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YOU CAN'T BE GOVERNOR UNLESS YOU PROMISE NOT TO RAISE THE INCOME TAX

By Jeff Trigg

CHICAGO — Illinois voters are giving Governor Blagojevich another four years despite the importance of corruption and scandals in the voters' minds. Treasurer Topinka evidently didn't offer the voters a better alternative.

Judy Baar Topinka made a huge mistake by failing to match the Governor's promise to not raise the income tax. Every winning candidate for Governor, at least since Jim Edgar in 1990, has made the promise not to raise the state income tax. You better believe that was a huge issue that set the two major-party candidates apart.

During Jim Edgar's 1990 campaign for Governor his position was to make a "temporary" state income increase, levied in 1989, permanent. In 1994, Edgar promised not to raise the state income tax while his opponent strongly endorsed an income tax hike. George Ryan learned from Edgar in 1998, and he also promised not to raise the state income tax. And we all know Governor Blagojevich has made the same promise in both 2002 and 2006.

Also of note is that Jim Thompson didn't seek re-election after passing an income tax increase, and Jim Edgar didn't seek re-election after proposing an income tax increase.

That means we all have to keep our eye on Governor Blagojevich or he may flip-flop like Richard Ogilvie did, and look where he ended up.

Chicago Democrats are mounting an increasing effort to push for the very questionable "tax swap" in House Bill 750 and Senate Bill 750 that would raise the state income tax by 67%, create a new retirement income tax, and create new state sales taxes on services like beauty salons, hair cuts, parking, auto repair, golf courses, and much more.

I hope they hear the message voters sent in this election that they do not want to pay more taxes. Voters are smart enough to know the negligible amount of property tax relief isn't nearly enough and certainly won't last more than a few years. Topinka would have been wise to heed the pattern of past elections and completely reject the notion of an income tax increase, but she has learned that hard lesson a little too late.

Topinka's reasoning for keeping an open-mind about an income tax increase in case of a natural disaster defies logic and the voters knew she couldn't be trusted. Who in their right mind would advocate an income tax increase if vast amounts of people in Illinois are dealing with the effects of a natural disaster? Her campaign was a disaster that started with her refusal to promise not to raise the state income tax. Future candidates for Governor should take note.

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