

From C.B. Forgotston:

### **Why Your Taxes Are Being Raised**

The reason basic *state* services (i.e., higher education and healthcare) are being reduced and your taxes are being raised is not because of a lack of money. It is because our leges are shirking their primary responsibility and taking responsibilities that are not theirs.

The leges currently have in the STATE Operating budget over \$25 Million in funding for non-state and in many cases, non-governmental functions. (This does not include similar funding found in the STATE Capital Outlay Budget.)

The leges are not called STATE Representatives and STATE Senators for no good reason. They are to be distinguished from parish and city officials of which we have ample.

The locals are perfectly willing to cede their responsibility for the funding of local functions, both public and private, as long as the STATE taxpayers pay and pay and pay.

It's hard to blame them. Why ask the local folks to tax themselves when they can get the money from the state.

Most likely, the local projects, private groups and charities would not even get funded if left up to the local people. Obviously, the local folks don't think the projects and charities are a priority or they would be willing to tax themselves to pay for them.

### **Taxing the man behind the tree**

The local politicians are doing that which the late U.S. Senator Russell Long only used to joke: Don't tax you; don't tax me; tax the man behind the tree.

It's fine if Tallulah wants to build new sidewalks. It's not fine if Tallulah wants to build new sidewalks and tax the people of Newellton to pay for them. It's fine if folks want to donate to The Awesome Ladies of Distinction. It's not fine if we tax the people of Louisiana to donate to the distinct ladies.

What Senator Long joked about is exactly what is happening. Purely local projects and private organizations and charities are being funded by taxpayers statewide while our taxes are being raised to fund *state* services.

### **Then versus now**

In recent years when these local and non-governmental functions first began to be funded by the state, the state had huge surpluses. Little attention was given to the gradual takeover of local and private responsibilities by the state.

This year we are seeing higher STATE taxes and reductions in basic STATE services. The only reason is that *state* functions are not a priority.

## **Higher Ed. and Healthcare supporters**

It is particularly important that those who live in communities wherein state higher education and healthcare facilities are located to determine if the *local* expenditures for your area are more important to you than these vital *state* functions.

It is important that the members of the good government groups and editorial writers and columnists in the newspapers that are supporting higher taxes for higher education (SB 335) review these expenditures.

## **The solution**

If state government only funded state responsibilities there would be no shortage of money for any *state* function. Instead of renegeing on promised tax breaks and raising our taxes, there would be enough money to further reduce state taxes.

It is obvious that our leges would rather cater to the local politicians and special interests groups (charities, private clubs, etc.) than to take care of their primary responsibility.

If you don't like what is going on let your lege know otherwise expect your *state* taxes to increase and your *state* services to decline. It is in our hands.