



FULTON COUNTY TAXPAYERS FOUNDATION

501©(3) Non-Profit Advocate of Lower Property Taxes in Atlanta/Fulton

June 2007

“3.3% Of The Registered Voters In Fulton County Passed \$1.4 Billion In Taxation!”

According to John Sullivan, Director of Fulton County Registration & Elections, “3.3% of the registered voters in Fulton County passed \$1.4 billion in taxation in the recent special election – for the school sales tax - on March 20th. This is a statewide problem that is shockingly undemocratic and blatantly unfair.

A mere 15,512 registered voters of the total 469,976 registered voters in Fulton County committed the County to \$1.4 billion in sales tax for the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST). On March 20th, many precincts in Atlanta were open 12 hours without a single voter showing up, while other precincts had single digit turnout. At a time when the Fulton County millage is already among the highest in the State, the cost of the Fulton County special election – borne by the Fulton County taxpayers - was \$600,000!

What Is A SPLOST?

The Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) law, enacted by Georgia legislators in 1985, authorizes a county tax of 1% on items subject to the state sales tax for funding capital projects. In November 1996, a constitutional amendment approved by the voters of Georgia allows the local boards of education (LBOE) the option of calling for a

referendum to ask their voters to approve a SPLOST. In the past, the primary source of local revenue available to most school systems, for renovating and modifying existing educational facilities and the construction of new schools, was property tax. Today, most school districts in Georgia - 159 counties with school systems, 21 city school systems - are using SPLOSTs.

What Has Been The Viewpoint Of Our Local School Boards?

According to an 4/30/07 article on the front page of the AJC, “the School Boards in Atlanta, Fulton and DeKalb actually discussed a general election in November before they voted for the special election, appealing to voters likely to support extending the sales tax.” The viewpoint of holding the vote at a time when few vote and passage is nearly certain has become the prevailing attitude in the local school districts as well as most school districts in Georgia, i.e., 212 special election tax proposals in the last two years held on off-cycle dates. Of these 212 SPLOSTs, 206 have been passed by the miniscule turnout of registered voters. In just two years, the aggregate taxation passed statewide reached an astounding \$11.5 billion!

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Fulton County

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“Profiles In Courage”

Senate Tommie Williams (R-Lyons) – the Senate Majority Leader - introduced Senate Bill 71 to require referendums to be held on the primary day or the general elections day in November. The Bill was co-sponsored by Senators John Douglas of Covington, Chip Rogers of Woodstock, Cecil Staton of Macon, Ed Tarver of Augusta, and Ross Tolleson of Perry. The vote for SB71 was unanimous out of the Senate Ethics Committee and passed the Senate with a huge majority, 36-3. Although it was unanimous out of the House Government Affairs Committee, the Bill was stalled in the House on the final day.

Senate Majority Leader Williams: “There is absolutely no reason that less than 5% of a city or a county population is making decisions about raising taxes for the other 95% of the population. Senate Bill 71 will require that SPLOST elections be held concurrently with already scheduled elections. Not only will this save a tremendous amount of tax dollars, it also encourages more

citizens to weigh in on the tax issues that affect them. This is a common sense idea and I’m sure we will get it passed in the 2008 Legislative Session. This must pass because it’s taxation without representation if no one is going to show up to vote.”

How The Taxpayers Could Help Pass Senate Bill 71

It is obvious that “the voice of the people” must be heard! To pass this Bill in the 2008 session of the General Assembly requires that the taxpayers express their views to the House Leadership and the House Members from Fulton County. It is urgent that the FCTF members – their friends and neighbors – email the House Leadership and their local House Representative, exhorting them to support Senate Bill 71 in the next session of the General Assembly.



Kind regards,

John S. Sherman

President.

Members of the Georgia House Leadership

Hon. Glenn Richardson, Speaker, glenn.richardson@house.ga.gov

Hon. Mark Burkhalter, Speaker, Pro Tempore, mark.burkhalter@house.ga.gov

Hon. Jerry Keen, House Majority Leader, jlkeen@bellsouth.net

Members of the Fulton Delegation In State House

Hon. Bob Holmes, Chairman, carglor9@cs.com

Hon. Sheila Jones, District 44, info@sheilajones.org

Hon. Jan Jones, District 46, janjones38@bellsouth.net

Hon. Chuck Martin, District 47, chuck.martin@house.ga.gov

Hon. Harry Geisinger, District 48, harry.geisinger@house.ga.gov

Hon. Wendell Willard, District 49, Wendell.willard@house.ga.gov

Hon. Tom Rice, District 51, tqgrice@aol.com

Hon. Joe Wilkinson, District 52, joe@joewilkinson.org

Hon. LaNett Stanley-Turner, District 53, lanett.turner@house.ga.gov

Hon. Edward Lindsey, District 54, ed.lindsey@house.ga.gov

Hon. “Able” Mable Thomas, District 55, mable.thomas@house.ga.gov

Hon. Kathy Ashe, District 56, kathyashe56@mindspring.com

Hon. Pat Gardner, District 57, pat@patgardner.org

Hon. Robbin Shipp, District 58, robbin.shipp@house.ga.gov

Hon. Margaret Kaiser, District 59, Margaret.kaiser@house.ga.gov

Hon. Georganna Sinkfield, District 60, georganne.sinkfield@house.ga.gov

Hon. Joe Heckstall, District 62, joe.heckstall@house.ga.gov

Hon. Tyrone Brooks, District 63, tyrone.brooks@house.ga.gov

Hon. Roger Bruce, District 64, rbruce5347@aol.com

Hon. Sharon Beasley-Teague, District 65, Sharon.teague@house.ga.gov

Hon. Virgil Fludd, District 66, virgil.fludd@house.ga.gov

Help Us Pass SB 71 By Educating & Lobbying The House Members!

The Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation is seeking additional support to help us in educating and lobbying the members of the House for the passage of Senate Bill 71. For those who are not members, please join!

If you are not receiving our emails, please contact us at: Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation, 309 E. Paces Ferry Road, NE, Suite 607, Atlanta, Georgia 30305. Phone (404) 869-6066, Fax (404) 869-6101, Email fctf1@bellsouth.net, Website www.fcta.us

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I enclose my annual membership of:

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If you prefer, you can charge your membership or a donation online at www.fcta.us

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