



CALIFORNIA STATE TREASURER JOHN CHIANG

NEWS RELEASE

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Statement of California State Treasurer John Chiang on Reforms to Board of Equalization

SACRAMENTO – “As a former chairman of the Board of Equalization, I can bear witness to how the only elected tax board in the nation has so much inherent potential to do good, but has too often of late been unable to tame its worst demons.

“As our tax system grows more complex and unwieldy, California taxpayers – now more than ever – need forceful advocates, as well as tireless agents for reform. Instead, the BOE has been so mired in self-inflicted chaos and scandal that no less than five investigations are ongoing.

“Its thousands of dedicated employees who are responsible for the collection of nearly one-third of all state revenues should be able to rely on its governing board for sure-footed leadership. Instead, the BOE has been found to have forged an environment so toxic that its managers and line-level staff are afraid to lawfully do their jobs for fear of suffering retaliation.

“In theory, taxpayers should enjoy heightened responsiveness from an elected board because each member must account for their performance every four years at the ballot box. In reality, the BOE has become so politicized that they are regularly accused of interfering in tax assessments and audit activities, as well as providing misleading information to lawmakers.

“The time has come for lasting change and true reform at the Board of Equalization. That is why I support the Taxpayer Transparency and Fairness Act of 2017. The proposal, backed by Governor Brown and the leaders of both legislative houses will promote fairness and transparency, de-politicize decision-making and, most importantly, restore public trust.”

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