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Arizona Legislative Goals

By Rick Edwards, Phoenix

The Arizona Tax Research Association is calling for property tax reform during this year's second regular session of the 50th Legislature. The ATRA is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to promote greater government efficiency in the state.

FIRST BALANCE THE BUDGET

In adopting its 2012 legislative program, the ATRA's Board of Directors agreed that a balanced budget should be lawmakers' highest priority.

Their report said it's crucial that the Fiscal Year 2013 budget is not only balanced but is also sustainable in FY 2014, when a temporary sales tax sunsets.

HOLD THE LINE ON PROPERTY TAX HIKES

After balancing the budget, the ATRA wants lawmakers to focus on preventing further increases in property taxes. Over the past two years, the state average property tax rate has gone up 19%.

In addition to rising rates, there has been a significant increase in secondary property taxes. That's because lawmakers expanded public school districts' ability to raise taxes through a 50% increase in their override authority.

PROPERTY VALUE LIMITATION

ATRA is pushing for a constitutional amendment for the 2012 general election to limit the annual growth in the limited property value (LPV) of locally assessed property to 5%.

Proponents say this will insulate taxpayers from dramatic increases in their tax bills that result from major fluctuations in the real estate market.

OTHER ISSUES

Legislation is being proposed to cap property tax levies for Library Districts, Public Health Services Districts and Jail Districts. The ATRA believes these countywide special district levies should be limited to the same percent growth as the annual increase in the county's primary property tax.

Finally, the ATRA intends to pursue legislation to reverse current efforts by county assessors to extend the personal property tax to computer software.

The Arizona Legislature will consider these and other property tax proposals before adjourning in mid-April.