



Champions For Effective Local Government

OKLAHOMA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE, INC.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEWS RELEASE

THE WORMY APPLE

Written by the Honorable Mike Brown, OML President, Mayor of the City of Weatherford

As President of the Oklahoma Municipal League (OML) an association of cities and towns representing 460 cities and towns in Oklahoma we are on record supporting quality teachers and schools as well as the need for comprehensive tax reform. However, we “OPPOSE” the proposed Boren Penny Sales Tax Increase for several reasons.

The state of Oklahoma state sales tax rate is currently at 4.5 percent. You couple that with counties and cities rates and you start pushing double digits in a hurry. There are currently 54 municipalities in the state with a combined sales tax rate (state, county & municipality) that are over 10% and two that are over 11%. There is a finite amount of sales tax to be had regardless of what the need may be. Funding education with a state sales tax increase is not the way to solve this situation. Education related entities currently receive over 50 percent (50%) of state appropriations. You need only look back to prior endeavors to solve this problem; attempts that included HB 1017, para-mutual gaming, the lottery to name a few. Additionally, this question does nothing to address the stated 1,000 teacher shortage positions in the state nor are there any accountability measures with this proposal.

As Mayor of the City of Weatherford, we have worked closely with our local university (SWOSU) and in fact our last sales tax increase included funding not only for municipal needs but also a portion of the money goes to the Weatherford Public Schools and the University. You will find this sharing of municipal resources true in other communities across the state as well.

This issue is being promoted as a “penny for the kids” which if that were true would be great. Of course, we are all willing to give a penny to the kids. What is not being told is that only a portion of the anticipated \$615 Million would go to teachers, the remainder to higher education and other sources, not to teachers.

Although this apple looks tasty on the surface, on further examination and looking at all the facts and the rest of the story, you will realize it is really a “wormy” apple and one that should be thrown away.

The State Legislature has ample time to step up and solve this dilemma and allow President Boren to keep to his word and not move forward with this state question.

This issue will hurt public safety (police and fire) and pit every voter in having to choose over their children's safety or padding higher education budgets. SQ 779 deserves a "NO" vote in November.

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About Oklahoma Municipal League

The mission of the OML is to provide services and programs required by municipal officials to assist them in better serving their citizens, and to act as the representative of Oklahoma municipalities in interactions requiring a united voice. Since 1913, the League has served as the individual and collective voice of local officials on the state and national level.

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