

Letter: Vote no on Prop. 13 change

Ventura County Star

Re: Luciano Ortiz's June 16 letter, "Close corporate tax loopholes":

The position taken by Luciano Ortiz in his letter supporting yet another tax increase is disappointing. He claims that removing Proposition 13's property tax protection for commercial and industrial properties will "close corporate tax loopholes."

Commercial and industrial properties are 45% owned by private equity, largely mom and pop owners; 34% are owned by real estate investment trusts. Nearly every worker owns REIT shares in their retirement account. These property owners will be forced to raise rents to cover the increased taxes, resulting in more costly goods and services to consumers.

Ortiz fails to recognize that, once government realizes it can gather more taxes by removing Proposition 13's protections, they will then target non-owner-occupied residential property. Homeowners are sitting on a lot of potential tax revenue. How long before government will consider removing Proposition 13 protections from them too?

I am reminded of Martin Niemoller's famous quote: "First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out — because I was not a socialist," that ends with, "Then they came for me — and there was no one left to speak for me."

There seems to be no end to the voracious appetite of governments to tax us. The answer is not to raise taxes on property owners. The answer is to not raise taxes at all.

Rather than increasing taxes yet again, let's look at decreasing government expenditure on pensions by using 401(k)s instead of defined benefit pensions. Think how much revenue could be saved by this simple change.

I therefore encourage all property owners to vote in solidarity against the deceptively named Schools and Communities First tax increase initiative. We must speak out to protect the property of each of us from government's desire to steadily increase the tax on our property.

Doug Michie, Ventura