

(Against) SCR1049 - Proposition 310- fire districts; funding; TPT increment

I respectfully ask you to vote NO on Prop 310, the statewide sales tax increase for fire districts.

Having served on a fire district board for the last 14 years, and as the current chair, I am well aware of the important role fire districts play in providing a much-needed public service.

Our board has worked hard to collect no more of our residents hard earned money than is necessary to finance the public service we provide. We do not need a second funding stream up and above the property taxes we levy to finance fire and EMT services, and we certainly do not want all the residents in Arizona to subsidize our operations. That would be unfair and excessive.

A tax increase that everyone in the state must pay that indiscriminately benefits all, regardless of need, is bad public policy.

These are tough economic times for many people. Our government must try to minimize their burden on our lives. Please join me in voting NO on Prop 310.

Cindy Biggs, Gilbert

VOTE NO on Proposition 310 Fire District TPT. In Arizona, there are large City Fire Departments, that are funded by city taxes and report to city management. Then, there are approximately 150 Fire Districts, many in rural areas, that are funded by local property taxes and report to five-member governing boards. These governing boards are generally comprised of retired employees and other members who rubber stamp whatever level of annual spending the Rural District Fire chief presents to them. These governing boards have full, unchallenged taxing authority. The taxpayers have no say as to how much they are taxed or how their taxes are spent. The amount of waste and abuse of taxpayers' money with 150 Fire Districts is enormous with each having a fire chief, support staff, equipment, and infrastructure. A simple answer to inefficiency and waste would be to give the responsibility of providing this fire and EMS service to Arizona's fifteen counties. However, Prop 310 offers NO REFORMS to these districts and NO ACCOUNTABILITY to curb reckless spending. Let's stop this waste and abuse by voting NO on the Proposition 310, a statewide sales tax increase. If you live in a city with its own City Fire Department, you will be paying twice, once for your City Fire Department and again for all 150 Fire Districts. It's time for Rural Fire Districts, their governing boards, and the unions to stop going to the taxpayers for more money for salaries and rich benefits. Tighten your belts just like the good citizens of Arizona must do. VOTE NO on PROP 310!

Dwight Kadar, Sedona

Proposition 310 creates a new 20-year statewide 0.1% sales tax for Arizona's 144 fire districts.

To the average voter, this may not sound like a big deal. After all, firefighters provide an important service that keep people and their property safe.

But this is terrible policy that would set a horrible precedent.

Prop 310 would force Arizona taxpayers who already pay for city fire and EMS services to subsidize 1.5 million other Arizona taxpayers in the state. This is redistributive and unfair.

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Additionally, Prop 310 is a bailout for fire districts who have irresponsibly spent taxpayer money. Forcing responsible districts to subsidize the few irresponsible districts creates a perverse incentive.

Prop 310 does nothing to improve accountability or transparency. Taxpayers would have no say in the election of fire district board members outside their jurisdiction despite paying taxes to them.

Of the approximately \$150M this new tax is anticipated to generate; no arguments have been presented by proponents demonstrating this amount of money will solve their “funding issue.” So, what’s to stop them from coming back to taxpayers for MORE money? Nothing.

Arizona’s fire districts already have access to the property tax base, rates and charges for ambulance service, and rich retirement benefits. Giving districts a third funding stream makes it more difficult to track how much money these districts are receiving.

Perhaps most importantly, Prop 310 sets bad precedent. Other taxing districts will assuredly look to get a piece of the sales tax base in the future too.

Now is not the time to raise taxes on the hard-working people of Arizona. With exorbitant gas prices and rising inflation, they need every break they can get. Please VOTE NO on Prop 310!

Aimee Yentes, Vice President Government Affairs, Arizona Free Enterprise Club, Gilbert

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Please join me in voting NO on Prop 310, the statewide sales tax increase for fire districts.

I currently serve as a volunteer reserve firefighter for a rural fire district in Arizona and I formerly served as a lawmaker in the Arizona legislature.

I am very aware of the many needs our rural fire districts have. It isn’t uncommon for us to use equipment past its useful life, or to make do with alternative supplies. Afterall, we rely much on people like me who volunteer their time and keep up on training to serve our community and respond to those in need. We do a lot with a little.

I know our district isn’t alone when it comes to needing more resources. That is common with rural districts with anemic property tax bases. But a statewide sales tax is NOT the answer to this problem.

Our state should be looking at targeted solutions.

Just last year our district worked with State legislators to craft a bill targeted at providing reimbursements from the state to our district when we provided service on federal lands. This passed and was a huge help in augmenting our budget for a service we were providing outside our jurisdiction, out of our own pocket.

There are better options.

Citizens in the urban areas of our state choose to live in cities and pay taxes for the services those cities

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have to offer. People such as me choose to live in a rural community, understanding the difference in service, taxation, and lifestyle will be quite different. We do not want or expect the taxpayers in urban Arizona to subsidize our way of life nor solve our problems.

I urge you to VOTE NO on Prop 310. This is the wrong solution at the wrong time.

Warde Nichols, Nutrioso

This proposition is at its core a 20-year commitment to a state-wide sales tax increase meant as a taxpayer bailout for fire districts. This proposition discourages fiscal responsibility in these fire districts and incentivizes each one to increase spending now that they are given access to a statewide pool of taxpayer funds. To put it simply, residents in Phoenix and Tucson shouldn't be paying for the wealthy and affluent fire districts of Sedona. This is a slippery slope and sets a bad precedent. The Republican Party of Arizona asks you to vote No on this proposition.

Dr. Kelli Ward, Chairwoman, Republican Party of Arizona, LLC., Lake Havasu City and Yvonne Cahill, Secretary, Republican Party of Arizona, LLC., Scottsdale

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