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TUCSON OPINION

## **Local opinion: Prop 414 is a regressive tax that hurts those it claims to help**

**William Arnold Special to the Arizona Daily Star**

Jan 31, 2025

***T**he following is the opinion and analysis of the writer:*

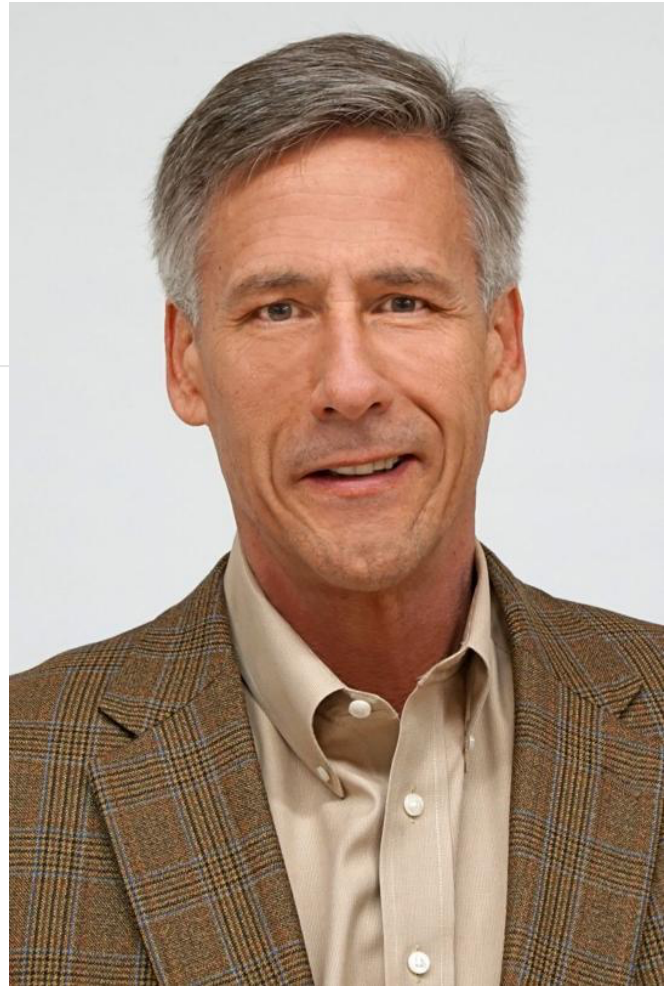
As leaders in Tucson's real estate community, we share a fundamental goal: enhancing our quality of life by building a safer, more prosperous city. However, Proposition 414 — a proposed decade-long half-percent sales tax increase — falls short in addressing Tucson's most pressing challenges.

If Proposition 414 passes, Tucsonans will face the highest sales tax of AZ's largest cities. At a time when inflation is straining household budgets, this regressive tax will disproportionately impact fixed and low-income residents, exacerbating the very challenges it seeks to address.

Despite more than 50% growth in the city's budget since 2015, public safety challenges persist. The previous budget expansion didn't resolve these problems — how can voters be assured that this new, unfair tax will succeed?

City leadership admits Prop 414 is a response to direct pleas from across the community, but the current crisis is a result of their own inaction.

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William Arnold

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Prop 414 also introduces economic uncertainty for Tucson's business community and a disincentive to shop in Tucson. The Proposition creates dozens of ongoing expenses, funded by a tax scheme that dramatically fluctuates over time. Financial commitments of this magnitude should generate a demonstrable return on investment and address the root challenges facing Tucson: low wages and high poverty rates. It does neither.

Prop 414 would benefit from clearer metrics to assess program effectiveness, and the competitive funding process appears to favor organizations with more advanced grant-writing expertise or greater access to resources and networks. To provide credibility, the Proposition establishes a "Citizen's Commission" but lacks details about the qualifications of its members. The Commission will be handpicked by the City Manager, assuring a singular bias in their selection and oversight.

The city should have looked at their budgets before coming for our wallets. There was no effort to try and reduce or eliminate expenses on their end, all the while, this tax would fund a significant number of new full-time employees and programs with no long-term funding plan beyond the 10-year tax. Raising taxes, rather than stimulating economic activity, to pay for needed programs is not sustainable. It's time for the city to make disciplined budget choices reflective of community priorities.

The Tucson Association of Realtors, as evidenced in our previous support for Prop 101, strongly supports investment in Tucson's future through thoughtful strategic planning, addressing systemic challenges, accountability, and comprehensive approaches that facilitate affordable housing and economic development.

Voting no on Proposition 414 is not rejecting progress — it's a demand for smarter, more effective municipal governance. Tucson deserves solutions that genuinely address our community's unique challenges and build a more equitable future for all residents.

Tucson's realtors strongly urge you to vote no on Proposition 414.

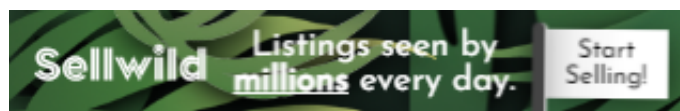
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*William Arnold is president of the Tucson Association of Realtors.*



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