

It's time for us to declare 'no new taxes'

Editor, The Tuskegee News:

On the count of three, let us in unison scream, "New taxes today, new taxes tomorrow, never go away."

A *Tuskegee News* editorial a few months back noted the level of taxation in Macon County is negatively affecting our county's well being. Regrettably, Macon County is not alone in this situation, but who cares?

Instead of managing government with its current revenue, government feeds upon the public for more — never satisfied. New taxing ideas are often hatched by a lobby group or association and subsequently slipped to legislators in a mutual relationship.

One such big-tax dreamer is the Association County Commissions of Alabama. The ACCA, no friend to the hard-working class, has again succeeded in fattening the coffers of their members' county governments and state by encouraging public servants to dig deeper into our pockets.

Effective November 1, 2016, a week before the general election, a voluntary Amazon on-line sales tax, authorized by Act No. 2015-448, will begin to feed Alabama governments. The "Yea" votes for Senator Beasley and Representative Warren aided the passage of the Amazon bill just two weeks AFTER they both sponsored separate pieces of legislation and subsequently voted "Yea" for the recently imposed new county-wide fuel tax!

In unison let us declare, "New taxes today, new"

Sonny Brasfield, the face of the sleepless and powerful ACCA, last year stated the association crafted a plan containing financial concessions to the on-line

giant and other on-line businesses for their collection of Alabama sales taxes.

The Act provides deposits to the Treasury, General Fund and Education Trust Fund, and subsequent quarterly prorated distributions to all counties and municipalities based on population, similar to disbursement of the state gasoline tax.

Like local businesses, the on-line stores may retain 2 percent of the collected money for handling the state's bookkeeping.

Keep in mind, local businesses

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must purchase an annual business license with its cost most likely worked into higher prices for their customers, who still get to pay a sales tax.

There seems to be no such requirement for on-line stores. If the "intent" of the ACCA is to create an even playing field between local and on-line stores, rather than larger governmental revenue streams, then local businesses should too be exempt from the added obligation.

Yes, Alabama is financially strapped. However, so are many of its citizens. Continuously sacrificing the well-being of communities with constant bombardment from multiple taxing and fee-collecting governments and agencies is out of control and with consequences. Fortunately, Macon County is not No. 50 in poverty, but very close with 1-in-4 persons struggling to survive.

Bottomless taxation is not a solution to a healthy community, but a hindrance; smaller and less intrusive government

to encourage small business development and expansion for more jobs, lower taxes and good paying local jobs are major components to sound socio-economics.

Our elected public servants can do better with money taken from breakfast tables, kids' Christmas gifts and school supplies, medical choices and family outings. Additional taxation is the easy way out for too many in public service.

A few examples of governments' unwanted cost savings include using Forever Wild money for state park maintenance instead of acquiring more costly Forever Wild land and its maintenance obligations.

Furthermore, divesting some of the 2013 Alabama Policy Institute-identified 6,500 state properties managed by Department of Conservation and Natural Resources would aid the General Budget. Last but not least, self-control of public spending up and down the government ladder.

I challenge all public servants to be mindful of the impact of taxation upon families and businesses.

Furthermore, I ask the 140 elected state legislators to include a mandatory sunset, review and reinstatement process in all tax bills and ensure voters have their say for imposing or renewing a tax.

Evaluating and justifying the continued need for the specific taxes will help hold government in check, afford greater citizen scrutiny and expectedly enable citizens to keep more money for their personal needs and emergencies.

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