

What Do the Voucher and Tax Votes mean to Davis County?

Last week, voters in Davis County defeated vouchers for private schools and said no to the question of raising our sales taxes for future transportation corridors. It was understandable why the Voucher issue was the main reason for voting. An unusual amount of voters flocked to the polls in a municipal election year where turnout is usually low. The message is clear that the people of Davis County want a voice in the issues important to our county.

The two tax issues on the ballot, Opinion One and the RAP tax showed that taxpayers in Davis County are fed up with taxes. Only South Davis voted on the RAP tax with Woods Cross voting against the sales tax boost for a new theater. With the narrow margin of the RAP tax passing, and the defeat of the transportation sales tax increase, voters delivered a statement. There is no doubt Davis County will need future transportation solutions. But, with the several tax increases we have had in the past few years, including property taxes, the people of Davis County are running into a "tax crash". In other words, enough is enough. Amazingly, the Northern Utah Transportation Alliance is wondering why Davis County voted down the tax increase. In particular are some of the Alliance members that were in favor of cutting sales taxes during the last legislative session. How can someone be for tax cuts one day and then be for tax increases a few months later? The answer is simple. Our elected Republican representatives have failed in long-term planning and Davis County Citizens are being asked to pay for their blunders.

With the defeat of vouchers, one would think the tax dollars for private schools movement would end, right? The elected Republicans behind the legislative voucher bill have said they will not bring up vouchers in the next legislative session. That maybe true, but given the history of our Republican controlled Legislature, retribution and revenge will be directed to the anti-voucher supporters. In particular, public education and any GOP legislator who supported the defeat of the voucher bill will be targeted. It is not a matter if they will, but how they will retaliate is the question. Also, voucher proponents will assist in targeting legislative candidates for the 2008 election.

Additionally, what will happen to the \$9.3 million that was saved for the voucher program? The obvious choice for those funds would be to finance the public education coffers. After all, the main issue debated during the voucher campaign was the importance of educating our children. My guess is that the Republican Legislature will spend the voucher money on other projects because it comes from the general fund. In fact, I would like to make a friendly wager to Todd Weiler that the Republican Legislature will not spend the \$9.3 million on education. Todd, at the end of the 2008 Legislative General session, I would like a 12 pack of Diet Coke with Lime.

Richard Watson,
Chair, Davis County Democratic Party