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## Oklahoma Policy Institute

### 2018 POLICY PRIORITY: REVISIT STATE QUESTION 640

#### Background

In March 1992, Oklahoma voters approved State Question 640, which requires that any bill to raise revenue must pass with three-quarters approval of both legislative chambers or be sent to a vote of the people at the time of the next General Election. SQ 640 passed by a margin of 56 percent to 44 percent in a very low turnout election.

Oklahoma's 75 percent supermajority restriction for any tax increase is the most stringent in the U.S. Since passage of SQ 640, lawmakers have not once cleared the three-quarter supermajority hurdle, even in periods of severe budgetary emergencies. At the same time, lawmakers have cut taxes repeatedly with just a simple majority, especially in years when the economy was strong and it seemed like Oklahoma had revenue to spare. This imbalance has contributed to many of the state's budget problems, including the severe underfunding of core services and a growing reliance on fees and one-time revenues. It has also handed just one-quarter of lawmakers an effective veto over the will of the majority on tax policy.



#### The Solution

After twenty-five years of living under State Question 640, Oklahoma voters deserve another opportunity to decide the proper threshold for tax increases. Lawmakers should send to a vote of the people a ballot initiative to lower the threshold to a simple majority or to 60 percent. If more than 50 percent support is required for tax increases, the same threshold should be required for measures that reduce taxes.

#### What You Can Do

Contact your state Representative and Senator and urge them to support legislation to give voters a chance to ease the three-quarters supermajority requirement to raise taxes.

You can look up your Senator and Representative at <http://okpolicy.org/find-your-legislator/>, call the House switchboard at 405-521-2711, and call the Senate switchboard at 405-524-0126.

To join the grassroots coalition of Oklahomans working to connect Oklahoma values with better budget and tax priorities, visit [www.togetherok.org](http://www.togetherok.org). To receive SMS advocacy alerts on important budget and tax issues, text OKBUDGET to 51555.