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THE TAX LAWYER

TAXES | 3/20/2013

Cyprus Needs A Tax Check-off Like Presidential Campaign Fund

April 15 is right around the corner. You'll be asked to make the following choice when you file your Form 1040: Do you want \$3 of your federal tax to go to the Presidential Election Campaign Fund, Yes or No?

The use of check-offs on income tax returns to fund charitable organizations began in 1972 when the federal government allowed us all to designate \$1 of our liability to a special presidential campaign fund. \$1 grew to \$3, but the big growth was in the states that soon followed. A check-off program for Cyprus probably wouldn't get any accolades in the U.S., nor perhaps even in European countries.

Perhaps not even in Cyprus. [Cyprus](#) is a tiny island of 1.1 million people, but now is a critical piece of the global economic puzzle. No one likes new taxes. In our increasingly small world, everyone assumes a new tax in one place is likely to be replicated somewhere else. And that can be in our own back yards.



Cyprus

Still, Cyprus needs money and it seemed as if a one-time tax of 6.75% on bank deposits under 100,000 euros (\$131,000) would do the trick. Bigger deposits were to take a 9.9% tax. In all, the one-time tax would have raised 5.8 billion euro (\$7.6 billion). But now it's a no-go. See [Cyprus Crisis: Parliament Rejects Deposit Tax In Bailout Plan](#).

So what's next? After Presidential election check-offs, check-offs have ballooned in scope and popularity. In fact, over the last few years, state agencies have seen huge growth in the number of programs and the amounts collected. Every state with an income tax has them, usually with multiple choices.

Some check-offs are byzantine, allowing an extensive list of possible programs to which taxpayers can contribute. California provides 18 programs from which the Golden State's heavily taxed taxpayers can select. Virginia too has 18. Oregon has 17. Only three states (and the District of Columbia) have a single check-off.

If you file a California tax return, this is your current list of check-off choices:

- California Seniors Special Fund
- Alzheimer's Disease/Related Disorders Fund
- Rare & Endangered Species Preservation Program
- State Children's Trust Fund for Prevention of Child Abuse
- California Sea Otter Fund
- California Breast Cancer Research Fund
- California Firefighters' Memorial Fund
- Emergency Food for Families Fund
- California Peace Officer Memorial Foundation Fund
- School Supplies for Homeless Children Fund
- California Fund for Senior Citizens
- Municipal Shelter Spay-Neuter Fund
- California Cancer Research Fund
- ALS/Lou Gehrig's Disease Research Fund
- Child Victims of Human Trafficking Fund
- California YMCA Youth and Government Fund

- California Youth Leadership Fund
- State Parks Protection Fund/Parks Pass Purchase

These are all worthy causes, and check-off programs are in high demand. Maybe one for Cyprus would help.

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