

NEWS

From Chairman Gary Ovitt Fourth District Supervisor, San Bernardino County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 18, 2009

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CHAIRMAN ADMONISHES THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO PASS A BUDGET WITHOUT RAISING TAXES

Gary Ovitt, Board of Supervisors Chairman sent a letter to state legislative members today, urging them to pass a budget without tax increases.

Ovitt said, "In these trying economic times it makes no sense to saddle county residents to pay for an archaic, inefficient budget that makes life more difficult for those we serve. Tax increases are not the answer. It makes an already untenable situation worse."

Chairman Ovitt will present a Board agenda item next week, February 23, that would put the Board on record opposing tax increases to balance the state's out of whack and long overdue budget.

The text of the letter sent to legislative members follows:

February 17, 2009

Honorable Members
San Bernardino County Legislative Delegation
California State Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Members of the San Bernardino County Legislative Delegation:

On behalf of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, we would like to thank you for your continued leadership and dedication to our region. An effective partnership between our delegations is pivotal to ensure that the County of San Bernardino continues to provide quality services. We understand that the legislature is considering raising taxes on California working families to finance the budget deficit. As Chairman of the Board of Supervisors and a former Mayor, I understand the importance of passing a fiscally responsible budget.

As you are aware, California taxpayers pay the highest sales tax, income tax, and gas tax rates in the nation. In the past month, the unemployment rate in California has soared to 9.3 percent, the highest in 15 years. Raising taxes will punish the very individuals that are struggling to make ends meet and potentially prolong California's recession.

The collapse of the housing market coupled with high unemployment has increased the demand for local services. The current financial situation has adversely impacted consumer confidence. Imposing additional tax burdens on Californians in order to finance the state's irresponsibility is unacceptable. As a result of the current economic crisis, counties are experiencing significant revenue shortfalls.

Raising taxes in this climate to close the budget gap will not solve the state's structural deficit but only perpetuate the problem. In order for the County to continue to provide quality services, including a wide array that is State mandated, a continued partnership with the delegation is critical. On behalf of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, we urge you to pass a responsible budget that addresses the human services funding deficit, implements health care reform, promotes clean and healthy communities, protects public safety, and funds transportation infrastructure without raising taxes.

Sincerely,

GARY C. OVITT
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

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