

**GOP whiplash:** One source who saw the memo yesterday expressed amazement Pullen and Mecum were sent copies and said they would surely face a firestorm of criticism for being connected to, if not active participants in, a campaign that would target GOP lawmakers. Already, conservative blog Sonoran Alliance has a pair of posts on the state party's involvement, one that attempts to provide cover for Pullen, and another that demands the party denounce the campaign. Party spokesman **Matt Roberts** said last night he was "not sure whether or not we would support such a campaign" and asserted the party was "not involved" in it. Mecum, too, said he wouldn't advise joining the effort. "It's not my purview to be pushing the budget one way or another," he said. **But one source said Pullen was "bragging" about the campaign a couple of weeks ago, when the foundation for it was being laid.** The chairman was not available for comment today. **And a legislative source said Pullen has been seen at the Capitol in recent weeks trying to cajole members into supporting Brewer's tax hike proposal.** "This idea that the party has nothing to do with it is insulting," the source said. And **Gould**, the most vocal critic of raising taxes, said the consequences for the party supporting a tax increase are dire. "If Republicans do a tax increase, our party's dead. The voters will throw us out if we do a tax increase," he said.

## Pullen asked to disavow Brewer campaign

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Pullen is getting national pressure to drop his support of HighGround's announced \$225,000 campaign to sell Brewer's 5-point budget recovery plan. In a letter to Pullen, **Grover Norquist** (photo), who heads up Americans for Tax Reform, asks the chairman "to unequivocally and publicly announce your opposition to and repudiation of this campaign to be waged by Gov. Brewer and High Ground." Norquist goes after Brewer for "her full-throated support" of "this campaign, which targets fiscally conservative legislators from your own party" . . . something that "disturbingly, was met with silence by you and your staff." The letter says it is troubling for Pullen to take Brewer's side as chairman of the state party and RNC treasurer. "Additionally, opposition to higher taxes is a long-held and central tenet of the Republican Party. It would be unconscionable for the state Republican Party to not condemn this effort," Norquist said. Pullen was unavailable for comment at press time.

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**Fellow consultant on Coughlin:** A Republican political consultant told our reporter all of Brewer's problems with lawmakers and the public can be attributed to her reliance on **Coughlin** as her chief advisor. The consultant said he believes the insistence on a tax increase and the resulting efforts to pressure GOP lawmakers are driven by Coughlin, who many say will run a ballot campaign to raise the sales tax. "HighGround doesn't benefit from a Republican budget." The consultant also said it was "stunning" Brewer and Coughlin have been so clumsy with their efforts to gain legislative support. "Napolitano, even if she was frustrated with [Democrats], would never have done this to them in 1,000 years. Everyone knew that she was heavy-handed, but you could never prove it. This is like trying to perform surgery with a hacksaw instead of a scalpel," the source said. Coughlin was out of the office and unavailable.

***Here, Pullen refuses to denounce Brewer's tax hike -***

## **An Open Letter to Grover Norquist**

Dear Mr. Norquist,

I am in receipt of your open letter, signed but not dated, and transmitted on June 4, 2009 by email. I will respond in kind. For the record, your letter is, at best inaccurate, and at its worst an attempt to defame and discredit our Republican Governor and me. In short your letter displays what is most often described as what is wrong with the conservative movement - an insatiable desire to eat its own.

You begin your letter by setting up a straw man. You state, "As you know, it has recently been announced that the firm High Ground Inc. (sp), a group that advises Governor Jan Brewer, will launch a \$225,000 media campaign against legislators who oppose Gov. Brewer's call for a multi-billion dollar tax increase in the middle of a recession." Well, there is no media campaign, and as I have

stated numerous times over the past ten days to numerous reporters and legislators, I would not support such a campaign if it existed.

I was indeed copied on the draft plan that was attached to your letter and which I have reattached to this response. On asking Mr. Coughlin about the draft plan, I was assured that there was no plan to target legislators and in fact there was no media campaign planned. His letter presented a general approach on how to support the Governor's proposed budget assuming that the legislature did not pass out a budget, all very speculative.

Asking me as chairman of the Arizona Republican Party, to unequivocally and publicly announce my opposition to and repudiation of this campaign to be waged by Gov. Brewer is like knocking the stuffing out of your straw man; therefore, I will respond hypothetically as follows:

If there were a media campaign (which there isn't) targeting (unnamed) legislators who (may or may not) oppose Governor Brewer's proposed budget, then I would be unequivocally opposed to such a plan (if it existed, which it doesn't).

