

AB 1957 by Assemblyman Richard Gordon (D-Redwood City) would give county Treasurers the option of not publishing the annual list of delinquent taxpayers, a notice published in California newspapers since forever that is required before a county can sell a delinquent taxpayer's property to recover the back-taxes. The bill would, instead, allow a county to pass a resolution that would require the list to be posted to the county's regularly maintained Internet web site, so long as it first publishes a brief newspaper notice directing folks to the web site.

#### AB 1957 Talking Points

- The delinquent taxpayers notice contains the assessor's parcel number, the delinquent taxpayer's name, the street address and amount due.
- While AB 1957 would hide this information on an obscure government website, newspapers thrust this essential information into the affected community.
- The published notice deputizes the entire community – neighbors, friends, relatives, churches, community groups and self-interested business professionals – everyone, to help get the taxes paid and keep the property from being sold by the government at auction.
- Publication of the list in the newspaper creates social pressure (shame factor) that cannot be duplicated by a brief referral ad to an obscure government website.
- The bill would objectively make this information hard to get – a person would have to read the newspaper, locate the brief advertisement with the government URL, make the almost telepathic connection that they have a need to get to the website either to protect their own interests or help protect someone else's, find a computer, fire it up and type in the URL, then sift through an otherwise alien and unfamiliar government website looking for the list – a website they likely would never otherwise visit.
- Both the sponsor County Treasurers Association and the author's staff have admitted the sole rationale for the bill is to decrease costs -- even though the taxpayer or property is ultimately responsible for the publication costs, not the county.
- Public Notice about government processes must be done by disinterested third party; otherwise the fox is guarding the henhouse. Internet-only public notices undependable, no permanency; subject to change; subject to technological failure. Connections fail, servers crash, links die and web sites are hacked. (See CNPA AB 1902 letter for detail).
- Printed delinquent taxpayer notices provide minimal due process and fairness for those who, if they fail to pay, are subject to having their property seized by government and sold at auction.
- Digital divide issues persist; only 62 percent of Americans have broadband access.

- Printed and distributed public notices are dependably accessible by all segments of society.
- Printed and distributed public notices are archivable.
- Printed and distributed public notices are unhackable.
- Publication of verifiable notices printed and distributed independent of the advertising public agency protects the property owner, the process and the agency.