

Revisit the Supermajority Requirement of SQ 640

BACKGROUND

In March 1992, Oklahoma voters approved State Question 640, establishing the requirement that any bill to raise revenue must pass with three-fourths 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 primary election.



Oklahoma is the only state in the nation to require a three-fourths legislative super-majority to raise any tax. SQ 640 has granted just one-quarter of lawmakers an effective veto on tax policy over the will of the majority. Even as the state has struggled over many years with severe budget shortfalls that led to deep and repeated cuts to state funding, it took 26 years for any tax increase proposal to overcome the three-fourths super-majority hurdle.

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 the chronic underfunding of core services and to a reliance on fees and one-time revenues as funding solutions.

THE SOLUTION

After more than 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 a ballot initiative to a vote of the people to lower the threshold to a simple majority or to 60 percent, which is the level of support needed to approve local bond measures. If more than 50 percent support is required for tax increases, the same threshold should be required for measures that reduce taxes or raise fees.

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.

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

You can look up your Senator and Representative on our website under the “**Advocacy**” tab on our main menu. You can also call the House switchboard at **405-521-2711**, and the Senate switchboard at **405-524-0126**.



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