

Opinion: Stop imposing 'fees' that are really taxes

By Juri McCorkle

State and local politicians are using a loophole in the law to raise taxes by disguising them as "fees" – circumventing constitutional requirements for passing taxes on goods like food, gas, beverages, cell phones and even emergency services. These hidden taxes add billions of dollars in higher costs that consumers, taxpayers and small businesses pay every day.

Proposition 26 would close this loophole. It would protect taxpayers against efforts by local politicians and the state Legislature to increase taxes by disguising them as fees. Prop. 26 would require tax-like fees to be treated like taxes, requiring voter approval for local fees and a two-thirds vote of the Legislature for state fees.

Under Prop. 26, legitimate fees – those that cover the cost of a service – can still be passed with a majority vote of the Legislature or be approved by local officials. Fees for things like driver's or fishing licenses or penalties for violating the law would still be considered fees under Prop. 26.

Read the whole story

Juri McCorkle is an owner of the Dell'uva Restaurant in San Francisco.