What is of more concern to me in your letter is your continued effort to misstate Republican principles with regard to spending and taxes. The Republican platform is quite succinct on taxes and government spending. I will quote from page 15 of the 2008 Republican Platform, "Spend only what is necessary, and tax only to raise revenue for essential government functions." It does not say anything about being in opposition to higher taxes or demanding that our elected officials sign a Taxpayer Protection Pledge.

What the platform does take considerable space to elaborate on are the wasteful spending and the inherently redundant and inefficiency of government. I quote from the Platform, "The entrenched culture of official Washington - an intrusive tax-and-spend liberalism - remains a formidable foe, but we will confront and ultimately defeat it." What is key to the debate is the need for balance. Cutting taxes without cutting spending can be just as detrimental as the liberal tax and

**spend mentality.** Senator McCain had it right earlier this decade when he questioned the Bush tax cuts on the grounds that there were no corresponding spending cuts. We were in essence borrowing from our children.

The Arizona Republican Party Platform passed in January 2008 is closely aligned with the national platform in stating, "The AZGOP believes reducing taxes not necessary to pay for essential government services creates jobs and economic growth, encourages new businesses to come to Arizona, and ultimately increases public sector revenues in our state." I have yet to see anything proposed by Governor Brewer to be in opposition to either the national or state platforms.

I applaud your mission at Americans for Tax Reform. We are in dire need of tax reform nationally as well as here in Arizona. **What is even more critical though is a plan to control spending. Republicans are out of power nationally, because we were unable to rein in spending. We spent eight years passing budgets that increased the national debt.** The 2008 Republican Platform recognizes this problem and is very clear about replacing current budgetary procedures with simplicity and transparency, balancing the budget and planning for long-term costs of pension and health care programs. Unfortunately for us, this recognition came too late.

## Tax polls: All depends on how surveys are framed

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**The Arizona Republican Party and others have been touting a poll conducted by Arizona Opinion of Tucson that showed nearly 67% of respondents found a sales tax increase to support education and healthcare an acceptable option. The Kenski poll was released by the party on March 31.**

More than three weeks earlier, Kenski conducted a poll for the Arizona Chapter of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP) that showed 55% of respondents - to balance the state budget - said it would be best to raise revenue through tax increases, with the majority of the 55% favoring an increase in the sales tax.

Unlike the Republican poll, the NAIOP survey did not link additional revenue to healthcare, education or any general service area. But findings on the final question of the NAIOP poll conflict with the finding a majority of respondents would support a tax increase of some form.

The question was about a "Citizen Smith," who supports raising taxes, and "Citizen Jones," who prefers to limit spending. Smith's position was favored by 43% of respondents, while 52% sided with Jones' no tax increase position.

**The Kenski poll for the GOP is the only one of four known tax question surveys that supported a tax increase, without exceptions.** Coughlin of HighGround said different polls find different conclusions based on how the questions are worded. He said the Republican poll spelled out the specific budget shortfall, cuts already made, and the future deficit and affects on vital services.

"I like our data," he said. "I'm confident in our data."

Coughlin said that if there ends up being a special election on the tax question, it will be quite a battle, but "We would win."

Asked about the disparity of her findings with the Smith-Jones question, **Margaret Kenski** said, "You have to read the questions very carefully. This happens very frequently. That's all I can say."

