

FCLCA affirms that taxes are a necessary and useful means to a prosperous, just and humane society.

The Friends Committee on Legislation (FCLCA) recognizes that government provides a variety of essential services and that these services are funded mostly by tax revenues. Many of these programs and services provide the essential human and social infrastructure to support a strong, healthy, and environmentally sustainable economy in which all areas and peoples of the state have an opportunity to participate.

Therefore, we believe that California's tax revenues should provide adequate funding of education, healthcare, public assistance, housing, and other human and social programs which are essential to make California a desirable place in which to live, work, and operate a business.

Because such programs contribute to overall economic prosperity and benefit society as a whole, individuals and businesses should share in the responsibility to pay for these programs through taxes. Tax debates should represent all sectors of society, not just those who work, own, or can best present their interests in the legislature.

Accordingly, FCLCA favors a taxation policy that encourages an equitable tax burden and progressive taxes (higher tax rates on those of greater means).

To ensure fair public debate, FCLCA supports fully transparent accounting of the costs and benefits of public policies and economic development on all sectors, communities and classes of people.

Human life rests on the natural environment; therefore, sound tax policies should help the prices of products and services to reflect the complete life-cycle costs for their use -- including the costs to harvest, transport, process and replace natural resources, as well as mitigation of any negative impacts. Accounting for these costs must be transparent.

FCLCA supports measures to:

- change the 2/3rds vote that is needed to approve the annual budget or to raise taxes to a majority vote;
- reduce the ability of propositions to mandate spending from the general fund without allocating or creating specific sources of revenue;
- progressively tax all income;
- expand sales tax exemptions for necessities;
- levy a sales tax on certain discretionary services now exempt, such as personal services, professional services, amusement and entertainment, and business-to-business services.
- provide an income tax credit for renters;
- provide for regular reassessment of commercial property, industrial property, and residences other than the owner's primary residence, and taxation of these properties at full market value;
- ensure adequate taxation of multinational corporations conducting business in California;
- ensure taxation policies that promote local and small businesses, and proportional representation of minority- and woman-owned businesses;

- abolish government-sponsored gambling and gambling as a way to raise revenues (see Policy Statement on gambling);
- abolish tax subsidies to upper income taxpayers;
- disallow use of lease-revenue bonds for prisons;
- avoid use of deficit-financing bonds to pay current (recurring) expenditures;
- revise tax distribution so that land use decisions are not based solely on the amount of sales tax revenue an establishment will generate (i.e. avoid “checkbook zoning”);
- establish a rainy-day fund to moderate revenue volatility;
- discourage making budget decisions by popular vote (aka “ballot-box budgeting”);
- tax oil production and other natural resources from their point of origin;
- tax carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions; and
- institute taxation policies which encourage the reduction of harmful greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, a right relationship with nature and other species, and the conservation, recycling and reuse of resources and goods;