

## Size and Cost of Government

Historically, property taxes were used by government to pay for property related functions such as property protection, common amenities or enhancements, repair and maintenance of infrastructure and other common necessities of communal life. Over time they came to be considered a basic source of money for general, undefined, use or the "general fund". Government is run by people. People are human. Budget padding and empire building became commonplace and people became angry.

Over 30 years ago we tried to send a message to all government entities throughout the State of California that enough is enough. That effort was Proposition 13, for which I was a county chairman. We wanted to stop the unrestricted expansion of government. Government either misunderstood or ignored the message.

With Proposition 13 in place, fees were instituted for many things that had previously been free. Government inertia sought business as usual. Part of its rationale was that the people wanted and deserved the highest possible standard of services, infrastructure, resources, entertainment and safety net for the unfortunate that money can buy. I believe what the people really want is the highest amount they need and can afford. Most of all, people want government out of their everyday lives, fewer restrictions and regulations at less cost. Unfortunately, many of our elected officials have bought into the empire building rationale of the bureaucracy.

Of course we need money to run government. Nobody willingly works for nothing. However, we don't need more than one person for each job. We don't need as many vehicles or the employees and the infrastructure to accommodate them. Nor do we need more than one agency for each area of service.

Communications technology could be used to reduce travel and the number of face-to-face meetings that create the need for many of these vehicles. The time saved from reduced travel gives staff more time in the office and reduces the need for more staff.

We don't need layer upon layer of government nor do we need separate agencies for different aspects of the same service ... such as water or the environment. Many state services could be combined into fewer departments, eliminating a significant amount of separate middle and upper management personnel.

We currently spend over \$16 billion a year just on state employee and appointee wages and stipends. That has to be brought back to reality. Levels of service have to assist us to accomplish things ourselves NOT do everything for us. Sacramento needs to learn to respect local government and the people of this state. One size does not fit all even when we want to achieve the same goal.

We should be able to cut the size of government by at least 1/3 just by remanding certain functions back to local government or the private sector and have us regulate ourselves with minimal oversight.

There are numerous examples of boards and commissions that were created for a given task. Many of them completed the task and then decide that it had to be "refined", "expanded" or "revised" which allowed it to hire more people and cost us more money to keep repeating the same work over and over. It isn't necessary. We can't afford it.

I've been fighting this constant expansionism for many decades and know how the system works. It must be slowed and stopped where possible. I've spent the last four+ years on state policy and study committees regarding state revenue and taxation matters. In 2010 I will be representing every city in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties on the League of California Cities' Revenue and Taxation Policy Committee. I have previously had an appointment to that committee by the president of the League. On one of its sub-committees I studied and recommended against California participating in a national sales and use tax which would have raised our taxes and taxed necessities that we don't believe should be taxed. I did recommend that we find a way to capture the luxury item sales taxes due on catalog and internet sales to fund the infrastructure necessary to provide these products and services and to be fair to our local retail establishments.

I have reviewed the work of the Commission on the Twenty-first Century Economy and find its tax implications flawed. Offering a reduction in state sales taxes while imposing new equivalent taxes on your doctor bills, emergency room visits, accounting, legal services, plumbing, painting, appliance and auto repairs is counter productive. While it looks like the consumer is getting a tax break he is really paying more in increased costs of the services and products to pay state taxes. This is a shell game and we can't afford to be duped.

The only way to cut taxes is to cut government costs by eliminating duplication and inefficiency. In some instances it may mean accepting some delays and inconveniences but it will give us more freedom to live lifestyles of our own choosing rather than accepting a vanilla existence created by government.

Also, we must learn to live within our means of money and resources and stop the constant increase in debt financing except for truly needed infrastructure.

Many of our problems are ones of disjointed cash flow rather than cost/benefit situations. These can be fixed with minor adjustments to how we manage our finances.

It is not necessary to throw the baby out with the bath water. We have a basically good system but we need people running it with some historical memory of what has and hasn't worked in the past.

Of all those seeking this office, I am the candidate with the longest historical memory, experience in Sacramento and a record of fighting for the people.

In my own jurisdiction while I've been in office we have improved our local economy, reduced per capita crime, enhanced our infrastructure, corrected many deficiencies, reduced contract costs through "not to exceed" clauses, reduced property taxes three times, reduced staff by approximately 20% without layoffs and cut our operating expenses significantly. Similar things can be done in Sacramento through variations on this theme. I know how to do it. I've done it. I can do it again.