*Here - Pullen defends his bogus tax poll -*

## **Bob Robb Opinion Editorial in the Arizona Republic**

This past Sunday, Bob Robb wrote in his opinion editorial that the Arizona Republican Party was trying to "peddle" a public opinion survey purporting to show support for Governor Brewer's tax increase. He goes on to list a number of "problems" with the poll. His biggest concern seems to be the wording of the question was not done in the "conventional way". The problem with his premise is he is assuming the purpose of the poll was to demonstrate support for what is typically a non-starter for most voters, a tax increase. In reality, the fundamental purpose of the poll was to try and understand what voters thought about the current budget crisis, who they held responsible for the debacle and how best to respond to restoring balance to the state's budget. The poll questions were in depth and extensive covering all aspects of the budget crisis and related issues. It was the most extensive poll I have ever been involved and provided a tremendous amount of insight for our leadership. As a former political operative and someone I worked closely in the late 1990s to develop a financing strategy to build a state of the art domed stadium for the Arizona Cardinals, Mr. Robb knows every election is essentially a "push poll". Political consultants try to understand how voters perceive the issues and to develop messaging to support their candidate or proposition. **More interesting to me, reading between the lines (something we also do), I sense Mr. Robb understands the State is facing a financial crisis of a magnitude not seen in our lifetimes and it is prudent to consider all options.** Mr. Robb has never been shy about putting his own ideas forward; however, in this instance he offered nothing of substance. Arizona has been dealt a terrible hand by our now departed Democrat governor. She was the architect for the explosive expansion of spending and new programs that have taken effect over the past three years. We now have the second largest budget deficit on a percentage basis and the largest per capita deficit in the nation of any state. Even more daunting is that tax revenues will continue to fall we short of projected spending for the state through 2013. Janet Napolitano's game plan was to deny the seriousness of the situation and with a wing and a prayer hope for the best. Well, the quail have come home to roost so to speak. She flew the coop for DC and left Governor Brewer with the task of cleaning up the mess. So far, Governor Brewer has enacted the largest budget reduction in the history of the state, with more to come. There will be more pay cuts, furloughs and reductions to right size state departments and programs, which will include education, healthcare and other social

programs. This is something a large majority of Arizonans believe needs to happen. Arizona voters also are not supportive of selling off state buildings, securitizing the lottery, or accounting gimmicks. Right now is not a good time to sell your house, nor state assets. Rolling over funding of education into a new fiscal year to avoid recognizing your financial obligations in the current years no different than not paying your bills this month to show you have a bigger check balance and then making double payments next month. Sooner or later it catches up to you. Governor Brewer understands Arizona's government needs to reform how it operations and to reinvent how it controls spending in the future by limiting the growth of government spending and having adequate reserves to weather the tough times, which will surely come again. She also understands that voters are in no mood to push our problems off to next year or to continue to deal with the problems in a piece meal fashion. Voters expect results. The Governor's five point plan addresses all of these concerns and lays the groundwork for creating a strong more stable economy in Arizona. A tax increase is the last point in her plan and assumes everything else has been addressed and voters are not willing to cut out education programs such as music, art, sports, all day kindergarten or child protection and other emergency services. **Giving the voters a chance to decide seems reasonable.**

## Source: Coughlin moving all the balls

ARTICLE POSTED 4.10.2009 | 2:28 PM

A House source said a **Coughlin** e-mail statement to our reporter earlier this week that his meetings with GOP leaders have been on behalf of Building a Better Arizona rings hollow.

The perception among many lawmakers, the source continued, is Coughlin is the driving force behind the entire push for a tax increase and is coordinating the support effort on several fronts.

"It's like this tangled world according to Chuck," quipped the source.

Coughlin has, according to the source, met with GOP leaders ostensibly on behalf of the governor and the Building a Better Arizona crew, which many

believe he has organized. And one of Coughlin's former employees, **Colin Shipley**, is political director for the Arizona Republican Party.

"Hey, I could create issues for people to hire me to do, too," said the source. "It's frustrating for a lot of people down here, seeing what he's doing."

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On Wednesday, HighGround officially became the designated lobbyist - essentially, the secretary of state's "point of contact" - for Building a Better Arizona. The paperwork was filed a day after the coalition and a HighGround lobbyist made a presentation to the House Dem caucus and two days after a YS story raising questions about Coughlin's employer. (See *'Who's paying Coughlin,'* April 6.)

**Doug Cole** of HighGround said the paperwork was finished a week ago.

Information on Building a Better Arizona as filed with the secretary of state lists HighGround's phone number as the coalition's phone number. Its address is also a PO box that HighGround previously used as the mailing address for the 2006 ballot campaign it ran for Prop 206 and as the address for the Time Coalition, the non-profit corporation that provided nearly \$150,000 to last year's ill-fated TIME ballot proposition.

Cole told YS he does not consider HighGround's and the coalition's work prior to the filing, including meeting with legislators several times, as lobbying, calling it "field work."

He said the lobbyist filing is a sign his firm will likely move from field work to advocacy on behalf of Building a Better Arizona.