



Tyler Courier-
Times-
Telegraph/ Tyler
Morn. Telegra
Tyler, TX
Circ. 45717
From Page:
4
4/28/2004
90488



22 220 60 180

Should Lottery, Sin Tax Fund Texas Education?

Texas Gov. Rick Perry has a strong focus on "unhealthy behaviors" in his public school finance reform proposal put before a special legislative session that started Tuesday.

Among the governor's proposals for lowering property taxes is a \$1 per pack increase in the state's cigarette tax, up from the current 41 cents per pack tax; a \$5 state tax on admission to adult entertainment; and the legalization of video lottery terminals at race tracks and Indian casinos.

Some political observers credit Perry with a brilliant move in focusing on "sin taxes" which are usually easier to sell than an across-the-board tax on everybody's home, income or groceries.

In the last few years, several states have looked to "sin taxes," centering on tobacco and alcohol as well as loosening restrictions on legal gambling.

But some are concerned about the unstable nature of sin taxes. Michael Quinn Sullivan, spokesman for the Texas Public Policy Foundation, is one who thinks it is not wise to use such revenue for school finance because of its uncertainty.

Do you think including "sin taxes" and legalizing video lottery terminals at racetracks in a public school finance reform bill would represent good policy on the part of the Texas legislature?

Reader comments on this topic are invited for use in the "As You See It" forum to be carried in the Monday, May 3, *Tyler Morning Telegraph*. Responses should be received at the newspaper office by Thursday, April 29, and there is a 350-word limit.

Send to: As You See It, *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, P.O. Box 2030, Tyler, 75710. E-mail: opinion@tylerpaper.com.