analysts say that if he had taken a firm position and signed the Taxpayer Protection Pledge, he would have pulled out a victory.

**“No one with an instinct for self-preservation plays Russian Roulette because they know they have a one-in-six chance of dying,”** continued Norquist. **“Now, GOP Virginia legislators who have an instinct for self-preservation will oppose taxes, because they have a two-in seven chance of losing. When you add in Ken Stolle and Michael Ball, the message is clear – raising taxes is too risky for anyone who sees a future for himself in politics.”**

**“ATR challenged all candidates who voted for the tax increase to show where they included their pro-tax votes in their campaign literature – only two responded: Democrats Mitch VanYahres and Vivian Watts. Clearly, delegates ran away from their pro-tax votes.”**

*Americans for Tax Reform 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 Jonathan Collegio at (202) 785-0266 or by email at [jcollegio@atr.org](mailto:jcollegio@atr.org).*