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Taxpayers' Revolt Losing Ground

A YEAR AGO, the Proposition 13 tax revolt was big news. California had voted to cut property taxes in spite of opposition by the legislature, public officials and labor unions.

The rest of the country applauded and tax cutting measures appeared on the ballots in at least 16 states, including Oklahoma.

News analysts pointed out that revolting against excessive taxation is an old American custom and predicted lawmakers would get the message that citizens wanted their taxes rolled back.

Today opinions differ as to whether Proposition 13 and tax cut proposals it spawned have had any real effect. Americans are paying more taxes than they did last year and will pay even more next year.

A national magazine reports that the California experiment in tax cutting at the ballot box seems to be succeeding, while a public opinion polls reports "the decline if not the demise of what has been called the

Proposition 13 syndrome."

News stories report some California municipalities face difficult problems as unions press demands for exorbitant wage boosts and cities don't have the money to grant them.

In some cases taxes have been relocated. Fees have been increased on services formerly partly supported by property taxes. Libraries and other optional services have been cut back drastically.

In Oklahoma, public demand for tax relief prompted the legislature to work out so-called tax cuts that involved schemes to bring in as much money, or more, by new rate schedules and new taxes.

When Oklahoma Cityans voted down a bond issue for capital improvements, observers called it a slap at federal spending. It had no effect on Congressional appropriations and didn't help Oklahoma City.

Some have argued the tax revolt was aimed at the wrong target. By forcing cuts of local taxes, state and city governments were made more

susceptible to federal subsidies and regulations.

How this works was shown when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently withheld \$13 million for Oklahoma City sewer facilities until the city council adjusts sewer rates to EPA demands.

Sporadic efforts are being made to keep the tax revolt alive. Drives continue for a constitutional amendment to require a balanced budget. Organizations continue to pass resolutions and campaign against wasteful or excessive spending by the federal government, with small results.

Federal income tax collections rose from \$169 billion in 1968 to \$415 billion in 1978. During the same period state and local tax collections rose from \$73 billion to more than \$200 billion.

This year, it is estimated Americans will pay \$57 billion more in individual income taxes and social security taxes than last year. Further increases lie ahead for 1980 and 1981.