

Our Weakness Means More Taxes

ONE certainty of this new year is that we are going to have new taxes slapped on our backs. Strapped on may be a better term, because taxes rarely are repealed; merely shifted around.

There might not be so many laws and tax increases if the people could vote on them. In November, Oklahomans turned down 9 out of 10 state questions proposing additional taxes.

Congress and the legislature are constitutionally directed to raise money to support the government but they are not required to levy taxes to support unconscionable waste, blatant extravagance, or the lawmakers' political friends and followers.

Oklahoma citizens could bring legislative acts to a vote if only 5 per cent of the total voters in the past general election request it — but it rarely happens.

Congress is more insulated. Action by only three more states is needed to require Congress to submit a budget balancing amendment

to a vote but political observers say that if it is adopted, it would take at least four years to put it into effect.

Meanwhile, the governor and legislators are trying to figure a way to get around Oklahoma's budget balancing amendment. Lawmakers don't like restrictions on their spending.

Congress has raised the debt to \$1.8 trillion and interest payments amount to \$1 million every three minutes. When you borrow money to pay interest you are going broke.

Examples of waste and extravagance in government have been proved numerous times, but congressmen and legislators seem to suffer acute astigmatism when they look toward them.

When former Gov. Raymond Gary said the state could cut \$200 million from projected spending, Senate Leader Marvin York called it an "incredible statement."

Following the election, 43 new members of Congress attended seminars at Harvard University for indoctrination on how to "get along"

in Washington. One professor said: "If there were an actual budget line that said 'waste' you could go after it, but there isn't." Perhaps that is why the "waste" line isn't there.

It appears hardly anybody wants to pinch public purse strings except a taxpayer majority and a political minority.

Sen. Don Nickles, R-OK, says, "It's time to carve into the biggest turkey in America — the federal deficit." Sen. David Boren, D-OK, said: "I am sick and tired of having people in both parties play political games with the budget."

The problem won't be solved until we get roused enough to demand that it be solved. We aren't there yet. Martin Feldstein, former chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisors, was asked whether it is possible to resolve the deficit by spending cuts alone. He replied: "It's very unlikely. There isn't the political will to cut enough."

Because we lack the political will to do what we ought, we are going to pay more taxes than we should.